

Annual Faculty Salary Report, 2018-2019¹

Committee on Priorities and Resources

Spring 2019

I. Charge

The Faculty Handbook charges the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) to report each year to the Faculty on the status of Amherst faculty salaries and compensation.² Since the late 1970s, the annual report has compared salaries and compensation at Amherst with those at 12 other colleges and universities known as the Traditional Group. Since 2003-04, the CPR has also compared salaries and compensation with a broader group of colleges and universities that includes the original 12 plus an additional 18 institutions; this is the New Group.³ For this report (Spring 2018) the CPR has compared salaries and cost of living with the redefined group of 12 liberal arts colleges following procedures established in the Spring 2016 report and also used in the Spring 2017 report. The comparative data on average salaries by rank are provided by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

This spring, the AAUP data was not available until May 21, 2019, after the academic year ended. Therefore this report is a **preliminary** analysis of the salary data, with the intention of the CPR carrying out a more careful examination in Fall 2019.

II. Background

Since the 1970s the CPR has compared faculty salaries with peer institutions. A Traditional Group was used for many years. In 2003, the Board of Trustees and the Administration asked the CPR to create a New Group to better define salary benchmarks that the faculty saw as comparable. However, concern over the potential impact of high-salary professional schools that are specific to several universities in the larger New Group led to the formation of a Liberal Arts group in 2014, to allow direct comparisons with Liberal Arts peer institutions. In 2016, the CPR adopted a Liberal Arts group of 12 peers for faculty salary benchmarking, choosing the institutions we regard as peer elite liberal arts colleges and without prior consideration of salary levels: Amherst, Bowdoin, Carleton, Davidson, Haverford, Middlebury, Pomona, Smith, Swarthmore, Vassar, Wellesley, and Williams.

¹ This report is submitted by the voting members of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). We would like to thank the colleagues who assisted in compiling data, especially Monique Bourgeois Miller and Jesse Barba in the Institutional Research office. We thank the *ex officio* CPR members, including Thomas Dwyer, Catherine Epstein, Steven Hegarty, Maria-Judith Rodriguez, and Kevin Weinman.

² Recent reports and minutes from CPR meetings are available on the Dean of the Faculty's website.

³ CPR created the New Group in 2005; the process is described in the CPR's Amherst College Institutional Comparison Group Report of 2005. The CPR, in creating this New Group, was responding to a request from the Administration and the Board of Trustees to choose a definitive comparison group.

Previously, the committee compared Amherst College salaries with a “traditional group” group of research universities and liberal arts colleges. While the salary analysis in this report no longer provides a condensed comparison with the traditional group, we will provide an online appendix with tables that list the average salaries for the traditional group. This report will use the new benchmark set by the CPR in Spring 2016 that presents normalized salaries in a quartile system by rank, and it will also compare salaries with a cost of living adjustment.

Data Resources and Limitations:

We rely primarily on salary data compiled by the AAUP (American Association of University Professors). These tend to be crude measures of the total compensation (which include some, but not all, benefits in various degrees across institutions), and they do not reflect regional or geographical differences in the cost of living. Moreover, salary information for Amherst faculty and that compiled by the AAUP includes only tenure-line faculty who are full-time teachers; faculty with partial administrative roles or with reduced teaching loads due to phased retirement or other factors are not included in this report.

Within the salary data there are several potential sources of bias. One such bias results from the fact that the AAUP does not report by years-in-rank or years-in-service, so we cannot take those into account when making salary comparisons. An institution with a large cohort of professors serving for many years in a particular rank will have a larger average salary at that rank than an institution with proportionally more recently-promoted professors. In 1997-98 the Amherst Administration conducted a confidential time-in-rank and salary survey and it concluded that demographic differences did not have a significant effect on Amherst’s rankings in the Traditional Group. However, in recent years the college has experienced significant turnover and these shifts now do appear to contribute to changes in the current rankings, notably a drop in the average salary of full professors in 2012-13.

For more information about changes in year-in-rank at Amherst, see the graphs, *Average Number of Year in Rank for Full-time, Tenure-line Faculty (2009-2018)* and *5 Year Projection (2019-2024)* and *Distribution of Years in Rank for Full-time, Tenure-line Faculty 2018-19*, appended to this report.

A second potential source of bias comes from the inclusion of professional school faculty salaries in the AAUP data, which contributes to salaries in the Traditional Group and the New Group. Salaries at professional schools (law, medical, etc.) are usually higher than salaries at liberal arts institutions, due to market competition given opportunities available to professionals in those fields outside of academia.

A third potential source of bias is regional variation in cost of living. Therefore, we also provide graphs that apply cost of living adjustments for salaries in the Liberal Arts group based on published local living-wage estimates (<http://livingwage.mit.edu/>).

Additional caveats are noted below when associated with specific analyses or comparisons.

III. Benchmarks

History

Historically the Amherst College Board of Trustees has sought to raise faculty salaries to meet stated goals. As noted in the 2004-05 CPR Salary Report, in 1958 the Trustees issued a policy statement that Amherst faculty salaries should be “as high as those in any other college in the country.” In 1970, this policy was updated to indicate that faculty compensation should be “at a level no lower than that of other institutions of the highest quality.” Nevertheless, in the 1970s faculty salaries dropped significantly on a relative basis. This resulted in much discussion and a resolution by the Board in 1979 that by 1982 faculty salaries should be increased to regain Amherst’s 1968 relative competitive position, which in 1968 corresponded to 3rd in the Traditional group (see the 2004-05 CPR Salary Report for details and caveats).

The benchmark targeted to be reached by 1982 was not achieved, and by the mid-1990s Amherst faculty salaries had once again lost relative ground. This resulted in a 1998 commitment to close the gaps for associate and full professors in particular. Then, in 2003, the Administration and Board of Trustees asked the CPR to set a benchmark for a ranking within the New Group that Amherst should try to reach and maintain. The 2004-05 salary report concluded that despite several periods in which salary trends were corrected to improve the relative positions of Amherst professors and despite increases in real or inflation-corrected salaries, salaries of Amherst professors have tended to rest below both the median and the average of the Traditional Group, which includes research universities and institutions with professional schools.

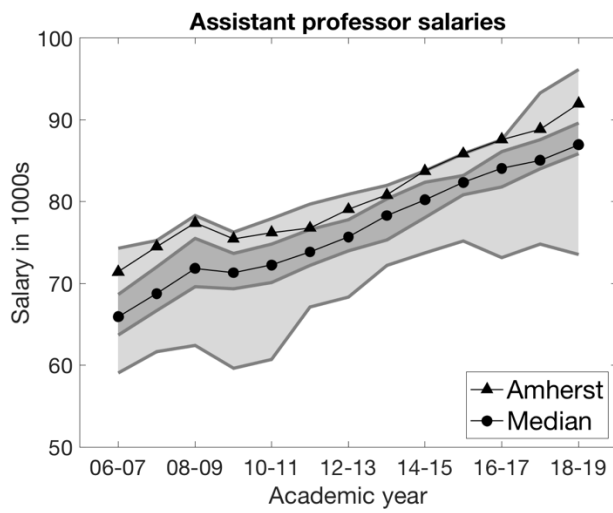
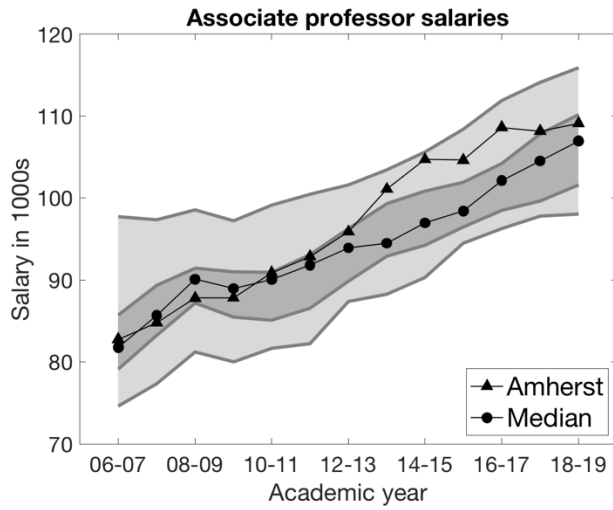
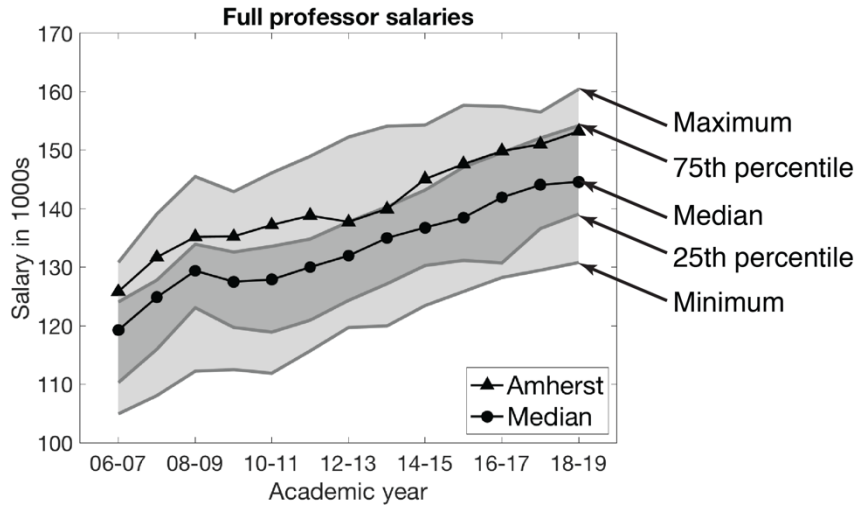
Current Benchmarks

The graphs in this report focus on the Liberal Arts group of 12 colleges as the comparison group: Amherst, Bowdoin, Carleton, Davidson, Haverford, Middlebury, Pomona, Smith, Swarthmore, Vassar, Wellesley, and Williams. The CPR also examines the comparison of Amherst College to the Traditional Group. The dark gray bands are outlined by the 1st and 3rd quartiles (25th and 75th percentiles), while the minimum and maximum values bound the light gray bands. The median marks the split between the upper 6 and the lower 6 salaries from this group of 12. The upper light gray band marks the top 3 salaries; dark gray band marks the middle 6 salaries; lower gray band marks the bottom 3 salaries. The plotted Amherst values represent the mean (average) salary values within each faculty rank. *The proposed benchmark is to remain at or above the 75th percentile among this group of 12 liberal arts peers.*

IV. Quartile analyses

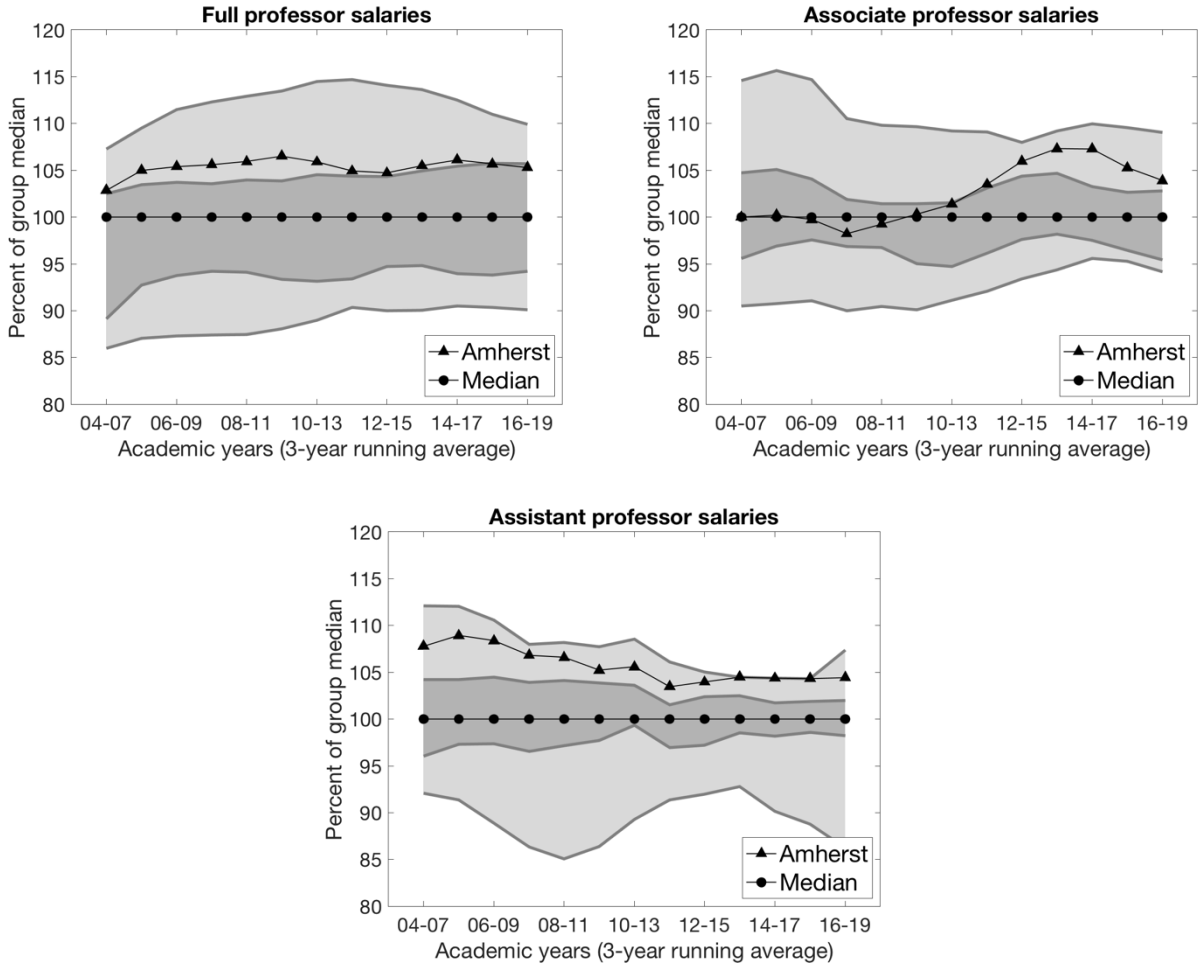
Untransformed and unadjusted data

The historic quartile analysis shows a comparison faculty salaries among the Liberal Arts group of 12 colleges. The following graphs display salary as absolute numbers in thousands of dollars without transformation or modification. Discussion of Amherst College’s status with regard to the 75th percentile benchmark is presented in the following section.



Normalized data

For easier comparison over time, we normalized the salaries by dividing each salary by the group median for that time point. A 3-year running average was applied first to smooth out one-year fluctuations, in order to better observe longer-term trends.

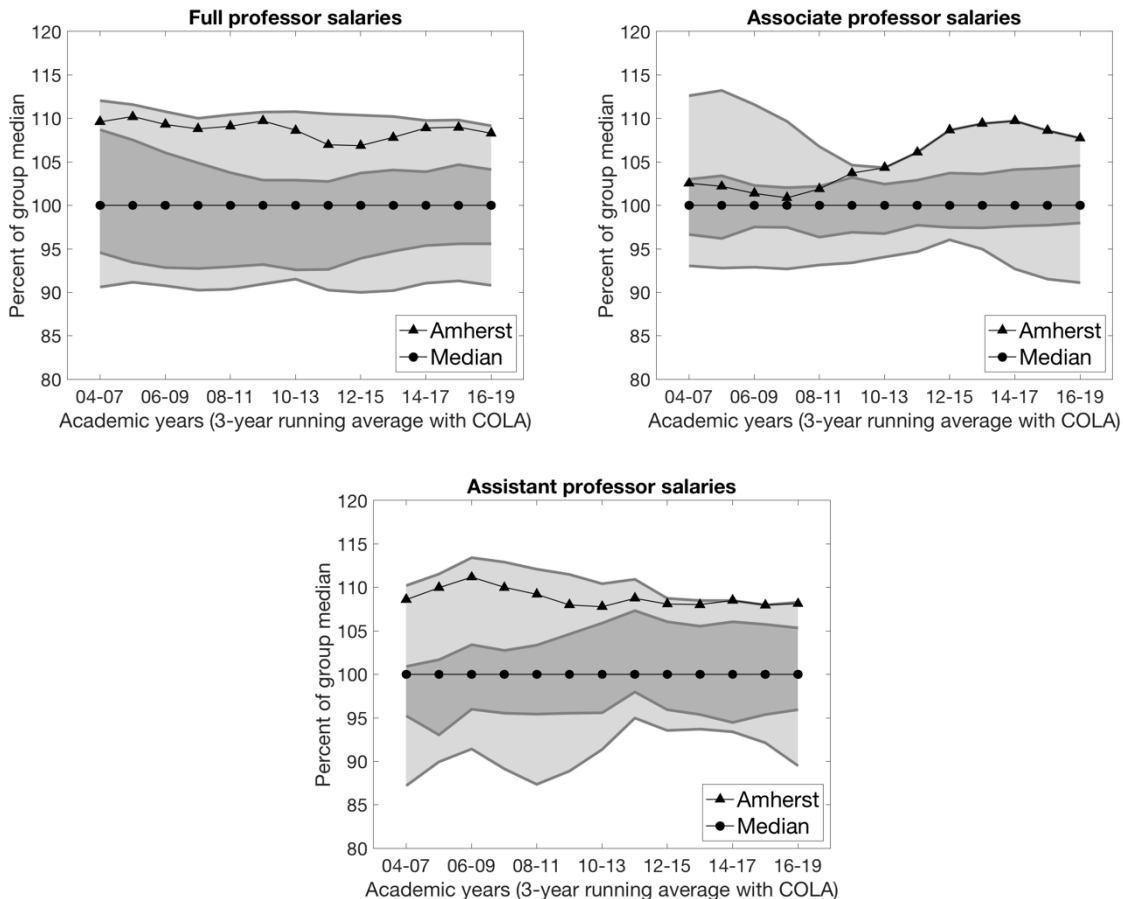


If the goal is to keep Amherst’s salaries among the top 3 (top quarter) in this group of peers (top light gray band) in order to remain competitive, then we are in the acceptable range for assistant professors, while salaries are falling behind for associate and full professors. In particular, the full professor salary average has fallen below this benchmark for the past 2 years. One potential explanation may be that full professors span a wider range of salary level, from newly promoted faculty to several decades at the college. A spate of retiring senior faculty, replaced by new promotions to full professor, may have caused a drop in full professor average salary; see appended graphs on changes in years-in-rank, which suggest that 2018 hit a minimum point for average years-in-rank for full professors, with value expected to increase in future years. However, this explanation does not apply to the case of associate professor salaries.

Cost of living adjusted data

We adjusted the salaries in an effort to take cost of living into account. The cost of living adjustments (COLA) in the following figures were generated from the MIT living wage calculations from 2017: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>. The living wage is a measure of the cost of living of basics for a family of 4 with 1 worker (2 adults, 2 children, and only 1 adult working), and the website provides values for each county in the US. We adjusted the salaries relative to the cost of living in Hampshire County. For example, Pomona's salaries tend to be higher than other peer institutions because of the high cost of living in that region. Since Los Angeles County's cost of basics is about 12.8% in excess of Hampshire County's, we divide Pomona's mean salary by 1.128 to calculate the COLA salary.

A strong caveat of this approach is that the living costs near the institution may differ substantially from the surrounding county on which the COLA is based. For the Pomona example cited above, that institution is in the broadly expensive Los Angeles County, where local housing costs near Pomona are 66% of the county-wide average (www.census.gov). However, in the town of Amherst, surrounded by the more rural environment, the housing costs are 126% of the county average. As a consequence, the COLA salary of Amherst is inflated relative to Pomona. Therefore, caution is needed when using this COLA in assessing whether Amherst College is meeting modified benchmarks, and more investigation on this adjustment is warranted across the comparison group.



As usual, we caution faculty members not to read these mean (average) data for comparison with their individual increases because the mean data as reported by the AAUP include salary increases at the time of promotion or tenure in the more junior ranks, thus overstating the actual salary increases for most members of the Assistant and Associate Professor groups. We also reiterate that overall trends are more significant than single-year or single-category movements that may be due to demographic variations in rank that result from hiring, promotion and retirement.

This year, as with last year, we are at the border of the benchmark criterion with slightly negative trends across categories. We include median salary values in each category in the summary tables below as an alternative measure that is less sensitive to outliers than the mean.

V. Salary Comparisons within the College

The following data do not include faculty with administrative positions, for which there were nine in 2018-19. Also note that variations from year to year can be due to changes in rank for Economics faculty. Grouping of departments and programs by discipline is appended to this report.

Amherst College Faculty Salaries 2017-18

Rank	Female			Male		
	<i>Median</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Count</i>
Professor	\$144,500	\$143,977	35	\$150,000	\$155,970	50
Associate	\$113,000	\$113,550	14	\$100,700	\$103,113	15
Assistant	\$88,300	\$89,500	25	\$87,100	\$88,090	21
All	\$117,250	\$119,816	74	\$120,200	\$130,176	86

Amherst College Faculty Salaries 2018-19

Rank	Female			Male		
	<i>Median</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Count</i>
Professor	\$148,900	\$148,489	37	\$153,000	\$156,802	49
Associate	\$105,000	\$110,824	13	\$102,200	\$107,900	18
Assistant	\$89,000	\$92,106	30	\$88,300	\$91,842	24
All	\$119,000	\$121,225	80	\$123,600	\$129,997	91

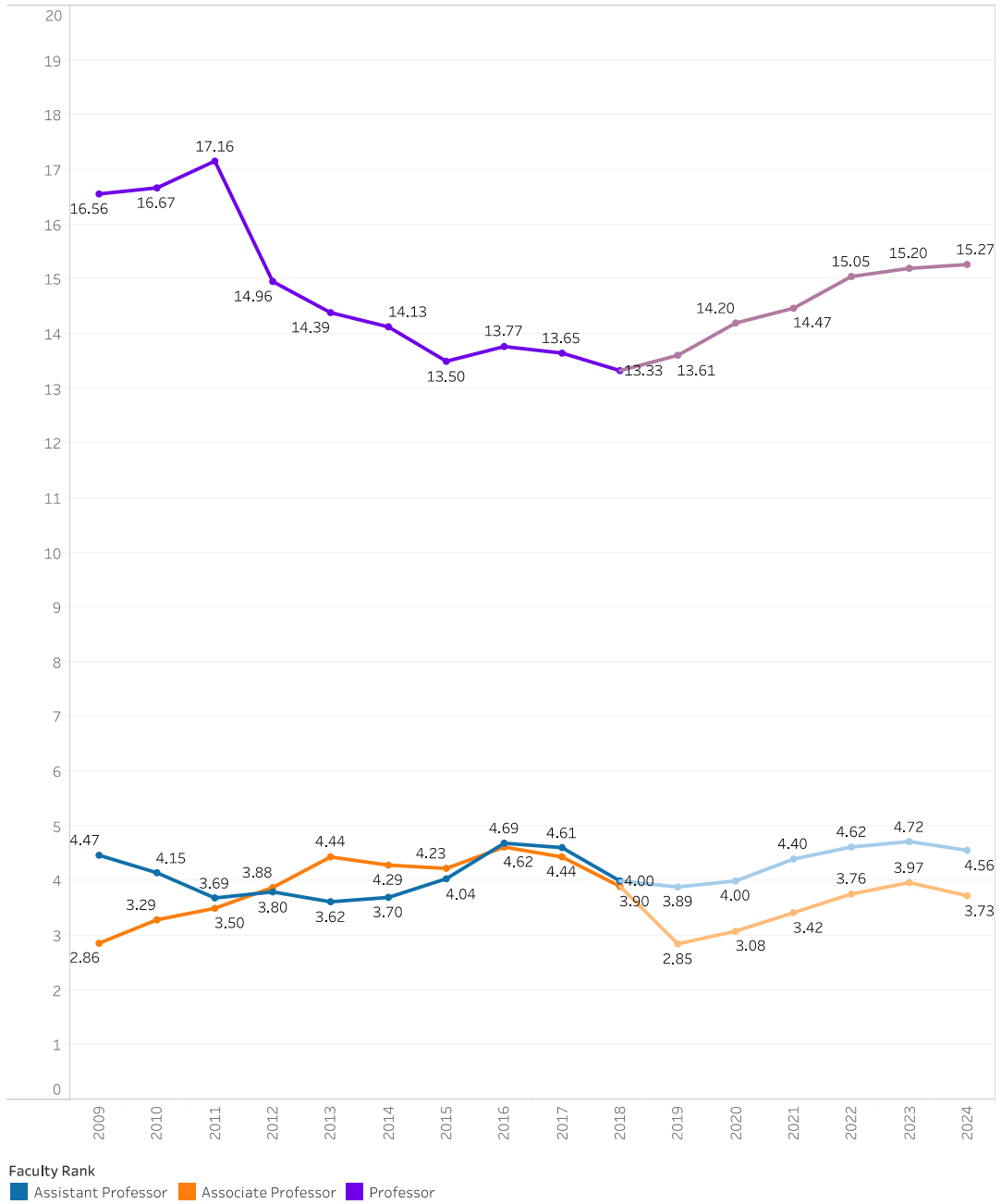
<i>Amherst College Faculty Salaries 2017-18</i>				
Discipline	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. of Persons</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Humanities	Professor	45	151,880	146,800
	Associate	19	104,637	100,700
	Assistant	23	87,117	86,000
Social Sciences	Professor	17	145,012	144,500
	Associate	4	123,925	128,550
	Assistant	11	90,255	88,300
Physical and Life Sciences	Professor	23	153,822	146,800
	Associate	6	108,767	107,000
	Assistant	12	90,908	88,500
All		160	125,384	120,000

<i>Amherst College Faculty Salaries 2018-19</i>				
Discipline	<i>Rank</i>	<i>No. of Persons</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Humanities	Professor	44	154,770	152,000
	Associate	20	107,630	103,800
	Assistant	27	88,755	88,600
Social Sciences	Professor	19	147,642	145,700
	Associate	2	133,300	133,300
	Assistant	13	98,800	91,000
Physical and Life Sciences	Professor	23	154,883	147,000
	Associate	9	107,078	100,600
	Assistant	14	91,900	87,350
All		171	125,893	120,000

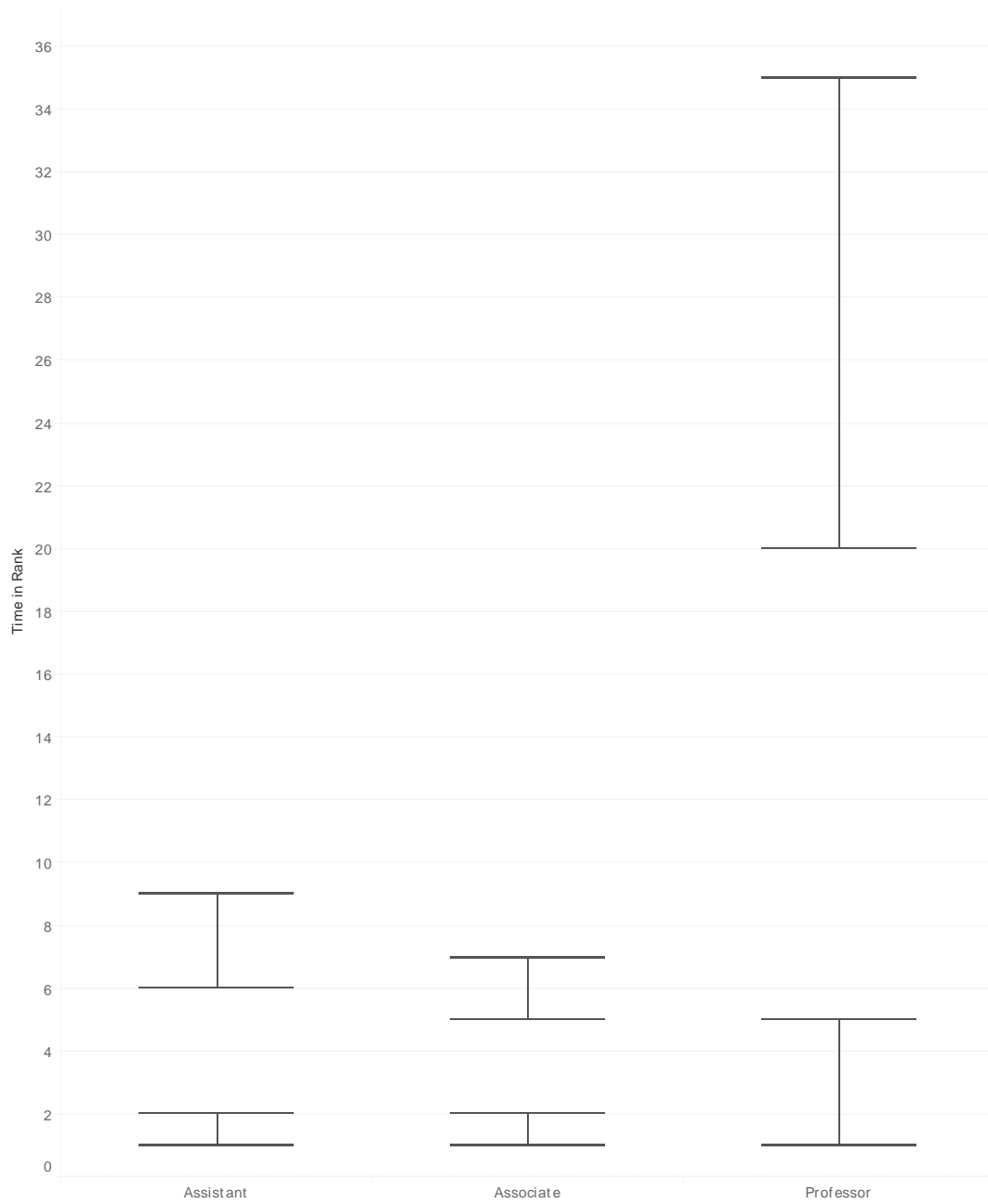
VI. Additional Salary Data

Tables providing comparisons to other peer institution groups, with salaries given in *thousands of dollars*, are appended to the end of this report.

Average Number of Years in Rank for Full-time, Tenure-line Faculty (2009-2018) and 5 Year Projection (2019-2024)



Distribution of Years in Rank for Full-time, Tenure-line Faculty 2018-19



Whiskers extend to 1.5 times the interquartile range. Nulls are two Associate Professors who will receive tenure in summer 2019. Total n excludes faculty on leave of absence as well as administrators consistent with AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey reporting instructions.

Grouping of departments and programs for grouping of faculty salary data by discipline

Subject	Discipline
AMST	Humanities
ARAB	Humanities
ARAH	Humanities
ARCH	Humanities
ARHA	Humanities
ASLC	Humanities
BLST	Humanities
CHIN	Humanities
CLAS	Humanities
ENGL	Humanities
ENST	Humanities
EUST	Humanities
FAMS	Humanities
FIAR	Humanities
FREN	Humanities
GERM	Humanities
GREE	Humanities
HIST	Humanities
JAPA	Humanities
LATI	Humanities
LJST	Humanities
MUSI	Humanities
PHIL	Humanities
RELI	Humanities
RUSS	Humanities
SPAN	Humanities
SWAG	Humanities
THDA	Humanities
WAGS	Humanities
MUSL	Humanities
ASTR	Science & Math
BCBP	Science & Math
BIOL	Science & Math
CHEM	Science & Math
COSC	Science & Math
GEOL	Science & Math
MATH	Science & Math
NEUR	Science & Math
PHYS	Science & Math
STAT	Science & Math
ANSO	Social Sciences
ANTH	Social Sciences
ECON	Social Sciences
POSC	Social Sciences
PSYC	Social Sciences
SOCI	Social Sciences

