Responses to the "Fact Check," Claim by Claim

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…"

The University of Washington responded to this claim with data from its own Office of Academic Personnel, including this table and a brief explanation.

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

In their explanation, UW and its consultants acknowledges that tenure has shrunk and lecturer positions have grown, although at a more modest pace than we claim, with tenure/tenure track faculty falling from 48% in 2002-03 to 41% in 2015-16. UW also says "*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.*"

The UW used its own data for its analysis. We used the National Center for Education Statistics Intercollegiate Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).[i] It includes self-reported data from every major university in the US and is considered the industry standard of this kind of analysis. IPEDS does not break down by job class like UW does, but does include part-time faculty as a distinct group. IPEDS captures the same trends as UW's data, only amplified.

What is UW missing in their analysis? For one, UW *does not* treat part-time faculty as a unique category. More importantly, they entirely leave out "Extension Lecturers" and similar titles teaching in the "Professional and Continuing Education" (PCE) program. These lecturers are not protected by the faculty code, but they ***are*** academic personnel, teach a significant number of classes on the UW campus, and are reported to IPEDS as faculty. As of last year, over 50% of UW master's degree students are enrolled in fee-based programs, and the PCE program now administers over 70% of UW's fee-based programs, with nearly 3,000 students and 2,600 student FTEs.[ii]

So what do the numbers look like including these counts, based on data the UW turned in to the IPEDS data base?[iii]

TABLE 1: COUNTS OF UW'S TENURED AND NON-TENURED FACULTY, ALL LECTURERS INCLUDED								
YEAR	All faculty	Tenure Track	% Tenure Track	Non-Tenure	% Non-Tenure	PT Non-Tenured	% PT Non-Tenure	% of Non-Tenure that is PT
2014-15	6086	1774	29.1%	4312	70.9%	1535	25.2%	35.6%
2012-13	5760	1693	29.4%	4067	70.6%	1460	25.3%	35.9%
2002-03	4463	1903	42.6%	2560	57.4%	387	8.7%	15.1%

In the 2002-03 academic year, traditional tenured or tenure-track faculty made up 43% of all faculty on campus, with non-tenured –both "Without Tenure" (WOT) professorial faculty and "non-ladder" instructional faculty and academic personnel— comprising 57%. Part-time faculty made up 9% of the total and roughly 16% of non-tenure faculty. By the 2014-15 year, the proportion that were tenured or tenure-track had dropped to only 29%, with non-tenure positions making up 71%. Part-time faculty made up 25% of the total, or 36% of all non-tenured positions. Relatively, tenured and tenure-track decreased by 31%, non-tenure increased 23%, and part-time faculty increased 183%.[iv] In 2015, the part-time non-tenure total (1,535) was very close to the number of tenure-line faculty (1,774).[v]

UW's reliance on "Without Tenure" (WOT) faculty and lecturers is problematic. WOT faculty ***do not*** have guaranteed funding or the protection of tenure. They merely have ***access*** to tenure if positions open and the university offers them to WOT faculty, which is uncommon. Otherwise, WOT faculty, like research track faculty are required to raise their own salaries through grant writing and fundraising, and do not get guaranteed teaching credits.

Lecturers are an increasingly important part of the UW community, particularly as the university expands dramatically in Bothell and Tacoma. On the fact check site, UW admits "*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.*" UW has much more rapid growth plans for Tacoma and Bothell than for Seattle, which means this will continue. During the recession, UW began employing many more non-competitive full-time lecturers with only one-year contracts, who earn much less than competitive hires, despite having similar duties. In order to achieve multi-year contracts, contingent faculty on one-year contracts are required to competitively apply for their own jobs. This has been controversial and led to huge backlash and unsuccessful attempts by Bothell and Tacoma faculty to fix this through shared governance. UW has done little to fix the problem, which is one reason we are organizing a union.

The real number of faculty and instructors is likely somewhere between what UW is reporting and what we have here. We look forward to working with UW to get the most accurate counts possible. While Washington labor law would require extension lecturers and other non-faculty instructors to be in a separate bargaining unit, they should be included in any analysis of inequality among instruction at UW, particularly given the growth of PCE enrollment, which has more than doubled in recent years[1], and the massive presence of lecturers in Bothell and Tacoma.

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."

The university responded to this with *"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."*

This is a misleading way to report relative tuition costs and masks a major problem. The "bottom quartile among our peers," is based on comparisons of UW to its Global Challenge State Peer Institutions, which are a dozen schools with similar sizes, endowments, compositions and focuses. It ignores UW's position in terms of overall higher education trends.

When compared to national averages, Washington public higher education had the ***second highest*** tuition cash amount increase from 2008-2014, after only Arizona, and the ***sixth highest*** percentage increase. [vi] This was partially due to UW getting its own tuition-setting authority. This is even with tuition freezes starting in 2014.

Moreover, Washington had the ***12th highest*** in-state tuition in the US in 2013-14,[vii] and the ***16th highest*** gap with funding from pre-recession levels.[viii] We also had the ***18th-lowest*** state funding for higher education per student in 2014 and were well below the US median.[ix] UW itself has widely publicized and commented on these claim in recent years, but apparently doesn't agree when it's a union issue.

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."

In their response, UW and their consultants redirect away from our main claim without addressing it, then tacitly acknowledge that we are correct. They start with "*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."* They then acknowledge the problem, saying "*In 1990, the state provided 82% of funding per UW undergraduate student, and families paid 18%. By 2013, state support had fallen to 28%, and students and families paid 72%."* Finally, they say that UW and the state legislature are committed to getting to a 50/50 FTE funding split by 2020. So what is wrong with what they are saying?

Here, UW fails to acknowledge our central claims, which is that state funding for higher education collapsed after the recession and ***has not*** returned to where it was. From FY 2008-2014, Washington State funding for higher education actually decreased a total of 27.8%, adjusted for inflation.[x] This is well established, and the total cash loss was over $1.4 billion. The entire state budget took hits during and after the recession, but public schools (elementary and high school) and human services recovered in the 2011-13 biennium, when higher education ***bottomed out***. During that period, state funding for higher education in Washington was $1.26 billion below a maintenance level of $3.4 billion.[xi]

When seen in this light, the 2015-17 statewide higher education budget of $3.5 billion is ***barely over*** what 2009-11 maintenance of $3.4 billion would be, does little to address the overall problem, and is likely a sign of continuing volatility in higher education funding. This problem will continue without new revenue solutions and a major injection of permanent state cash into higher education.

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."

UW has an interesting response to this claim. The website sound defensive of the well documented collapse in federal research funding and seems to think we are blaming UW, then says funding has improved slightly, rather than joining us in calling for a dramatic reprioritizing of research.

The site says *"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 site also provides information about grants UW receives, and how successful UW is in getting funding, which we agree is impressive.

But this misses several central points we make about long-term funding. In constant 2015 dollars, annual NIH funding peaked in 2004 at around $35 billion for the year. In 2015, it was around $30 billion for the year.[xii] It dropped significantly after the Great Recession. The 12% increase since 2009 ***does not*** make up for these losses.

Moreover, in 1968, federal research and development expenditures were 12% of the total federal budget with about half going to non-defense. In 2016, R&D has fallen to under 4% of the federal budget with non-defense receiving less than 2%.[xiii] As the single biggest public university recipient of federal research funds in the last 40 years[xiv], you would think UW would share our concerns.

Inflation-adjusted total grant and contract awards to UW increased almost every year from 1995-2010 but stagnated in the early 2000s and have decreased since 2010.[xv] NIH grants to UW decreased in seven of the last eleven years and would have decreased eight times had it not been for a one-time boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. They decreased 14% from 2010-11 (the year after the boost), and 6% from 2013-14, going from $454 million to $428 million.[xvi] UW doesn't mention any of this on the fact check site, and instead says that minor increases in this year's grant budget are a "bright spot."

Since 2011, direct UW grant expenditures have either stagnated or decreased in every major expense type (staff/faculty salaries, equipment, tuition stipends/graduate student salaries, etc.).[xvii] The number of people employed in grant-related work decreased from 15,236 to 14,596.

And grant funded faculty are feeling the pinch. In a recent survey with over 550 UW faculty respondents, we found that 49% of grant-funded faculty spend over 10% of their time working on grant proposals, and 13% spent between 26-50% of their time on it. 84% of research faculty respondents had spent the most time looking for grants within the last three years. 35% were employed at less than full-time because grant funding wasn't available, and 54% said they had to cut back on hours or positions for research staff and students due to limited funds.[xix]

Finally, the claims addressed on the UW Fact Check site come from various documents from our campaign and are taken out of context. The site ***does not*** address the significant majority of our claims. When it does, it is merely misdirecting away from the problem and addressing a separate issue, while tacitly agreeing with us, particularly around funding issues.

We look forward to maintaining a healthy dialog with our faculty colleagues and the administration about the many ways in which the economy, state funding and misplaced priorities are causing the University of Washington to act more and more like a corporation every day, and how we can work together to address

the problem, restore the values of higher education, honor our teaching faculty and instructors, and get sustainable higher education funding from the state.

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[i] See https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/. Author analysis on file and available

[ii] The UW Graduate School brags about this information in its most recent Fee-Based Programs Report. We have a copy of the report and are happy to share.

[iii] Table 1 and Figure 1 are from National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. See http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/. Author analysis on file and available

[iv] UW reports all this information to the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. See http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/. Author analysis on file and available

[v] UW reports all this information to the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. See http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/. Author analysis on file and available

[vi] See the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities analysis at http://www.cbpp.org//sites/default/files/atoms/files/5-1-14sfp.pdf (pages 5 and 12)

[vii] See https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/misc/trends/2014-trends-college-pricing-report-final.pdf (page 19)

[viii] See the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities analysis at http://www.cbpp.org//sites/default/files/atoms/files/5-1-14sfp.pdf (page 4)

[ix] See https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/misc/trends/2014-trends-college-pricing-report-final.pdf (page 28)

[x] See http://www.cbpp.org//sites/default/files/atoms/files/5-1-14sfp.pdf, in particular, page 4

[xi] The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board reports key facts about higher education in Washington State. See http://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/KeyFacts2012.pdf (page 11)

[xii] See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/09/budget-crisis_n_2843174.html

[xiii] See http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/Budget_1.jpg

[xiv] See http://www.washington.edu/research/.SITEPARTS/.documents/orFactsheet_2014.pdf

[xv] See http://www.washington.edu/research/.SITEPARTS/.documents/.reports/Annual/Annual_Report_-_Fiscal_Year_2014.pdf. (page 14)

[xvi] The NIH houses this information in their REPORT database, at http://report.nih.gov/index.aspx.

[xvii] See http://www.washington.edu/research/.SITEPARTS/.documents/.reports/Annual/Annual_Report_-_Fiscal_Year_2014.pdf. (page 48)

[xviii] See http://www.washington.edu/research/.SITEPARTS/.documents/.reports/Annual/Annual_Report_-_Fiscal_Year_2014.pdf. (page 67)

[xix] See our survey results and methodology at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/uwfacultyforward/pages/1/attachments/original/1448095043/Survey_Analysis_(methodology_attached).pdf?1448095043