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Monetary Compensation of Full-Time Faculty at American Public Regional Universities: The Impact of Geography and the Existence of Collective Bargaining

Stephen G. Katsinas,¹ Johnson A. Ogun,² and Nathaniel J. Bray³

Anastasia, Ray, and Joan are three full-time faculty (all fictional), who work at regional universities. Anastasia teaches sociology at rural university with 5,500 students in Louisiana, Ray teaches history at a suburban university with 6,000 students in Indiana, and Joan teaches economics at a suburban university with 23,000 students in California. They met a decade ago while serving on their university's graduate student council, and were hooded at the same commencement. All three were ecstatic to land jobs in a tough hiring year, and after much hard work, have been promoted and tenured with flying colors. They look forward to celebrating their success at their upcoming ten-year reunion, but recurring headlines about severe budget cuts and layoffs in public higher education have them concerned about their futures. So they decide to compare notes to project where their current and future monetary compensation might go. As the resident economist in the group, Joan volunteers to coordinate the project.

Anastasia and Ray work at regional universities without faculty collective bargaining, while Joan does. When they share their wage data in a telephone conference call with Joan, they are surprised to learn how varied their monetary compensation packages are. Anastasia receives \$79,527 in salaries and fringe benefits, Ray \$89,221, and Joan's gross pay is \$119,515.

What explains these large one-year differences? After all, their institutions are similar in many key dimensions: all three are publicly-controlled regional universities who belong to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), so Joan begins her analysis at the AASCU web page. She finds that the 420 AASCU member institutions serve nearly five million Americans, including large numbers of first-generation, minority, and economically disadvantaged students on Pell Grants and other forms of need-based financial aid (AASCU,

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2016). In AASCU President Muriel A. Howard's welcome message, she sees stated what drew Anastasia, Ray, and herself to teaching careers at regional universities in the first place: "to deliver on the American promise of access, affordability, and educational opportunity and on their commitment to serve as stewards of place" (AASCU, 2016). Joan also sees that AASCU's signature program, *Stewards of Place*, dates to the early 2000s and continues today (see Votruba, 2002; Parr, Curris, & Jones, 2002; Saltmarsh, Giles, O'Meara, & Sandmann, 2014; Dunfree & Vaidya, 2015). AASCU member institutions are committed to being good stewards of place, befitting their historic role as public regional universities. Joan also finds much useful public policy advocacy information about federal and state policy, including reviews of gubernatorial addresses and state-by-state legislation and budget information. But when she keys in the word "salaries," no relevant data pops up, even though the four-four teaching workloads each semester for the three are exactly alike.

Joan turns to a more general search for her comparative study, and keys in the words "salary surveys in higher education" on her laptop. Her search engine initially takes her to websites presenting administrative professional salary data. Joan then adds the word "faculty" in front of that phrase, and up pops a number of online job search services, as well as links to salary surveys by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the National Education Association (NEA). Since her campus has an active AAUP chapter, Joan chooses summary tables from AAUP's *2014 Report on the Economic Status of the Profession* (Curtis & Thornton, 2014). The tables group faculty salaries by academic rank (professor, associate, assistant, instructor, lecturer, no rank, and combined) and by type of institution (doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, Associate's with rank, and Associate's without rank). Joan apparently learns the average salary for associate professors employed at master's universities is \$72,869 (AAUP, 2014). But is it? What exactly is Joan comparing?

Not including fringe benefits, the salaries Anastasia and Ray receive of \$59,711 and \$64,314 respectively, are well below that \$72,869 national average, and far less than the \$79,836 Joan receives. How can this one-year spread be so wide, and what does it mean when considering career earnings over thirty years in teaching?

Joan now begins to question the basis of the data groupings. She reads the appendix of the AAUP report to see if all three regional universities are among the 1,136 institutions of higher education that submitted data to AAUP for 2013-14. Here is where Joan discovers that she actually works at an institution defined as a "Doctoral university-Moderate Research Activity," while Anastasia and Ray work at "Master's universities."

This is when Joan learns that the institutional groupings embedded within AAUP's salary studies are framed using the "highest degrees awarded" scheme developed by Carnegie

Foundation for Advancement of Teaching's Basic Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The Carnegie Classifications, which date to Clark Kerr's work with the Carnegie Council for Higher Education Policy Studies in the 1960s and 1970s, groups institutions based largely upon their highest degrees awarded (doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, and associate's). Joan's suburban-based California State University is classified as "Doctoral Moderate Research Activity," and has an average research activity of \$5.7 million; this compares to the other two doctoral institutions of "High Research Activity" and "Highest Research Activity," which have \$39.1 million, and \$319 million, respectively. Her colleagues at doctoral flagship universities have 2-2 teaching loads, however, so Joan is surprised to see her suburban regional university grouped with research universities whose missions are very different from her own. Joan begins to notice that the logic embedded in the "highest degrees awarded" institutional groupings is reflected in other published data sets that use the Carnegie Classifications.

Until she took on this analysis, Joan did not know that in the Carnegie Classifications, some 120 doctoral and baccalaureate institutions belonging to AASCU are not "public Master's Colleges and Universities." She assumed that the AASCU's 390 distinct institutional identifiers within the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System would be included in the public Master's subcategory, a shorthand for AASCU regional universities like her CSU campus. She did not know that AASCU's 390 member institutions are spread across six different institutional subcategories in the Carnegie Classifications.

The three friends were also surprised to learn of the dramatic differences in their fringe benefits: Anastasia, Ray, and Joan earn, respectively, \$19,816, \$20,382, and \$36,679 in fringe benefits. Joan keys in the phrase "faculty fringe benefits in higher education," and the first four choices that pop up include a July 25, 2011 item entitled "The State of Fringe Benefits in Higher education" at higheredjobs.com (Freedman, 2011); a story titled "Fringe benefits: Perks make the grade for higher education," in deseretnews.com; and "Perks of Working in Higher Education" in QuintCareers.com. Joan is now getting frustrated when she sees a self-reported poll of fringe benefits from urban institutions with more than 10,000 students, a situation that does not describe her friend Ray's reality. Ray's wife died of cancer three years ago, and he raises two kids as a single parent. The quality of his university's medical and dental plans matters, as one child has had serious mental health issues that require expensive psychiatric hospitalizations and follow-up therapy. Where can Joan find comparable hard data?

Joan consults the U.S. Department of Education (USED)'s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and learns that IPEDS ended their collection of fringe benefit data with their 2010-2011 Human Resources Survey. She finds most of USED's salary and fringe benefits tables again lump public flagship and public regional university faculty together under the category "4-year public university." Flagship and regional universities have very

different missions (graduate education, research, commitment to first-generation students), and faculty workloads (2-2 instead of 4-4). Again, Joan finds studies published by the major organizations representing faculty and staff lump public universities in ways that do not capture regional universities time after time after time.

This fictitious example describes a very real problem: trying to ascertain with precision salary and fringe benefits data for our nation's public regional universities. In the age of the internet, even well-informed business officers, human resource officers and faculty do not know how differences embedded in how institutions are grouped within the Carnegie Basic Classification obfuscate what we know--and should know--about key differences in institutional types across the American higher education landscape. And sadly, with the end of data collection by the federal government in 2011-2012, Joan, Anastasia, and Ray will no longer be able to find updated data on salary *and* fringe benefits at public flagship universities, regional universities, community colleges, and non-profit private colleges and universities.

Argued here are two propositions: first, when considering total monetary compensation, to leave out fringe benefits by analyzing only salaries, misses much of the story. Second, the entire universe of public regional universities deserves analysis as a distinct sector of the American higher education landscape. To lump access-oriented regional university and flagship university data together as the U.S. Department of Education does, or to leave 120 regional universities that serve nearly 1.5 million students out of the public Master's Colleges and Universities (MCUs) sub-classification in Carnegie Basic Classification – and then to use that as a shorthand for the AASCU institutions – obfuscates and does not clarify.

This study of salaries and fringe benefits of full-time faculty at regional universities in the United States addresses these data deficiencies. We disagree with the implicit assumption embedded in the lumping of data on faculty salaries and fringe benefits across major types of public four-year universities. *There are well-known differences between public regional and flagship universities.* They differ by mission, students served, and faculty workload. To lump both together assumes sameness of mission that does not exist, and masks significant differences.

This study poses three questions:

1. What is the average monetary compensation (salaries and fringe benefits) for full-time faculty at public regional universities in the United States?
2. Are there differences in monetary compensation of full-time faculty based upon geographic type (rural, suburban, and urban) of publicly-controlled regional university?
3. Are there differences in monetary compensation of full-time faculty based upon the existence of faculty collective bargaining or lack thereof?

This paper provides a brief review of the very limited literature on the subject of monetary compensation of faculty at public regional universities is presented. This is followed by presentation of results and discussion.

Literature Review

The literature on America's regional universities is relatively small. Historically, regional universities trace their roots to teacher's colleges. In his study for the Carnegie Commission for Higher Education, *Colleges of the Forgotten Americans*, Dunham (1969) reported 231 AASCU members in 44 states, in addition to AASCU institutions in Guam, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The 231 regional universities accounted for about 10% of all colleges and universities and enrolled 21% of all students in U.S. higher education. As of August 2014, AASCU reported 420 members spread across 49 states (Wyoming has no regional universities) that belong to AASCU. Some thirty AASCU members are system offices (Arkansas, California, and Southern Illinois University systems, etc.) with no students, leaving 390 institutions with distinct identifiers within the USED/NCES/IPEDS universe.

Often overlooked when measuring the value of higher education is how it benefits both the individual and the community where the students live. According to Garmise (2014), education past high school increases individual earning power that in turn allows for more spending, which in turn stimulates the local economy. Hence, the regional universities themselves contribute to the economic growth of the community in which they are located. This was the justification for Kinkead to reclassify the 264 publicly-controlled MCUs that the 2005 Carnegie Basic Classification sub-classified as *larger*, *medium*, and *smaller* programs into a geographically-based scheme that identifies a rural, suburban, and urban differential (2009).

A fundamental objective for AASCU is to advocate for sufficient state funding and state policies to make college accessible and affordable to students. At present, policy challenges facing regional universities include finances due to the economic downturn and slow recovery, sluggish state revenues, the substitution of tuition for declining state support, and the challenge of keeping current in technology. To improve degree attainment and college completion as state aid and federal financial aid is reduced is challenging to AASCU institutions (AASCU, 2014).

Additionally, AASCU also advocates for reforming the formula used in determining funding of Pell grants and other Federal programs, effective utilization of loans over grants, helping students manage debt incurred through college, assisting member institutions' faculty in guiding students toward gainful employment, protection of the institution accreditation process, and guiding the member institutions in the data reporting process (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2014). In response to U.S. President Barack Obama's February 2009

charge to America to be the global leader in regard to higher education degree attainment by 2025 (Obama, 2009), AASCU is working to build the future for students enrolled in their institutions by improving rates of college completion. Enhanced recognition of the value of having a higher education degree has motivated stakeholders and foundations like the Lumina Foundation with its “Big Goal” and Complete College America. Accordingly, AASCU institutions supported a *Project Degree Completion* pledge (Garmise, 2014).

The literature on faculty monetary compensation at regional universities is small, and is even more limited by what has historically been left out of the Carnegie Basic Classifications. A number of published studies from the 1970s to the early 1990s found little difference between the salaries of the southern region and other parts of the country at four-year institutions. For example, Jones and Ressler (1993) compared similarly qualified faculty based on years of experience in teaching and the number of publications and found little difference across major geographic region. But few studies examined intra-state differences between rural, suburban, and urban regions served by the colleges and universities.

Kezar (2012) described two fundamentally different worlds in academia, the tenure track and the non-tenure track. Tenure-track positions require faculty involvement in various institutional reform efforts aimed to increase student success, completion, and learning. According to the United States Department of Education/IPEDS data in the fall of 2010 tenured and tenure-track faculty accounted for 47.7% of the total institution faculty (Almanac of Higher Education, 2012). According to Premeaux (2012), faculties strive toward being tenured, and consider it a protection mechanism for lifetime job security. Tenure relates to academic freedom as a mechanism to give faculty assurance to be able to speaking freely in areas of their expertise or on academic committees without fear of penalty or loss of job (Premeaux, 2012).

The severe budget cuts that coincided with the Great Recession were in fact preceded by several decades of flat state funding. The downward spiral of state funding has increased institutional pressures to hire adjunct and non-tenure track faculty, who do not require expensive fringe benefits. Over 70% of faculty in many colleges and universities are teaching as non-tenure track (June, 2012a). In one institution, there were as many as 400 part-time faculty members with 50% of 82 philosophy class sections offered in one semester being taught by adjuncts (June, 2012a). At AASCU institutions, 61% of adjuncts were teaching in 2007 compared to 48% in 1997 (June, 2009).

Nationally by 2011, the number of full-time tenured faculty increased to 282,429; however, as a percentage of total faculty, full-time tenured dropped to 16.6%. The same trend can be seen in the full-time tenure track faculty spanning from 1975 to 2011. Whereas there has been a surge in the employment of part-time, non-tenure track faculty both in number and percentage, rising

from 35.3% to 57.2% (Curtis, 2014). June (2012a, 2012b) reports that the AAUP , the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2009, 2014), and the National Education Association (NEA, 2007, 2012), the three organizations that collectively represent the lion’s share of full-time faculty in collective bargaining, are increasingly concerned about preserving faculty purchasing power and the rise of contingent labor.

Fringe benefits are an area that has long been studied in American higher education. The first major national study of fringe benefits, authored by Rainard B. Robbins for the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (1940), found just 350 college retirement plans and only 1,500 retirement plans in all of business and industry. At that time, there were no major medical or disability plans, and few with life insurance plans. Successive comprehensive studies of fringe benefits issues at four-year institutions were conducted by TIAA and with the support of the Ford Foundation about once each decade between the late 1930s and the early 1980s (Greenough, 1948; Greenough & King, 1959; Greenough & King, 1969; King & Cook, 1980). William C. Greenough was Chairman and Francis P. King was Senior Research Officer at Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association and College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF). In 1970, the American Association of Junior Colleges published King’s comprehensive study of fringe benefits for that sector (King, 1970). Thus, the 1980 study by King and Cook, *Fringe Benefits in Higher Education*, supported by TIAA and the Ford Foundation, was the only one in the series that examined all public higher education employee groups (flagship university, regional university, community college), and those working in non-profit higher education as well. The timing of the last TIAA-CREF study is relevant to the discussion below, in that when the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics migrated its Higher Education General Information Surveys to its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System in the early 1980s, it may have seemed that the federal government would permanently be taking over this data collection, obviating the need for decennial reviews by private sector organizations and associations. This was certainly the case until 2011, when IPEDS discontinued collecting fringe benefit data as part of its Human Resources Survey. It is important to note that the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, with its implications for reducing the teaching loads of adjuncts to avoid the payment of health care benefits, is another justification for examining fringe benefits for faculty at regional universities in the United States.

The Great Recession’s Impact

The Great Recession saw deep cuts in state funding for public regional universities, as well as for public flagship universities and community colleges. The situation has not improved in the five years since the Great Recession ended: Just two states—Massachusetts and Utah—appropriated funds at or above the inflation rate in each of the five years since the Great Recession ended, according to a 2016 University of Alabama Education Policy Center (EPC)

report (Katsinas, D'Amico, Friedel, Adair, Warner, & Malley, 2016). From a standpoint of administrative operations, if state funding is flat, the only alternatives are to raise tuition, cut programs and services, or both. Thus, the deepest cuts in state funding occurred in the first years *after* the end of federal stimulus funding ended.

Because funding access is a shared responsibility of the federal and state governments, the leaders of access institutions must focus. The interrelated nature is demonstrated by what is happening in Illinois, where the state's political leaders have yet to agree on a FY2016 budget nine months into the July 1 to June 30 spending year. Since 2009, Illinois's 17.8 percent enrollment plunge is the deepest by a wide margin across the fifty states, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers (2013). The impact on the state's regional universities has been dramatic: Eastern Illinois University has seen its enrollments plummet from 13,349 to 8,913, while Western Illinois has cut \$4 million in academic programs and eliminated majors in religious studies, public health, and women's studies (Rutter, 2016). State appropriations cuts mean higher tuition, which in turn means increasing dependence of students at access institutions on federal student aid.

In June 2012, the significant increases in Pell funding that date to 2007 in the last two years of the George W. Bush Administration came to an abrupt end. During the first term of the Obama Administration, the number of Pell Grant recipients grew from 6 to 9 million nationwide. A series of 21 EPC studies on Pell reveal that when federal Pell funding rises, so too does enrollment at access institutions. But when the Congress, faced with a \$2 billion shortfall in Pell funding, in June 2012 increased the eligibility restrictions, enrollment at access institutions immediately fell. A November 2012 EPC report on the impact of the new Pell eligibility restrictions in Alabama that obtained responses from all public flagship university, regional university, and community college financial aid offices in the state, projected 16,500 students lost their Pell Grants in 2012-13 year. Of the 16,500, about 11,300 attended public regional universities. Given that the total percentage of students on Pell at Alabama public universities grew from just over 30,000 in 2008-9 to 48,000 in 2011-12, a 60% increase. Alabama's access institutions are clearly more dependent upon Pell grants to cover tuition increases that are double or triple the rate of tuition (Katsinas, Bray, Koh, & Grant, 2012). The cuts in Pell, coinciding with flat or declining state funding which reached a 25-year low in 2011 (Kelderman, 2012), impact the demand side of the ledger, and are producing a "double-whammy" that will make it difficult for many institutions to hire and retain good professors (Dunn, 2013a).

Monetary Compensation: Focus on Fringe Benefits

Thanks to the deep, longstanding commitment on the part of AAUP, as well as AFT and NEA, there is no need for an extensive review of salary data here. What follows is a review of

total monetary compensation with a focus on fringe benefits and data collection issues related to isolating full-time faculty who work at regional universities in the United States.

According to Lee (2014), faculty in public institutions are averaging \$73,926 based on a 9/10 month contract, which is less than the purchasing power they had several decades when based on adjusted rate of inflation by \$261. Salaries are also different by academic disciplines, institutional needs, region, and location cost of living. Full professors in the public sector earn approximately 17% less than their colleagues at private institutions (Dunn, 2013b).

Lee (2014) commented that full-time faculty, most especially those teaching in law, business, and engineering, enjoyed higher salaries than their colleagues in other departments. Factors responsible for this include the fact that entry-level faculty are able to negotiate their salary to match or exceed their current employment pay. A survey of fine arts educators (Milbrandt & Klein, 2010) described the average salary for public, four-year master's full-time faculty as \$53,400 with \$78,700 for business, \$58,000 for education, and \$96,900 for the health sciences. On a regional comparison of faculty salaries, Lee (2014) found that faculty members in New Jersey and Delaware earn about \$40,000 more than faculty in Montana and Arkansas. In Lee's study, Arkansas, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Montana ranked the lowest in 2012-2013 reported data while New Jersey, Delaware, California, Connecticut, and Iowa ranked the highest. Out of the 50 states, the southern region states of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, ranked 31st, 33rd, and 35th, respectively, while both the eastern and western region topped the list according to Lee.

At present, it is not at all easy to assess if differences in faculty compensation at the 420 member institutions that belong to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities exist in terms of the state-assigned geographic region served (urban, suburban, or rural), faculty rank, or the existence or lack of collective bargaining. The AAUP, AFT, and NEA represent full- and part-time faculty in collective bargaining negotiations. Each organization regularly publishes studies on key issues of academic freedom, working conditions, and faculty compensation including salaries, fringe benefits, and the status of faculty collective bargaining. Most of their studies reflect activities taking place at four-year institutions, and key areas of concern include both the use of part-time faculty and compensation for full-time faculty. Despite the continuing concerns regarding the much higher percentages of part-time faculty as a percentage of the total faculty workforce, since these studies generally use federal data sets to lump AASCU institutions into a single category of *four-year universities* with other public universities (including public flagship universities), it is not possible to identify or highlight differences based upon institutional type or geographic region served. It goes without saying that there are major differences in financial revenue structures between large doctoral granting universities who are members of Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, and AASCU institutions, with

their much smaller profile of graduate education offerings. Further, it is not currently possible using existing federal datasets to highlight differences by the state-assigned geographic region served (urban, suburban, or rural).

Two recent studies within the community college sector have analyzed federal faculty compensation data sets to identify differences based upon geography and collective bargaining. Maldonado (2006) conducted a national analysis of federally-reported faculty compensation (salaries and fringe benefits) for community colleges, analyzing federal data for Fiscal Year 2003 using a classification scheme based upon state-assigned geographic region served (urban, suburban, and rural). Maldonado also examined community colleges in those states with and without the presence of collective bargaining agreements, using the 1996 Directory of Collective Bargaining obtained from the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions. Finally, Maldonado disaggregated the data according to those 25 states that have and those 25 states that lack substantial local funding exceeding 10% of total revenue (in most of these states, it approaches zero). The author found stark differences in full-time faculty salaries by geographic region served: Faculty in 2002-2003 at Rural-Small community colleges that received no substantial local funding without collective bargaining making \$55,035 in per year in salaries and fringe benefits, compared to an average of \$70,584 for faculty teaching at suburban community colleges with local funding and collective bargaining. In an update of Maldonado's work, Mayhall, Katsinas, and Bray (2015) analyzed IPEDS' Human Resources Survey data and found total monetary compensation for the 122,799 full-time faculty in 2010-2011 at 1,028 rural, suburban, and urban community colleges was \$81,307. But there were major differences across those with and without collective bargaining and those working at community colleges that have access to local tax appropriations and those who do not. The highest paid were Suburban-Single Campus community college full-time faculty with collective bargaining and local appropriations (\$95,457), while the lowest paid were those at Rural-Small community colleges without collective bargaining and with local tax appropriations (\$61,090) (Mayhall, Katsinas, & Bray, 2015). We wondered if similar differences by geographic region served and with the presence of collective bargaining would be obtained for another sector that, like community colleges, are highly committed to place-based access.

According to the 2012 *Directory of U.S. Faculty Contracts and Bargaining Agents in Institutions of Higher Education* (hereafter, *Directory*) published by the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, there are 310,279 full-time faculty and some professional staff employed at public four-year colleges and universities as of Fall 2009, of whom 92,884 or about 30% bargain collectively (Berry & Savarese, 2012, p. 14). As Wickens (2008) notes, about a third of all faculty at four-year universities collectively bargain for salaries and fringe benefits, and their salaries are higher.

In their review of the Current Population Survey and the Union Membership and Coverage Data Base created by Hirsch and Macpherson (2013), nearly 4 million of the 12,718,235 educational services employees, or 31%, are covered by collective bargaining. As Sproul, Bucklew, and Houghton note, "...higher education is something of a 'sleeping giant' within the current landscape of the labor movement. Despite such dramatic and rapid shifts, the rise of academic collective bargaining has not been especially well documented." (2014, p. 2).

The 2012 *Directory* found 368,473 faculty, including unidentified faculty and a small number of full-time non-tenure line faculty, are represented by a recognized collective bargaining agent. These faculty are represented by 639 separate bargaining units distributed across 519 institutions or higher education systems serving 1,174 campuses. They "are heavily concentrated in public institutions; less than 7% percent are employed by private colleges or universities...Organized faculty are more evenly divided across institution type (two- or four-year institutions). Specifically, 43.4% of organized faculty are employed at two-year institutions relative to 32.7% at four-year institutions; the other 17.4% are located in public systems that have both two- and four-year components" (2012, p. ix). Among unionized faculty, the AAUP, AFT, and NEA individually or collectively represent nearly 80% (Berry & Savarese, 2012).

In the forward to the last in the TIAA-CREF-funded studies of fringe benefits for non-profit higher education by King and Cook (1980), former TIAA-CREF Chairman Greenough observed the progress made in his lifetime:

Incredible! Ninety-nine point nine percent of America's faculty members and administrators are at colleges and universities with retirement plans. Nearly as many institutions have pensions for all staff members. Yet in business and industry, fewer than half of the employees have any employer pensions other than Social Security.

Coverages for the other great threats to income—medical expenses, disability, and death—are almost as widespread as are retirement plans in the college world. This is a record well ahead of business and industry. (Greenough, 1979 in King & Cook, 1980, p. xi)

The battles won by previous generations are only prelude to our current times. As our nation apparently moves from defined benefits to individual planning for retirement, it remains to be seen how these institutional differences may play out. Some states, like Wisconsin, are eroding long-assumed public employee retirement benefits (Saltzman, 2012). As Conley points out in various writings, eroding retirement and benefits is the wrong response to the fiscal crisis of the Great Recession (Conley, 2009; Conley, 2012; Conley & Finkelstein, 2013). It will be more important than before to have accurate data that can be localized to the place-based reality of America's 390 regional colleges and universities.

Methodology

This study analyzed faculty compensation at AASCU-member institutions by pilot testing a geographically-based modification of the publicly-controlled regional universities in the United States. The starting point was Kinkead's 2009 geographic classification of AASCU member regional universities that were classified as Larger Program, Medium Program, and Small Program public Master's Colleges and Universities sector included in the 2005 and 2010 Carnegie Basic Classification. The relative size was determined by Carnegie to be based upon the numbers of master's degrees awarded. We believe geography trumps numbers of degrees awarded both at the doctoral and baccalaureate levels. To this, the 71 "missing" doctoral and 69 regional universities in the 2010 Carnegie Basic Classification that are AASCU members have been re-classified geographically and by enrollment size by the University of Alabama's Education Policy Center to produce seven categories: Rural-Small, Rural-Medium, Rural-Large, Suburban-Small, Suburban-Large, Urban-Small, and Urban-Large. This allows for analysis of differences in the monetary compensation paid across the entire universe of full-time faculty at the public regional universities institutions charged with providing access and success to 5 million students nationwide, and to assess if differences exist geographically and by the presence or lack of collective bargaining.

This study deployed the latest available listing of institutions with and without faculty collective bargaining from the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions (NCSCBHEP) to assess faculty compensation at AASCU institutions. Faculty salary and benefits on academic ranks were also evaluated in 30 states that permit collective bargaining and the 20 states with restrictions on collective bargaining. It must be noted that the U.S. Department of Education ceased the collection of fringe benefits data after 2010-2011; therefore, the year 2010-2011 was analyzed in this study.

It is important to note several limitations. First, no part-time faculty, administrative – professional personnel, or graduate students are included. Second, while many AASCU institutions award the doctoral degrees, most that do are classified by Carnegie as "Doctoral Granting." The average annual research and development expenditures in 2009 for the three levels of doctoral granting institutions were \$274 million, \$43.4 million, and \$3.3 million, respectively. This means that in terms of research expenditures, the AASCU-member doctoral institutions are more like their public Master's counterparts than the other two types of doctoral-granting universities in the Carnegie Basic Classification universe.

This study examined faculty salaries and fringe benefits only for full-time faculty using IPEDS' Human Resource Survey data for those working at public regional universities. The study then presented data for faculty salaries and fringe benefits by geographic area served and

Table 1

States With and Without Collective Bargaining

State	Collective Bargaining	State	No Collective Bargaining
Alaska	X	Alabama	X
California	X	Arizona	X
Connecticut	X	Arkansas	X
Delaware	X	Colorado	X
Florida	X	Georgia	X
Illinois	X	Hawaii	X
Iowa	X	Idaho	X
Kansas	X	Indiana	X
Maine	X	Kentucky	X
Maryland	X	Louisiana	X
Massachusetts	X	Mississippi	X
Michigan	X	North Carolina	X
Minnesota	X	North Dakota	X
Missouri	X	Oklahoma	X
Montana	X	South Carolina	X
Nebraska	X	Tennessee	X
Nevada	X	Texas	X
New Hampshire	X	Utah	X
New Jersey	X	Virginia	X
New Mexico	X	West Virginia	X
New York	X	Wyoming	X
Ohio	X		
Oregon	X		
Pennsylvania	X		
Rhode Island	X		
South Dakota	X		
Vermont	X		
Washington	X		
Wisconsin	X		
Total	30	Total	20
<i>Source:</i> Berry, J., & Savarese, M. (2012). Directory of U.S. faculty contacts and bargaining agents in institutions of higher education. New York, NY: National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions.			

the presence or non-presence of collective bargaining. In analyzing geographic differences, a modification of the 2010 Carnegie Basic Classification scheme was used. To analyze differences

in salaries and fringe benefits for faculty employed at institutions with collective bargaining, the list of 30 states with and 20 states without collective bargaining was obtained from the *Directory of U.S. Faculty Contracts and Bargaining Agents in Institutions of Higher Education* from the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Profession. The list was published in 2012 and revised in 2015.

Kinthead's (2009) study was the first to propose a geographic classification of Master's Colleges and Universities (MCUs). In the 2010 Carnegie Basic Classification, MCUs included three types: smaller, medium, and larger programs. In Katsinas' modified reclassification base on geographic type, universities are classified as urban or suburban if their physical addresses provided to the USED/NCES/IPEDS are within metropolitan areas of at least 500,000 people. If the physical address is within the central cities, the university is classified as urban, and if in the metropolitan area but outside the central city, it is classified as a suburban. All universities outside of metropolitan areas with populations of at least 500,000 people are classified as rural. This leaves about 261 institutions in public regional universities as rural; unduplicated headcount enrollments are used to classify rural as small (under 2,500 students), medium (between 2,500 and 7,500 students), and large (over 7,500 students). This study pilot-tested the "Carnegie Modified" classification developed by Katsinas (2016, forthcoming) by presenting salary and benefits data for full-time faculty at the seven geographic types of publicly controlled U.S. access universities. *Results*

Table 2 presents a numerical and percentage distribution of the 390 public regional universities within and across each of the seven geographic types. Table 3 is a companion table that shows how 127,221 full-time faculty are distributed across America's 390 regional universities. Both Tables 2 and 3 present a distribution based upon geography and the existence or lack of collective bargaining. This is followed by Tables 4 and 5, which present data on salaries and fringe benefits, respectively, in the same manner as Tables 2 and 3. This is followed by a presentation of total monetary compensation (Table 5).

Table 2 shows the geographic distribution of the 390 public regional universities in the United States. Most public regional universities – 261 or 67% - are rural-based, while 55 are suburban, and 74 are urban. Across the seven geographic types of institutions, 49 are classified as Rural-Small, 90 as Rural-Medium, and 122 are Rural-Large, while 12 are classified as Suburban-Small and 42 as Suburban -Large, and 21 are classified Urban-Small and 74 Urban-Large. This strong rural-tilt reflects the heritage of regional universities as place-based teacher-training institutions, geographically spread to serve all of the people of their states (thus, the

Table 2

Public Regional Universities with & without Collective Bargaining by Type, 2010-11

	Institutions (Numbers)		
	All Public Regional Universities	With Collective Bargaining	Without Collective Bargaining
Rural Small	49	32	17
Rural Medium	90	40	50
Rural Large	122	62	60
Rural Average	261	134	127
Suburban Smaller	13	9	4
Suburban Larger	42	32	10
Suburban Average	55	41	14
Urban Smaller	21	13	8
Urban Large	53	31	22
Urban Average	74	44	30
Average, All	390	219	171
% <u>Within</u> each geographic type			
Rural Small	100	65	35
Rural Medium	100	44	56
Rural Large	100	51	49
Rural Average	100	51	49
Suburban Smaller	100	69	31
Suburban Larger	100	76	24
Suburban Average	100	75	25
Urban Smaller	100	62	38
Urban Large	100	58	42
Urban Average	100	59	41
Average, All	100	56	44
% <u>Across</u> each geographic type			
Rural Small	13	15	10
Rural Medium	23	18	29
Rural Large	31	28	35
Rural Average	67	61	74
Suburban Smaller	3	4	2
Suburban Larger	11	15	6
Suburban Average	14	19	8
Urban Smaller	5	6	5
Urban Large	14	14	13
Urban Average	19	20	18
Total	100	100	100

Source: Analysis of 2012 Directory of Collective Bargaining, NCSCBHEP and IPEDS data by the Education Policy Center, College of Education, The University of Alabama, 2016.

nomenclature sometimes used of “directional” universities). Of the 390 institutions, 67% are rural, 14% are suburban, and 19% are urban.

Table 2 also shows that among the 390 public universities, 219 (56%) have collective bargaining, and 171 (44%) do not. There are differences in the presence of collective bargaining *within* the major geographic types of public regional universities. Three of four suburban regional universities have collective bargaining, compared to about 6 in 10 urban regional universities. In contrast, the ratio is nearly an even 50-50 for the rural sector, but even here, there are differences across the seven geographic types. In terms highest to lowest ranked by percentage across the 7 geographic types of public regional universities with collective bargaining: (1) Suburban-Large, (2) Suburban-Small, (3) Rural-Small, (4) Urban-Small, (5) Urban-Large, (6) Rural-Large, and (7) Rural-Medium. A majority in 5 of the 7 regional subtypes have collective bargaining. The surprising finding that a higher percentage of the 49 Rural-Small regional universities have collective bargaining than either urban institutional sub-category speaks to the need for a place-based classification scheme that accurately captures reality.

Table 3 shows how the 127,221 full-time faculty reported to IPEDS are distributed within and across each of the seven geographic institutional sub-types, with and without the presence of collective bargaining. Given where the institutions are located (Table 2), it is not surprising to find that the majority of full-time faculty at public regional universities, 71,863 are employed at rural, 21,325 at suburban, and 34,034 at urban regional universities, or 56%, 17%, and 27%, respectively. A large majority – 74,468 – work at the 219 regional universities with collective bargaining, and 52,754 at the 171 without, or 63% and 37%, respectively. From highest to lowest percentage of full-time faculty employed at regional universities with collective bargaining across the 7 geographic types, they are ranked as follows: (1) Suburban-Small and Suburban-Large (tie), (3) Urban-Large, (4) Rural-Small, (5) Urban-Small, (6) Rural-Large, and (7) Rural-Medium. A majority of institutions in 5 of the 7 regional university subtypes have collective bargaining, one is tied, and in one subcategory, Rural Large, the majority of full-time faculty work at public regional universities that do not have collective bargaining.

Space limitations do not allow the presentation of data showing the total financial outlays within and across each of the seven geographic types for salaries and fringe benefits, respectively. The total monetary compensation paid to the 127,221 full-time faculty in 2010-2011 was \$11,753,399,951. Of this total, \$9,015,368,914 (or 75%) came in the form of salaries and \$2,738,031,037 (or 25%) in form of fringe benefits.

Tables 4 and 5 show the average salaries and average fringe benefits within and across each of the seven geographic subtypes. Table 4 shows that the average annual salary for 127,222 FT faculty in FY2011 was \$70,864. The average salary received by full-time faculty are ranked

Table 3

*Full-Time Faculty at Public Regional Universities
and the presence of collective bargaining, in numbers, 2010-11*

Full-Time Faculty			
	Number	<u>With</u> Collective Bargaining	<u>Without</u> Collective Bargaining
Rural Small	5,386	3,372	2,014
Rural Medium	15,872	8,066	7,806
Rural Large	50,605	25,764	24,841
Rural Average	71,863	37,202	34,661
Suburban Smaller	2,441	1,767	674
Suburban Larger	18,884	13,635	5,249
Suburban Average	21,325	15,402	5,923
Urban Smaller	4,957	2,837	2,120
Urban Large	29,077	19,027	10,050
Urban Average	34,034	21,864	12,170
Total, All	127,222	74,468	52,754
% <u>Within</u> each geographic type			
Rural Small	100	63	37
Rural Medium	100	51	49
Rural Large	100	51	49
Rural Average	100	52	48
Suburban Smaller	100	72	28
Suburban Larger	100	72	28
Suburban Average	100	72	28
Urban Smaller	100	57	43
Urban Large	100	65	35
Urban Average	100	64	36
Average, All	100	63	37
% <u>Across</u> each geographic type			
Rural Small	4	5	4
Rural Medium	12	11	11
Rural Large	40	35	47
Rural Average	56	50	66
Suburban Smaller	2	2	1
Suburban Larger	15	18	10
Suburban Average	17	21	11
Urban Smaller	4	4	4
Urban Large	23	26	19
Urban Average	27	29	23
Average, Total	100	100	100
<i>Source: Analysis of 2012 Directory of Collective Bargaining, NCSCBHEP and IPEDS data by the Education Policy Center, College of Education, The University of Alabama, 2016.</i>			

across the seven geographic types as follows: (1) Urban-Large, (2) Suburban-Small, (3) Suburban-Large, (4) Urban-Small, (5) Rural-Large, (6) Rural-Small, and (7) Rural-Medium. Full-time faculty employed by Urban-Large regional universities are paid the highest (\$77,940), while those employed at Rural-Medium are lowest paid (\$60,824). This means that faculty at Urban-Large regional universities who do essentially the same work, ostensibly with the same workload (4-4), are paid more than a quarter of their total salary more than some of their rural counterparts. The significant spread of \$17,116 across the seven institutional types demonstrates again how averages can mask large differences across the state-assigned geographic regions served by our nation's public regional universities.

Table 4

Average Salaries of Full-time at Public Regional Universities, 2010-2011: The impact of Collective Bargaining

	Colleges	Full-Time Faculty				Average Salaries of Full-Time Faculty...				
		Number	Total	With CB	Without CB	All	With CB	Without CB	Difference	
									Dollars	%
Rural Small	49	5,386	100	63	37	\$62,622	\$64,737	\$59,079	\$5,658	9
Rural Medium	90	15,872	100	51	49	\$60,824	\$61,900	\$59,711	\$2,189	4
Rural Large	122	50,605	100	51	49	\$69,074	\$70,383	\$67,482	\$2,901	4
Rural Average	261	71,863	100	52	48	\$64,173	\$65,673	\$62,091	\$3,583	5
Suburban Smaller	13	2,441	100	72	28	\$74,944	\$79,018	\$64,314	\$14,704	19
Suburban Larger	42	18,884	100	72	28	\$74,687	\$79,836	\$61,339	\$18,497	23
Suburban Average	55	21,325	100	72	28	\$74,816	\$79,427	\$62,827	\$16,601	21
Urban Smaller	21	4,957	100	57	43	\$72,162	\$70,704	\$53,116	\$17,588	25
Urban Large	53	29,077	100	65	35	\$77,940	\$83,308	\$75,105	\$8,203	10
Urban Average	74	34,034	100	64	36	\$75,051	\$77,006	\$64,111	\$12,896	17
Totals/Averages	390	127,221	100	63	37	\$71,347	\$74,035	\$63,009	\$11,026	15

Source: Analysis of 2012 Directory of Collective Bargaining, NCSCBHEP and IPEDS data by the Education Policy Center, College of Education, University of Alabama, 2016.

Table 4 also reveals the striking one-year impact of the presence of faculty collective bargaining on salaries. The 74,468 full-time faculty employed at the 261 public regional universities with collective bargaining receive on average \$74,035 in salaries, compared to \$63,009 for the 52,754 full-time faculty who work at the 171 regional universities without. This one-year difference is \$11,026. Across the seven geographic institutional types, the ranking of one-year difference is as follows: (1) Suburban-Large (\$18,497), (2) Urban-Small (\$17,588), (3) Suburban Small (\$14,704), (4) Urban-Large (\$8,203), (4) Rural-Small (\$5,658), Rural-Large (\$2,901) and (7) Rural-Medium (\$2,189). The spread between average annual salary of full-time faculty with and without collective bargaining ranges from under \$3,000 in FY2011 at Rural Medium and Rural Large regional universities, to \$18,497 at Suburban Large and \$17,588 at Urban Small. Again, averages even within the 261 public universities with collective bargaining mask significant differences across regional university types.

Fringe benefits are a critically important part of the total monetary compensation package for public regional university employees. Space considerations do not permit a formal presentation of which benefits faculty at which types of public regional universities receive or do not receive. Highlights are presented here.

The seven most common fringe benefits offered the 390 at U.S. public regional universities are medical/dental plans, retirement plans, social security, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, group life insurance, and guaranteed disability insurance. Medical/dental plans, retirement plans, and social security account for 83% of the total national fringe benefit outlay (39%, 35%, and 22%, respectively). The most common fringe benefit for full-time faculty was medical/dental plans, which were offered at 385 of 390 (or 99%) of public regional universities. Only five institutions did not offer medical/dental plans. Next to medical/dental plans, the most commonly offered fringe benefits were social security plans at 94%, group life insurance at 76%, retirement plans at 77%, and unemployment compensation at 76% (see Table 15). By public regional university type, rural-serving institutions have a larger percentage offering these benefits than suburban and urban institutions. A total of 106,135, or 83%, of the 127,221 full-time faculty employed at public regional universities in 2010-2011 were covered by medical/dental plans. A total of 21,086, or 17%, were uncovered (it is likely that the majority of these are classified as lecturers and instructors within IPEDS). Reasons for not being covered may include possessing coverage from a previous job, coverage via a spouse's insurance coverage, or the lack of a supplement to cover such employee medical costs (the year for which IPEDS data collected was just prior to implementation of the federal Affordable Healthcare Act).

As Table 5 shows, the average annual fringe benefits for the 127,222 full-time faculty employed at America's 390 public regional universities was \$25,829 in FY2011. The average expenditure for fringe benefits for the 74,468 faculty *with* collective bargaining was \$31,684, while the average for the 52,754 faculty *without* was \$21,700. Across the seven geographic institutional types, the one year spread for those faculty with collective bargaining is as follows: Urban-Large, Suburban-Large, Suburban-Small, Urban-Small, Rural-Small, Rural-Large, and Rural-Medium. Faculty at Urban-Large regional universities receive the highest annual average level of fringe benefits (\$26,684), while those employed at Rural-Medium regional universities receive the lowest (\$23,896). Again, the one-year impact of collective bargaining was substantial, at \$9,984. The spread of the one-year difference between average fringe benefits received by full-time faculty with and without collective bargaining by type ranged from a low of 1,986 at Rural Large regional universities, about \$8,000 for Rural-Small and Rural-Medium, \$12,840 at Urban-Large, and a whopping \$16,089 at Suburban- Large regional universities. Across all types of public regional universities, and within the 261 institutions with collective bargaining, averages can mask large differences across geographic types.

Table 5

*Average Fringe Benefits of Full-time at Public Regional Universities, 2010-2011:
The impact of Collective Bargaining*

	Colleges	Full-Time Faculty	ALL	With Collective Bargaining	Without Collective Bargaining	Difference (expressed in)	
						Dollars	%
Rural Small	49	5,386	\$25,209	\$26,828	\$18,011	\$8,817	33
Rural Medium	90	15,872	\$23,896	\$27,321	\$19,816	\$7,505	27
Rural Large	122	50,605	\$25,159	\$26,052	\$24,066	\$1,986	8
Rural Average	261	71,863	\$24,755	\$26,734	\$20,631	\$6,103	23
Suburban Smaller	13	2,438	\$26,271	\$34,172	\$20,382	\$13,790	40
Suburban Larger	42	18,886	\$26,679	\$39,679	\$23,590	\$16,089	41
Suburban Average	55	21,324	\$26,475	\$36,926	\$21,986	\$14,940	40
Urban Smaller	21	4,957	\$25,832	\$28,601	\$23,622	\$4,979	17
Urban Large	53	29,077	\$26,684	\$34,185	\$21,345	\$12,840	38
Urban Average	74	34,034	\$26,258	\$31,393	\$22,484	\$8,910	28
Total Average	390	127,221	\$25,829	\$31,684	\$21,700	\$9,984	32

Table 6 combines the data presented in Tables 4 and 5, and shows that the total average monetary compensation for the 127,222 full-time faculty employed by America's 390 public regional universities was \$96,505 in FY2011. The ranking across the seven geographic types is as follows: Urban-Large, Suburban-Large, Suburban-Single, Urban-Single, Rural-Large, Rural-Small, and Rural-Medium. The 29,077 full-time faculty employed by the 53 Urban-Large regional universities are the highest paid, at \$101,309, while the 15,872 full-time faculty employed by the 90 Rural Medium regional universities are paid the lowest, at \$84,720.

Table 6 also shows a significant one-year impact of collective bargaining on average total monetary compensation of full-time faculty. The 74,468 full-time faculty working under collective bargaining agreements received on average \$105,720 in total monetary compensation, while the 52,754 faculty not working under collective bargaining agreements received \$84,709. The one-year difference in average total monetary compensation across all seven types of public regional universities in the United States is \$21,010. The spread across all seven geographic types was \$21,010; from a low of \$4,887 at Rural-Large regional universities (rurals were lower paid at \$9,694 at Rural-Mediums, and \$14,475 at Rural-Large), and a high of \$34,586 at Suburban Large regional universities. The ranking of the spread of one-year differences in average total monetary compensation within the geographic classifications of the 261 regional universities with collective bargaining agreements is as follows: (1) Suburban-Large, (2) Suburban-Single, (3) Urban-Small, (4) Urban-Large, (5) Rural-Small, (6) Rural-Medium, and (7) Rural-Large. Averages can mask large differences in average total monetary compensation across all types of public regional universities, and within the 261 with collective bargaining as well.

Table 6

The Impact of Collective Bargaining Over Time for Full-Time Faculty at U.S. Public Regional Universities, 2010-11

	ALL	With Collective Bargaining	Without Collective Bargaining	annual average difference expressed in		annual average x 30 years (in dollars)
				Dollars	%	
Rural Small	\$87,831	\$91,565	\$77,090	\$14,475	16	\$434,250
Rural Medium	\$84,720	\$89,221	\$79,527	\$9,694	11	\$290,820
Rural Large	\$94,233	\$96,435	\$91,548	\$4,887	5	\$146,610
Rural Average	\$88,931	\$92,407	\$82,722	\$9,685	10	\$290,550
Suburban Smaller	\$101,215	\$113,190	\$84,696	\$28,494	25	\$854,820
Suburban Larger	\$101,366	\$119,515	\$84,929	\$34,586	29	\$1,037,580
Suburban Average	\$101,253	\$116,353	\$84,813	\$31,540	27	\$946,200
Urban Smaller	\$97,994	\$99,305	\$76,738	\$22,567	23	\$677,010
Urban Large	\$104,624	\$117,493	\$96,450	\$21,043	18	\$631,290
Urban Average	\$101,309	\$108,399	\$86,594	\$21,805	20	\$654,150
All	\$97,174	\$105,720	\$84,709	\$21,010	20	\$630,300

Source: Analysis of 2012 Directory of Collective Bargaining, NCSCBHEP and IPEDS data by the Education Policy Center, College of Education, The University of Alabama, 2016.

Discussion

This paper provided a pilot test of a proposed classification of publicly-controlled regional universities in the United States. At present, the Basic Classification published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching leaves out 120 regional universities that are member institutions of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) from its public Master's Colleges and Universities (MCUs) category. This includes 71 AASCU members that are listed as doctoral universities like California State University-Fullerton, and 69 AASCU members that are listed as Baccalaureate Institutions (the Baccalaureate category includes community colleges that award baccalaureate degrees). These 120 regional universities serve about 1.4 million students. In the Carnegie Basic universe, regional universities are spread across six separate categories. Thus, when the American Association of University Professors uses public MCUs as a shorthand for AASCU members in their annual salary studies, or the Delta Cost Project uses public MCUs in their analysis of college and university revenues and expenditures, much precision is lost.

Further, the basic commitment to place is lost. One of AASCU's signature programs over the past 15 years is "*Stewardship of Place*." That the organization representing America's 390 regional universities explicitly recognizes commitment to improving the place where their member institutions reside as fundamental strongly suggests the need for a better way to categorize institutions. Kinkead (2009) applied the geographically based Associate's Colleges

classifications developed for the Carnegie Foundation by Katsinas, Lacey, and Hardy to the public MCUs in the Carnegie Basic Classification (founding AASCU President Allan Oster sat on Kinkead's dissertation committee). We extend this analysis here by addressing a key recommendation Kinkead offered, to include the "missing" AASCU members that are not classified by Carnegie Basic as public MCUs. The goal, as the late Clark Kerr wrote to the lead author of this study, was "to gain greater precision" in research, practice, and policy. Related to this, we offer four recommendations for future research:

First, data should be disaggregated across four-year universities by mission. It no longer makes sense to publish salary data under the category "four-year universities" that merge institutions with such divergent missions as public regional and flagship universities have. The standard teaching workload for full-time faculty at regional universities is 4-4 (fall and spring semesters), while the standard teaching workload at public flagship universities is 2-2, reflecting their commitment to research. Publication of such data obfuscates rather than clarifies. It is time for national organizations such as the AAUP, AFT, and NEA, as well as NACUBO, Delta Cost Project, and NCSCBHEP to disaggregate data in a manner that formally recognizes these very clear, well-known institutional differences.

Second, data for the regional university sector should be disaggregated geographically. Just as the access-mission community college sector is better understood through a classification scheme that recognizes geographically-based differences, so too can a classification scheme for regional universities better represent their longstanding institutional commitments to place. A more precise classification scheme of regional universities is further justified given the predominant usage of peers for institutional improvement purposes embedded in accreditation and degree completion improvement efforts. Picking peer institutions explicitly assumes recognizing place-based differences, which institutional actors have been doing for many years now.

Third, the presence of collective bargaining matters. Career earnings differences over a thirty year career, adjusted for inflation, can easily exceed \$1 million. Such differences in career earners cannot be explained by differences in property values alone.

Fourth, rural institutions need focus. In high poverty regions, rural regional universities are challenged, with state budget cuts, to recruit and retain talented faculty. A soon-to-be published Education Policy Center study will show that among 114 chief academic officers at regional universities, finding and retaining STEM faculty and minority faculty represent major challenges. It is interesting that such a high proportion of Rural-Small regional universities have collective bargaining. The question begs: Are there different outcomes at the institutions with as compared to those without?

In conclusion, the natural outcome following the choice by the U.S. Department of Education to discontinue collection of fringe benefits data in their 2012 Human Resources Survey is that interested parties are on their own. Boards of trustees, business officers, human resource officers, and faculty face a situation very much similar what existed prior to the creation of IPEDS in 1985/6, when this critical data need was met by private membership organizations and associations. The National Association of College and University Business Officers, the College and University Personnel Association, and expert business and human resource officers together comprehensively studied fringe benefits at public and non-profit private institutions. Studies written by TIAA staff or funded by TIAA and the Ford Foundation were conducted about once every ten years between the 1930s and 1970s. The last in this series of studies was conducted by King and Cooke in 1980. With the abandonment of this function by the U.S. Department of Education, interested parties are on their own; the need for good data on the part of trustees, institutional leaders, and faculty to construct good compensation plans was in no way obviated by the choice by USED to discontinue data collection.

The involvement of expert business officers and human resource officers in the past TIAA-supported fringe benefit/compensation studies cannot be understated. Related to this, we offer the cautionary note that total dollars spent does not necessarily equate with better fringe benefits. For example, more “bang for the buck” may be obtained by spreading the purchase of key fringe benefits, such as medical and dental plans, group life insurance, etc., across larger pools and groups. In this regard, an acceptable classification scheme of regional universities is only a starting place for more precise and useful analysis. A classification scheme to accurately capture the lived experience of full-time faculty at regional universities is also the starting point for the needed research on recruiting and retaining faculty in high wage/high demand science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and information technology fields; secondary analysis of issues related to recruiting and retaining faculty at regional universities serving high poverty and/or sparsely populated rural regions. It is also a starting point, along with the companion geographic classification of community colleges, to look at the vital area of transfer, articulation, and degrees awarded across community colleges and the institutions to which they most commonly transfer, our nation’s 390 regional universities.

Telling the story better has become an imperative for public higher education faculty, administrators, and boards. The Education Policy Center’s January 2016 review of five years of annual National Access and Finance Surveys of National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges members reveals (1) the toughest year since the Great Recession began (FY2008) was FY2012, when the federal stimulus funds (as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) ran out; and (2) the competition for scarce state funds is as tough now as it has ever been, despite the economic recovery to date. In 2011 and again in 2014, we asked if

“Enrollments had been capped at some or all of my state’s public flagship universities,” to which 12 were in agreement in 2011 and 11 were in agreement in 2014, including respondents from California, Florida, and Texas. In 2014, respondents from six states were in agreement that enrollments had been capped at some or all of the regional universities in their states, including California. When we asked in 2014, “To increase the numbers of adults with college degrees and first-certificates, a long-term plan exists in my state to finance the needed operating budgets,” responses from just 11 states indicated “strongly agree” or “agree,” 5 were neutral, and 33 indicated “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” Similar data were found for long-term capital budgets as well (Katsinas, Shedd, Koh, Malley, Adair, D’Amico, and & Friedel, 2015, p. 3). For public higher education to advance and not retreat in a tough state legislative budget environment requires precise localized data to tell the “bigger picture.”

This paper has presented a new frame to tell the regional university story, by disaggregating published data on “4-year universities” into regional universities and flagship universities, in a manner already completed for the Associate’s Colleges/community colleges sector. The geographically-based classification scheme allows capturing the commitment to rural, suburban, and urban places, and is a tool to look at a host of issues including but not limited to (a) the impact of state appropriations cuts on different types of access institutions, (b) career earnings by academic area of full-time faculty adjusted for inflation, (c) degrees awarded by institution type, (d) the relationship, if any, between lower faculty-to-student ratios, institutional mission, and higher rates of college degree completion, to name just a few of the possibilities. To tell the access story requires new frames to better localize the data. As the 1919 Bulletin of the American Association of Community Colleges noted when announcing its new Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession (Committee Z), “. . . While the problem is primarily a local one, and must be dealt with by local efforts, the Association can doubtless render some valuable aid to these efforts by calling general attention to the gravity of the situation, and by collecting information which will be of use to local committees” (AAUP, 1919, p.1).

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