

Questions and Answers
Berkeley Salary Equity Study
Last updated November 14, 2014

Q: The interim report describes a study that is not a state-of-the-arts study of potential gender discrimination and likely to produce biased results. It sounds like the entirely inappropriate analysis conducted by systemwide.

A: Like the UC system-wide study, the campus study uses multiple linear regression analysis, which is the statistical method preferred by social scientists for such studies. The campus study differs from the system-wide study in a number of ways: Berkeley's data sets are complete; Berkeley's study ensures that cell sizes are adequate; it uses a Total Population and a Log Salary model in addition to a White Male model; it examines salaries at multiple levels (department, school, division, college, campus); and it explores the effects of introducing variables for market values, rank, and retention. In addition, the Berkeley study includes several sub-studies (e.g., concerning citation rates and additional retention-related variables).

Q: Can the committee formally define the ethnicity categories used in this study? And do "mixed ethnicities," however defined, receive equal treatment?

A: The ethnicity data used in this study are those that the University collects to comply with mandates by the U.S. government for the administration of civil rights laws and regulations. All faculty are asked to self-identify voluntarily on the employee portal "blu." To find the full menu of categories, please go to blu.berkeley.edu and log in using the button in the upper left. Then under "Self Service" (on the left), click on the "Ethnic Groups" link. In addition to the options that are immediately displayed, please also review the numerous options on the drop-down menu. Because the university does not ask for "mixed ethnicities," we are not able to include that as a variable in this study.

Q: The salary equity study appeared to contain no predictor variables directly related to productivity, e.g., books or articles in peer-reviewed journals. Ever since Elizabeth Scott did her classic salary equity work in the seventies and eighties, including the Carnegie Commission study of major universities, such productivity predictors have been the gold standard in identifying corruption or bias in the promotion and salary process.

A: Productivity takes very different forms in different disciplines, and of course the quality of research and creative accomplishment are important, not just their quantity. In addition, merit advancement takes into account faculty members' records in teaching and service along with their records of research and creative accomplishment.

These factors, combined with the large practical difficulty of collecting accurate productivity data for the entire faculty, led the steering committee to decide not to include any other productivity variables in the three regression models.

However, for several specific units, sub-studies have been carried out to examine the effects of introducing citation data.

Q: Will this include data or exclude data from faculty who are 'exceptionally off scale'?

A: The study uses data for the salaries of all faculty members, whether they are unusually high or unusually low.

Q: Is the present study an internal equity study, or is it relative to our peers external to Berkeley?

A: This is an internal study, though the variable for market salary ratios is based on data concerning salaries at peer universities that Berkeley obtains through the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE).

Q: If those involved in our academic-personnel reviews are doing their jobs properly, then any differences in faculty salaries that can be correlated with gender or ethnicity will reflect merit differences. If the study participants find such correlations and believe they are the result, not of differences in achievement but of conscious or unconscious bias, they should identify where they believe this is taking place. Is it at one or more levels of campus review? Are outside factors at work, e.g., who gets competitive offers, which journals accept whose work, how outside reviewers rate our faculty? Are the "career equity" review and the diversity statement not working as they should in the review process? Does Berkeley place too much emphasis on scholarship and not enough on teaching and service?

A: While it is too early to state any definitive findings, and thus also too early to anticipate the nature of recommendations, if any, that would be appropriate, it is not too early to emphasize several general points.

First, as the question indicates, Berkeley's review process is multi-faceted. Final decisions rest upon materials prepared by faculty members, cases presented by departments and deans, and recommendations from the Budget Committee. In some cases, campus ad hoc review and career equity review are part of the process, and in many cases, the Associate Vice Provost reviews cases to identify potential equity issues. From our regression studies, it would not be possible to identify systematically the distinct roles played in outcomes by these varied contributions.

Second, if the regression studies were to indicate different results for women and men or for minority and non-minority groups, our next task would be to try to understand them. Different results could be produced by a wide range of factors, as national studies suggest.