

FACULTY UNIONIZATION FACT CHECK

Accurate information is critical to an informed choice. Recent communications from various sources about faculty unionization have contained inaccuracies, which we hope here to correct.

Claim: “Over a 10-year period ending in 2012-13, the percentage of tenure-line faculty dropped from 43 percent to 30 percent. This means a significant portion of instruction at the UW is not done by research faculty...”

Here is the profile over time of the makeup of UW faculty across all campuses from the Office of Academic Personnel¹:

Academic Year	Tenure	%	WOT	%	Research	%	Lecturers	%
2015-16	2161	41.2	1716	32.7	335	6.4	1030	19.6
2012-13	2039	41.9	1544	31.7	373	7.7	911	18.7
2002-03	1939	48.1	1056	26.2	365	9.1	671	16.6

figure 1

The data show that the percentage of tenure-track faculty has declined since 2002 and the percent of lecturers has increased, but modestly. It is important to note that “WOT” faculty are without tenure by reason of funding. They perform all of the duties of tenure-track faculty, including teaching, and are considered tenure-eligible. The size of the WOT faculty largely varies with

availability of grant funding; they are not viewed as replacements for duties that might otherwise be performed by tenure-track faculty. In the Non-Health Science Schools and Colleges on the Seattle campus where the use of WOT appointments is infrequent (under 2%), 68.4% of the faculty is tenure-track in 2015.

At UW Tacoma and Bothell the % of tenure-track faculty is lower, comprising 48% of the faculty and lecturers 51%. This is largely due to the rapid growth of those campuses. However, the trend is for increases in tenure-track appointments, with over 70 new additions to the tenure-track ranks from 2012 to 2015, although the % increase was quite modest (2%).

Claim: “Meanwhile, funding of the university is derived more and more from unsustainably high rates of student tuition and from private donors, whose donations are (unsurprisingly) earmarked for research or teaching projects of particular interest to them.”

While tuition increased by double-digits during the Great Recession, even at its high point of \$12,397, UW’s tuition and fees for resident undergraduate students were still in the bottom quartile of our peers.² As we know, in 2015 the Legislature actually reduced tuition, the only state to do so. Charitable donations to the University are at an all-time high, an indication of the broad-based support in the community for our public mission and a recognition of the excellence of the UW and the faculty. Private donations do not replace public tax dollars or tuition. Rather, philanthropy provides an additional margin of excellence to enable the University to do even more with its resources than otherwise would be possible.

Sources:

¹ Summary Profile of Appointment Tracks, 2002-2015. See: <http://bit.ly/20R6JsG>

² Annual Tuition & Fee Comparison, Academic Year 2013-2014, UW Office of Planning & Budgeting. See: <http://bit.ly/1QWaacr>

FACULTY UNIONIZATION FACT CHECK *(continued)*

Claim: UW is "...an institution at risk caused by decreasing state support...From 2007-13, state higher-education funding dropped by 25.5 percent. Recent improvements in state funding offer some relief but don't compensate for years of sustained losses."

These data appear to be from 2012.³ From FY 2013 to FY 2016, state funding to UW has increased by more than 39%, or \$82.4 million. These funds have allowed the UW to fund annual faculty salary increases, and to freeze and reduce undergraduate tuition rates.

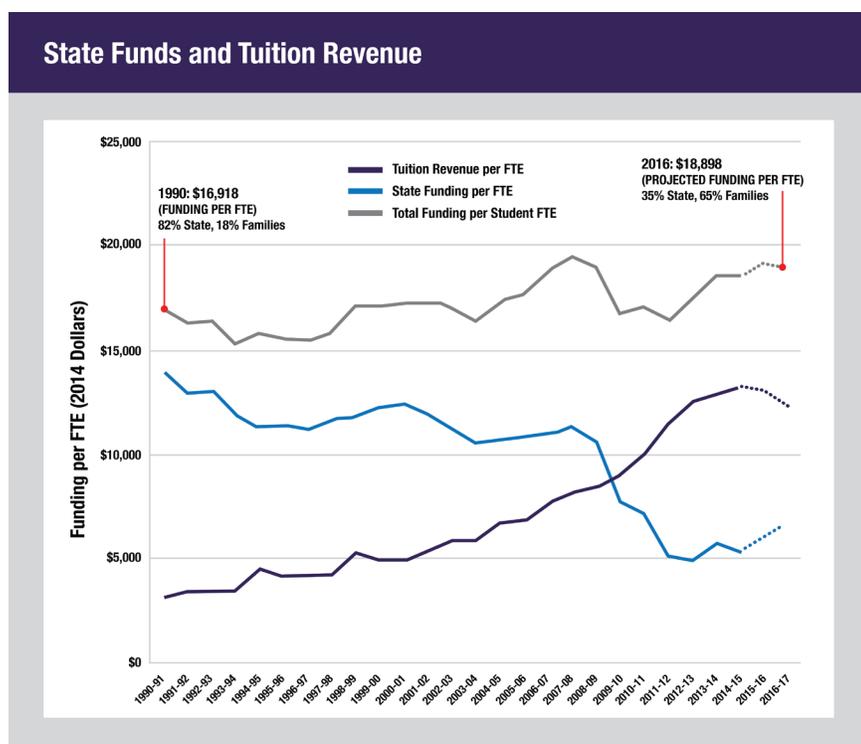


figure 2

Claim: "The decrease in federal (NIH) funding for work in the sciences further reduces the means to support across-the-board faculty innovation and achievement at all ranks and in all fields."

Federal funding for research has gone through its ups and downs in the past six years. But in FY2015, the research funding for universities and non-profits was actually up 12% since 2009, and funding for NIH was up 2% in the same time period. UW continues to be effective in advocating for increased research funds, while at the same time, our faculty are increasingly competitive for federal research funds. The percentage of all federal research funds that the UW receives has increased since 2009 from 2.9% to 3.4%. The FY2016 approved budget has a number of bright spots including a \$2B increase for NIH funding (a 6.6% increase) as well as significant increases to the research budgets of NASA, DOE, DOD, and the FDA. While awards from non-federal sources have been growing as a share of UW's overall research portfolio, these awards represent important research projects from non-profit organizations (e.g. \$8M in FY15 from Seattle Children's Research Institute), foundations (e.g. \$65M in FY15 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), and industry sponsors (e.g. \$50M in FY15 for clinical trial projects).

The Office of the Provost and the Office of Research also support faculty research through internal granting programs such as the Bridge Award Program (~\$1M/yr.), Royalty Research Fund Program (~\$2.5M/yr.), Innovation Awards (~\$1M/yr.), and startup/matching funds (~\$7.3M/yr.).

Source:

³ Key Facts about Higher Education in Washington, 2012, WA HECB. See p. 15: <http://1.usa.gov/1QcGtHy>