

# Overview

by *Harold S. Wechsler*

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*A former editor of NEA higher education publications, Wechsler has published books and articles on student access to higher education and education for business and teaching.*

*Wechsler is currently writing on the history of efforts to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice on college campuses, as well as on the history of methods of college admission.*

You are reading the fifth anniversary issue of a unique publication for faculty and staff in higher education. Five years ago, NEA redesigned the *Almanac of Higher Education* to bring NEA members an annual report on the conditions of academic work, written by the experts in the field, and based upon up-to-date research and data. Our goal: readable, informative essays for a professional audience. We hope you've liked and used the results.

The *Almanacs* have included analysis of faculty and staff salary and benefits data, faculty workload and productivity, and state appropriations. We have also used NEA's Higher Education Contract Analysis System (HECAS) to examine trends in bargaining and provide members with model contract language.

Finally, several *Almanacs* have contained special essays highlighting timely issues or presenting the results of commissioned research.

The 1998 *Almanac* builds upon these traditions. Here's a rundown of this year's contents.

Faculty salaries, note Suzanne B. Clery and John B. Lee in "Faculty Salaries: 1996-97," did not do well during the recession of the early 1990s. Salaries just kept pace with inflation—making up little lost ground—during the sustained economic recovery. Faculty salaries in 1996-97 increased by 3.1 percent, just ahead of a 2.9 percent inflation rate and last year's 3.0 percent salary gain. But the gap between the best- and lowest-paid faculty members widened; so did the gender gap.

In "Faculty Workload and Productivity: Gender Comparisons," Henry L. Allen continues his comprehensive analysis of the 1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, a dataset compiled by the United States Department of Education. The key findings: Women are found disproportionately in lower academic ranks, in public community colleges, independent liberal arts colleges, and independent and public comprehensives, and in part-time positions. Women devote more time to teaching and less to research. Men publish refereed articles more frequently than women.

This year, we asked Gregory M. Saltzman, a professor of economics at Albion College and an authority on collective bargaining, to discuss the legal status of unions and bargaining in America's colleges and universities. In "Legal Regulation of Collective Bargaining in

Colleges and Universities,” Saltzman documents the laws governing bargaining by full- and part-time faculty, teaching assistants, and support staff in higher education—their evolution, current status, and future.

The first NEA Higher Education *Almanac* appeared as the nation was recovering from a recession that helped to reduce the proportion of all state budgets devoted to higher education. State appropriations, William Zumeta notes in “1997 State Higher Education Finance and Policy Developments,” have increased during the past two years, but competition for funding from other government services, including Medicaid, prisons, and welfare, has meant that higher education has not regained its former share of state budgets.

Colleges and universities, notes Jay L. Chronister in “Faculty Benefits: Identifying Family Friendly Campuses,” are responding to demographic changes in the college and university workforce by changing their benefits. Some colleges are implementing “family friendly policies” that “help faculty, staff, and students balance their family, employment, and educational obligations and opportunities.” Chronister also examines trends in expenditures for benefits. These expenditures, he notes, increased as a percentage of salaries

during the 1990s, but have now begun to stabilize.

Support staff in higher education face the uncertainties brought about by the move toward privatization of services traditionally performed in-house. Union contracts, Gary Rhoades and Christine Maitland find in “The Hidden Campus Workforce: (De)Investing in Staff,” contain few protections. Rhoades and Maitland list and analyze existing contract provisions in HECAS, the extensive NEA contract database, and provide language on contracting-out found in the stronger support staff contracts.

Taken together, the first five NEA *Almanacs of Higher Education* provide extensive data on—and in-depth analyses of—higher education trends. In the future, we will build upon the accomplishments of our authors to provide you with an even stronger voice for faculty and staff.

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