

## The Union Difference

The data is clear: Full-time faculty are paid best when they have collectively bargained contracts.<sup>1</sup>

And that's not all — the presence of unions also is related to the closure of pay gaps between men and women and across racial groups, and protection from gender- and race-based discrimination.<sup>2</sup> For example, unionized institutions are more likely to have larger shares of female faculty in full professor positions.<sup>3</sup> Additional research also shows that unions benefit individuals' health and relationships, provide protection against poverty-inducing events, and decrease the risk of political and socioeconomic disenfranchisement.<sup>4,5</sup>

Figure 1 uses full-time faculty salary data, collected and published by the federal government, to show average faculty salaries for public institutions in 2018-2019: first, with faculty collective bargaining agreements; second, without faculty collective bargaining agreements, but located in the same state as institutions with faculty unions; and third, in states without any faculty collective bargaining agreements.

What is apparent is: In almost every sector, at public institutions where faculty collectively bargain, faculty earn more money. Only liberal arts institutions, which comprise 1 percent of faculty, are exceptions.

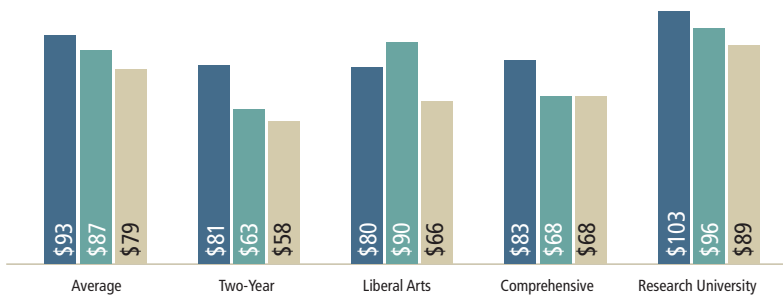
Across the board, faculty with unions earn about \$6,000 more, on average, than those working without contracts in similar states with collective bargaining. They earn about \$14,000 more than faculty in states without collective bargaining.

The largest difference occurs in public 2-year institutions, where faculty at institutions with collectively bargained contracts earn about \$18,000, or 30 percent, more than those working in the same states without collectively bargaining contracts. Meanwhile, the union advantage is \$15,000 at comprehensive institutions and \$8,000 at research/doctoral-granting institutions.

**FIGURE 1. THE PRESENCE OF FACULTY CONTRACTS IS CORRELATED WITH HIGHER SALARIES.**

Salaries for faculty in public institutions (in thousands), 2019-20.

■ With contract ■ State with bargaining, no contract ■ No faculty contract in state



Source: ASA Research analysis of U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Faculty Salary Data, 2019-20.

1 Vidal, M. (2013). Inequality and the growth of bad jobs. *Contexts*, 12(4): 70-72.  
 2 Rosenfeld, J & Kleykamp, M. (2012). Organized labor and racial wage inequality in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(5): 1460-1502.  
 3 May, A.M., Moorhouse, E.A., & Bossard, J.A. (2010). Representation of women faculty at public research universities: do unions matter? *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 63(4): July 2010. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/ilrreview/vol63/iss4/8>.  
 4 Reynolds, M.M., Brady, D. (2012). Bringing you more than the weekend: union membership and self-rated health in the United States. *Social Forces*, 90(3): March, 1023-1049. Doi: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41682687>.  
 5 Brady, D., Baker, R.S., Finnigan, R. (2012). When unionization disappears: state-level unionization and working poverty in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, 78(5): 8720896 Doi: 10.11770003122413501859.