

NEA Higher Education Conference
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San Diego, CA

Report by
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CCA Director J

Although the conference was scheduled to begin at 8 AM, it turned out that the first sessions did not begin until 1:30. I took advantage of that time to catch up on paperwork.

The first session I attended on Friday was “Examining Effective Leadership,” by Mark Chaykin, who had just recently retired as the Director of Field Services for NYSUT. According to Chaykin, leadership includes casting a vision, shaping the future, developing strategy, engaging talent, and fostering innovation. There are multiple leadership styles from authoritative to democratic, but there isn't a clearly superior style. However, the interpersonal side of leadership is important as leaders can motivate or demotivate.

The presenter noted that successful leaders attend to what is necessary, inhibit what gets in the way, and stay aware of how to get to the next step. However, to be successful, leaders require organizational power. Organizational power occurs when people both in the membership and within the larger community engage in working towards a collective goal.

Ideally, leaders should not be threatened by challenges from others. People should perceive you as being easy to work with. Your performance standards (timelines and requirements) should be firm and clear. You should be seen as trustworthy, display situational awareness, and be emotionally connected. All leaders should work on the emotional skills of self-awareness, empathy, social skills, motivation, and self-regulation.

The next session was entitled “Faculty Salaries and Other Curious Matters,” and were presented by Sue Clery, Coffey Consulting and Valerie Conley, Univ. of Colorado, Colorado Springs, College of Education.

According to the presenters, faculty are still having some trouble nationwide. Although unemployment has dropped from 9% to 5% over the last six years, underemployment is still about 15%, and this is affecting state budgets. Nationwide, faculty purchasing power is still 6.5% lower than it was nine or ten years ago, and although state spending has increased 7.8% in FY 2015 alone, much of this increase is for health care. Adjusted for inflation, faculty salaries slowly increase from 1982-2002, but since then have remained at about \$80,000 (in 2015 dollars). It is interesting to note that in 1972 a dollar was worth about five dollars today.

Nationwide, public institutions pay full professors about \$64 - 70K, except at doctoral institutions, which pay about \$85K. Private colleges pay much less if they are two year institutions, about the same if they are primarily baccalaureate institutions, and more if they are doctoral granting institutions. Compared to full professors, associates make about 75% and assistants make about 67%. There is a considerable variation, and full professor salaries can exceed \$100K.

Women account for a little under 40% of full professors and for 60% of instructors. They make about the same as other instructors (mostly in community college positions), but less than men in all ranks of professors.

For two year colleges, California has the best pay with an average of \$82K, followed by MI, AZ, and CT. New Jersey is fifth at \$72K. The bottom states are GA (\$47K), WV, IN, and AR. For four year colleges, NJ is first at \$104K, followed by DE, CT, CA (\$98K), and HI. The bottom states are comprised of MT (\$69K), SD, MS, LA, and AR.

By discipline, the highest paid studied discipline (not counting health) was legal (\$120K), followed by

business. Collective bargaining matters far more (economically speaking) for disciplines like library science, communication, performing arts, and education than it does for fields like business, family & consumer science, engineering, and legal. In fact, salaries in non-collective areas are higher than in collective bargaining areas for engineering and legal professors. However, on average in all fields, union professors average a little under \$5,000 more than non-union professors.

About 31% of faculty are in non-public non-profit institutions. 69% are thus in public institutions. (They did not consider for-profit institutions in their study.) In the last ten years, tenured faculty have dropped from 61% to 51% of all faculty. (Note that this is tenured, not tenure track.) Over half of new hires are not tenure-track. This is particularly severe with community colleges.

In 2013, 56% of students were female, but 45% of full-time and 35% of tenured faculty were women. By race, 14% of students were black and 20% of student were Hispanic. The values for faculty in these categories at a national level are 7% and 6%, respectively.

The average American who reaches age 65 can expect to live 16 (male) or 19 (female) more years. It was about 12 years back in 1900. However, for those who reach 85, they can expect to live 6 (male) or 7 (female) more years. It was 4 years back in 1900. Those over 65 accounted for about 10M people in 1940, 20M in 1960, and 30M in 1985. It is now about 40M and climbing rapidly. In 1993, the labor force participation for men over 70 reached a low of 10% after declining from a high of 21% in 1963. The trend is now going back up, and is now over 15%.

A handful of additional facts were presented. For example, a Medicare participant has a 30% chance of being in the hospital in any given year. Most people (over 90%) have a Medicare supplement (Medigap or employer). People with retirement accounts (e.g. 401(k)) rarely withdraw this account money as annuity payments. Most are taken as ad-hoc distributions.

Finally, the presenters noted that tenured faculty are highly confident with their retirement planning. This is largely due to their having a good pension plan. However, only 19% of adjunct faculty reported being "very confident" and almost one-third lack confidence in their retirement prospects.

After an afternoon and evening spent with awards and general information, the next day began with a session called "Health Insurance Challenges and the Cadillac Tax," which was presented by three professors from the University of Maine.

The Cadillac Tax (formally known as the Affordable Care Act Excise Tax) will come in 2018. It is a 40% excise tax on premiums above \$10,200 for individuals and \$27,500 for "families," which includes any plan other than "individual." These amounts will increase by CPI+1% in 2019 and by the CPI thereafter. It does not matter who pays the premium; the tax is on high value benefit plans.

As the tax is charged to the employer, the employer (in this case the University of Maine) wants to avoid the excise tax. The net agreement was that the university would have a plan that would not exceed the excise tax limit. Many faculty in California are in a plan like CalPERS that offers choices. Our districts will likely be working towards reducing those choices that allow for an excise tax.

I spent the noon hour in an NEA focus group for tenured faculty, and then attended the afternoon workshop "Building a Pro-Union culture" presented by the president and vice-president of the United Faculty of Florida. The noted that after a few years where a group of six did all bargaining and grievances but not much else, a new group of faculty has begun to expand their union's role. Now, the focus is:

- bargaining
- grievances
- building community amongst the faculty
- giving back to the faculty

-- connecting with the greater college and area labor communities

They send weekly "Did You Know" emails to faculty noting one aspect or another of the contract. They have also sponsored "theatre nights," where they purchase tickets for student events and give them to faculty. Working with the interest of their members, the union now has partnerships with groups like the Central Labor Council, the Latino Leadership Institute, and Fight for \$15.

The final session at this conference was during breakfast on Sunday and was a panel presentation entitled "Tackling Institutional Racism in Higher Education."

The first speaker (Ravi Hutheesing) talked about how racial profiling actually benefited his career. As the token dark person in a couple of activities, he was able to get more exposure. He also told a story about how on consecutive cab rides in New Orleans, both a white and a black cab driver expressed racist views to him. He came to the conclusion that racism is color-blind, and that our situation can benefit through teaching empathy to children. In his opinion, this will require additional funding to the arts. He also noted that millennials are likely to teach each other than to learn from their elders.

Sharon Elise (Sociology Dept. Chair at CSU San Marcos) noted that she works in a white racist world and that she has had her livelihood and well-being threatened. Although she is at the peak of her personal power as a tenured professor, she believes that she has never had the opportunity to engage in reverse racism. She also wants us to look at our unwelcoming campus climate that ignores regular violence. She believes that we are all practitioners of white racism and that we need to create a better community. In part, this can be accomplished by sharing our stories of bias and privilege. We are complacent about the lack of funding to ethnic studies and women's studies, and we need to reach out to and work with legislators.

Phu Phan (Assoc. Prof. of Human Services at CSU Dominguez Hills) said that faculty need to bring up social issues in our classes, citing the racism of Donald Trump as an example. We should also bring up points of racial equality at faculty meetings. He suggests that there be a required class in "cultural humility" at all universities.

Terry Jones (Prof. Emeritus of Social Work at CSU East Bay) mentioned that tenure has done some terrible things to women and people of color. He claims that unions historically have been brutal to people of color and unbelievably racist and sexist. However, unions have been doing wonderful things in the State of California. He also added that there needs to be more faculty involvement in selecting the presidents of universities. There are rewards and privileges to being racist in society, and that we must fight this urge.

Dana Stachowiak (Asst. Prof of Diversity at Univ. of Louisiana at Lafayette) believes that being an "ally" is insufficient. She also believes that we need to be more active in supporting those working towards social justice.

All speakers agreed that institutional racism is a part of American culture, and the panelists urged the audience to take action to eliminate it.