

To: Elected Faculty Representatives, Compensation Committee
CC: President Bolton; Provost Tipton; Vice President Hamrick
Re: New-Faculty Compensation

Oct. 13, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing in our capacity as officers of the Whitman College Chapter of the AAUP to bring to your attention a matter of concern regarding faculty compensation.

Each year Whitman welcomes a new group of talented and accomplished faculty to campus. New colleagues face unique and increasingly challenging financial burdens. In the current housing market, new faculty may have to begin leases a month or two prior to receiving a paycheck, and housing costs are outstripping any growth in faculty salaries. Also, compensation for moving expenses occurs as reimbursement and is, therefore, delayed.

Yet, new faculty are often conducting significant Whitman-related labor prior to the start of the semester. Much of this labor involves new course design that is required for readiness at the start of the academic year.

Some faculty enjoy the privilege of access to family wealth (either in inter-generational form or through heteronormative kinship structures), and thus are able to navigate this particular period of financial precarity that attends to joining the Whitman faculty. However, many faculty do not, and it is imperative that the college center their experience.

What does that experience entail? Faculty have shared with the AAUP that some new faculty are forced to max out credit cards, pawn belongings, and scramble for personal loans to cover basic living expenses.

New faculty deserve better. We urge the compensation committee and the college to think creatively and justly about how to best support new faculty. For example, consider:

- A first full-paycheck disbursement at the end of August
- A one-time housing grant disbursed to new faculty when they sign a lease on a property in Walla Walla
- New mechanisms for promptly covering relocation expenses.

These examples are illustrative rather than exhaustive. We look forward to seeing what policies the compensation committee will propose.

Sincerely,
Professor Lisa Uddin (President, Whitman-AAUP)
Professor Jack Jackson (Vice President, Whitman-AAUP)
Professor Pavel Blagov (Secretary, Whitman-AAUP)