

Overview

By Harold S. Wechsler

Harold S. Wechsler is a professor of education at the Margaret S. Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester.

A former editor of NEA higher education publications, Wechsler writes on the history of minority access to college, efforts to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice on college campuses, ethnic studies, and education for business and for teaching. He is writing a history of efforts by the National Conference of Christians and Jews to combat campus prejudice.

Wechsler's current publications include *Eastern Standard Time: High School-College Collaboration and Admission to College*, published by the College Board in *A Faithful Mirror: Reflections on the College Board and Education in America*, an anthology of essays commemorating the board's centennial, and *Access to Success in the Urban High School: The Middle College Movement, a study of high schools for at-risk students, located on community college campuses*, published by Teachers College Press.

This tenth anniversary edition of the *NEA Almanac of Higher Education* has a new format and design. We're including a CD-ROM disk that contains NEA-IPEDS salary data for 2001–02—the material formerly included in the Faculty Salary Report. Placing the salary data on a disk permits us to analyzing more key issues confronting American higher education by expanding the editorial content of the *NEA Almanac*. The CD also includes electronic files from past *NEA Almanacs*. We hope these changes encourage you to refer to the *NEA 2003 Almanac* throughout the year. Here's an overview of the contents.

Salaries for faculty members on 9/10-month contracts averaged \$59,939 in 2001–02, up 7.0 percent over *two years*, note Suzanne B. Clery and John B. Lee in “Faculty Salaries 2001–02” (the National Center for Educational Statistics did not collect data for 2000–01). The purchasing power of faculty salaries in 2001–02 remained greater than the former peak in 1972–73, while the gap between salaries in unionized and non-unionized colleges widened.

Henry Lee Allen, in “Diversity, Nonstandard Work, and Academic Employment in the 21st Century,” looks at data from the 1999 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF). Allen notes key changes in the academic workforce: “contingent” faculty members made up about 43 percent of the professoriate, only 31 percent of all faculty members were tenured, and 45 percent of faculty members at institutions that offered tenure were not on the tenure track. “The emergence of a split-labor market,” Allen notes, “has serious implications for faculty workload, productivity, and unionization.”

This year, Thomas R. Wolanin joins our roster of authors. Wolanin, a senior associate at The Institute for Higher Education Policy, was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs at the U.S. Department of Education under Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. In “The Federal Role in Higher Education,” Wolanin surveys federal government policy on student assistance, taxes, research support, civil rights, and employment regulation. He notes possible effects of federal policy on the freedom and autonomy of higher education.

Ten years ago, when the first *NEA Almanac* appeared, the nation was emerging from a recession. Many states balanced their budgets by reducing spending on postsecondary education and by raising tuition. The proportion of state spending on higher education declined significantly during that recession. Today, most states face similar or larger budget deficits. William Zumeta, in "Higher Education Finances: In Recession Again," surveys the current economic condition of the states and the status of state budgets. Higher education expenditures, traditionally the "balance wheel" in state budgets, he notes, are again under severe pressure.

Faculty members often use sabbatical leaves to keep up with the scholarship in their fields. But have colleges and universities maintained this benefit? In "Bargaining Professional Development," Gary Rhoades, Rachel Hendrickson, and Christine Maitland examine contracts in NEA's Higher Education Contract Analysis System (HECAS) to determine the status of sabbaticals and other professional development leaves. The essay includes model contract language for leaves to learn about new instructional technologies and examines professional development opportunities for staff, especially contract language for tuition benefits.

This year, Marilyn Amey and Kim VanDerLinden rejoin the roll of *Almanac* authors. Amey, who teaches at Michigan State University, and VanDerLinden, an MSU doctoral student, survey administrator and staff perceptions of key technology issues facing community colleges in "The Use of Technology: Institutional Issues." The key issue: support for instructional and administrative processes—a finding that reinforces the need for effective bargaining for professional development. "Leaders looking to position their institutions effectively in the

technology forefront," note Amey and VanDerLinden, "often overlook the key to success: the human resources aspects of change processes."

"Defined benefit pension plans proved far superior to defined contribution plans" during the stock market decline, writes William Dale Crist in "Faculty Benefits and Retirement: *Fighting off the Bears, Part II.*" But the decline also affected faculty in defined benefit plans by reducing the funds available for salary and benefits increases. This reduced funding, along with increased costs, helped to create another crisis: "Providing high quality, affordable health care," notes Crist, "is our top domestic problem."

In 2002, *Time Magazine* recognized three whistleblowers as their "Persons of the Year." But staff members who speak out about behavior that is inappropriate, unethical, or illegal may face retaliation, not recognition. Do our colleges adequately protect these staff members? Linda Johnsrud, in "Higher Education Support Professionals: The Fear of Speaking Out," examines federal, state, and institutional protections for whistleblowers. She then looks at contracts in the HECAS database for language that protects staff who exercise bargained rights. Last, Johnsrud evaluates the efficacy of protections at one university.

Finally, some tenth anniversary "thank yous." Thanks to our authors—all highly informed scholars—for timely information and analysis. Thanks to a talented production team for a high quality publication. Thanks to the students, faculty, librarians, and staff at the University of Rochester for research, counsel, and accommodations. Thanks to NEA leaders, directors, and managers for promoting an influential annual. Last, thanks to NEA members for using the *Almanac* to improve American education and the working conditions of American educators.