FACULTY PAY RESEARCH

White Paper: Perceptions and Impact of Pay Disparities among UCCS Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

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Executive Summary

This report highlights persistent and systemic concerns regarding faculty compensation equity at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS). Quantitative data reveal pay disparities across colleges and ranks. Quantitative and qualitative data underscore dissatisfaction with salary structures, particularly among minoritized faculty and those in low-pay colleges, and with the implementation of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act at UCCS. Our data also helps us assess the impacts of pay disparities on institutional commitment, morale, and financial well-being among tenured and tenure-track (T/TR) faculty.

Key Findings

Pay Disparities at UCCS:

- Disparities Across Colleges and Ranks: Salary gaps exist across all faculty ranks, with assistant professors in the highest-paid colleges (Engineering and Applied Science [EAS] and Business [BUS]) earning more than associate professors in all other colleges and more than full professors in the College of Education (COE).
- Faculty earning less than $70,000 are concentrated in just three colleges – Library, Education, and low-paying units in the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences (LAS).
- Higher salaries ($90,000 or higher) were more common among male faculty compared to female and non-binary faculty, and among those who identified as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Middle Eastern.

Perceptions of Pay:

- Faculty Dissatisfaction: A majority of faculty expressed dissatisfaction with their compensation. This sentiment was especially pronounced among women and LGBTQI faculty, Black faculty, and respondents from low-pay colleges.
- Faculty in the low-paid units in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (LAS) reported the lowest perceptions of pay equity, with 82% disagreeing that their salary reflects their productivity, and only 9% agreeing.
- In contrast, Beth El faculty had more favorable views, with 43% agreeing their salaries reflect their contributions and 71% perceiving fairness within their college.
- Structural Inequities: Faculty cited outdated salary analyses, unjustified market-based pay differences, and institutional policies that fail to account for rising living costs and increased workloads. These concerns span disciplines and career stages.

Perceptions of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA):

- More than half of respondents disagreed that UCCS is a great place to work due to equal pay policies.
- Faculty were largely neutral or skeptical about the Act's impact on salary equity, with concerns about its implementation and transparency.
- Many viewed EPEWA more about appearing equal and did little to address salary inequities, noting UCCS's approach differs from other CU campuses.
- Concerns were raised about how "substantially similar work" is interpreted, with faculty in high-pay colleges emphasizing meritocracy over equity.
- Faculty in low and mid-pay colleges expressed frustration with how the University is defining "substantially similar work," and failing to recognize their valuable efforts to the campus.

Impact on Faculty from Diverse Backgrounds:

- The Act's influence on recruiting and retaining diverse faculty was questioned. All faculty who raised these concerns were women, some from racially minoritized backgrounds. A recurring issue was the lack of compensation for extra service work, disproportionately affecting these groups.

Institutional Pride & Commitment

- Sixty-two percent of faculty are proud to be part of UCCS; 85.5% care deeply about its future.
- Faculty show strong short-term commitment (avg. 7.88/10 for staying additional 5 years), but long-term commitment was lower (avg. 6.46/10 for staying 10 years).
- Non-binary faculty report lower pride and care.
- Minoritized racial groups (except Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander/Middle Eastern) show higher institutional pride despite systemic challenges.
- Faculty in AA, Beth El, and COE show lower long-term commitment.

Factors Influencing Plans to Leave

- Top reasons for considering leaving UCCS are higher salary (7.39/10), better healthcare (7.01/10), and higher rank opportunities (5.83/10).
- Full professors are more likely to express the desire to retire at UCCS; assistant professors and non-white faculty are more likely to express the desire to leave for career advancement or research support.
- Faculty with married or cohabiting partners were less likely than unpartnered faculty to express the desire to leave UCCS.

Perceived Pay Equity and Institutional Commitment

- Perceived pay equity is a strong predictor of pride, care, and intent to stay at UCCS.
- Faculty who perceive equitable pay are less likely to want to leave for better benefits or research opportunities.
- High-pay colleges offer more resources (e.g., summer funding, travel support), boosting morale and retention

School Loans, Homeownership, and Length of Sabbaticals

- Faculty in low-pay colleges face dual burdens of low salary and student loans. High-pay faculty did not express a dual burden and were more likely to express having manageable school loans.
- Higher salaries correlate with homeownership, leisure spending, and charitable donations.
- Faculty in low-pay colleges struggle more with homeownership, but marital status to a spouse with a higher salary increases opportunities for homeownership.
- Faculty Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) is a critical support tool, but racial disparities in generational wealth affect access to homeownership.
- Faculty pay disparities do not seem to inform decisions regarding the length of sabbaticals. Sabbatical decisions are influenced more by partner income.

Vacation & Retirement

- Vacation habits vary by pay level; high-pay faculty take more expensive vacations.
- Marital status also influences vacations.
- Some faculty in high-pay colleges reported that pay did not negatively affect their retirement decisions, and those in high- and mid-tier pay colleges often noted its positive influence.
- Faculty in low-pay colleges were more likely to express uncertainty about future retirement.

Chapter One: Introduction

This study focuses on perceptions and consequences of faculty pay disparities at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS).[1] This white paper examines issues related to pay among tenured and tenure-track (T/TR) faculty at UCCS. In this paper, we analyzed patterns of pay disparities, perceptions of pay equity, and the implementation of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA). It explores how perceptions of pay influence faculty members' institutional commitment and their professional and personal lives. We analyzed data from multiple sources to understand how compensation is experienced across colleges, ranks, and sociodemographic groups. This study offers a comprehensive understanding of pay issues at UCCS.

Methods

We used a mixed-methods approach to explore pay disparities and perceptions of pay and of the implementation of the EPEWA among T/TR faculty at UCCS. The mixed-methods approach included a request for all CU faculty salaries, a survey, and qualitative interviews with T/TR faculty at UCCS.

Salary Data Request

We attempted to gather salary data directly from the UCCS Human Resources Department for T/TR faculty, broken down by college, department, race, gender, and sexuality. Our request was denied due to concerns about anonymity. We then submitted a request to the University of Colorado Human Resources using the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA). We received salary data for all faculty, staff, and administrators across the CU system for Fiscal Years 17-23. The CORA data exclude gender and racial/ethnic identifiers; however, they were useful in our analysis of pay disparities across colleges and units because they include this information. As we did not have salary data for T/TR faculty by gender or racial/ethnic identity, we conducted a survey to collect this information.

Survey

In spring 2024, we designed and administered a survey to UCCS T/TR faculty (n = 110). The survey was distributed via Qualtrics. It was sent to all T/TR faculty through an email request using the UCCS faculty listserv, which included a link to the survey. The request was sent three times over the course of a month. To increase survey participation, we randomly awarded one $100 and eight $50 electronic gift cards to faculty members who expressed interest in the incentive and provided their email addresses. The distribution of key background attributes of survey participants is given in Table 1. The survey also asked participants about their willingness

[1] This research was funded by the UCCS Sociology Department.

to take part in a qualitative interview. Thirty faculty members initially expressed interest in participating in an interview, but only twenty scheduled an interview.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Key Background Attributes[2]

	Mean (SD)/Freq. (%)
Current title at UCCS	
Assistant Professor	46 (42.2%)
Associate Professor	33 (30.3%)
Full Professor	30 (27.5%)
Years working for UCCS	10.8 (7.75)
Gender	
Male	40 (36.4%)
Female	63 (57.3%)
Non-binary	7 (6.36%)
Race*	
White	78 (70.9%)
AA/NA/HL/Other	18 (16.4%)
Asian/NHPI/ME	14 (12.7%)
Currently married/cohabiting (Yes=1)	
No	31 (28.2%)
Yes	79 (71.8%)
College	
Library (AA)	3 (2.73%)
Business (BUS)	13 (11.8%)
Health Sciences (Beth El)	7 (6.36%)
Education (COE)	8 (7.27%)
Public Service (CPS)	7 (6.36%)
Engineering & Applied Science (EAS)	13 (11.8%)
Letters, Arts, & Sciences (LAS) Low-pay	34 (30.91)
Letters, Arts, & Sciences (LAS) High-pay	25 (22.73)

* NOTE: "AA/NA/HL/Other" refers to African American/Native American/Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx/Other Racial Groups. "Asian/NHPI/ME" refers to Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander/Middle Eastern.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative data included 20 semi-structured interviews conducted during the spring 2024 semester. The interviews were conducted by a trained graduate student, nineteen via Microsoft Teams, one in person. All interviews were recorded. The questions focused on personal and

family demographics, career paths to becoming a professor, perceptions of pay, insights into the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, and how pay affected various aspects of their lives. These detailed responses offered valuable insights and lived experiences related to faculty pay and institutional commitment. Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and 1 hour and 30 minutes, with most lasting around one hour. Faculty participants were given $25 gift cards, though many declined them.

Faculty participants ranged in age from 29 to 62 years old, with an average age of 44 years. The sample included eight men, 11 women, and one non-binary individual. Regarding sexual orientation, 75% of the participants identified as heterosexual, 20% as bisexual, asexual, or gay, and 5% did not respond. Eighty-five percent of the sample were white, 10% Black, and 5% Latinx. Sixty-five percent of participants were married, 20% single, and 5% divorced. Our sample represented all colleges, including the library faculty. Fifteen percent of participants were from the College of Engineering, 10% from the College of Education, 10% from Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, 10% from the College of Business, 5% from the College of Public Services, 10% from the Kraemer Library, and 40% from the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. Fifty percent were at the Assistant Professor level, 35% at the Associate level, 10% at the Full Professor level, and 5% was an Endowed Professor.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed in Stata 19.5. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, a method that involves reviewing transcripts to identify themes and subthemes related to perceptions of pay and of EPEWA. To code the data, we used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, to organize the data into themes and subthemes.

Results

The report is organized into six chapters. Chapter two discusses CORA data to highlight disparities in UCCS T/TR faculty pay across colleges and by faculty rank. Chapter two also outlines pay disparities among T/TR faculty using both qualitative and quantitative data. Chapter three examines perceptions of pay and of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act. Chapter four analyzes the impact of pay on institutional commitment and chapter five considers how faculty pay affects various aspects of faculty life. In chapter six, we offer recommendations to address the issues we have identified in this report.

Chapter Two: Pay Disparities among UCCS T/TR Faculty Based on CORA Data

Figure 1 presents the pattern of pay disparities by college and rank among T/TR faculty at UCCS, based on the CORA data. The colleges of business (BUS) and Engineering and Applied Science (EAS) had the highest average full-time pay of all seven colleges. The other five colleges had similar average salaries for T/TR faculty. We observed pay disparities across all faculty ranks, but the differences were more noticeable at the assistant professor level than at the associate or full/distinguished professor levels. Assistant professors in the two highest-paid colleges (EAS and BUS) earn more on average than associate professors in the other five colleges and even more than full/distinguished professors in the college of education (COE). Using the CORA data, we categorized departments into high-pay (Engineering and Business), mid-pay (Public Service and Nursing), and low-pay (LAS, Education, and Library) colleges. We further divided LAS (the largest college) into low-paid and high-paid units based on the average salaries of T/TR faculty from the CORA data. Low-paid LAS units include Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Philosophy, Women's and Ethnic Studies, Visual Arts, Communication, Music, History, Theatre, and English. High-paid LAS units are Economics, Physics & Energy Science, Psychology, Chemistry, Biology, and Geography. These categories helped us interpret the qualitative data.

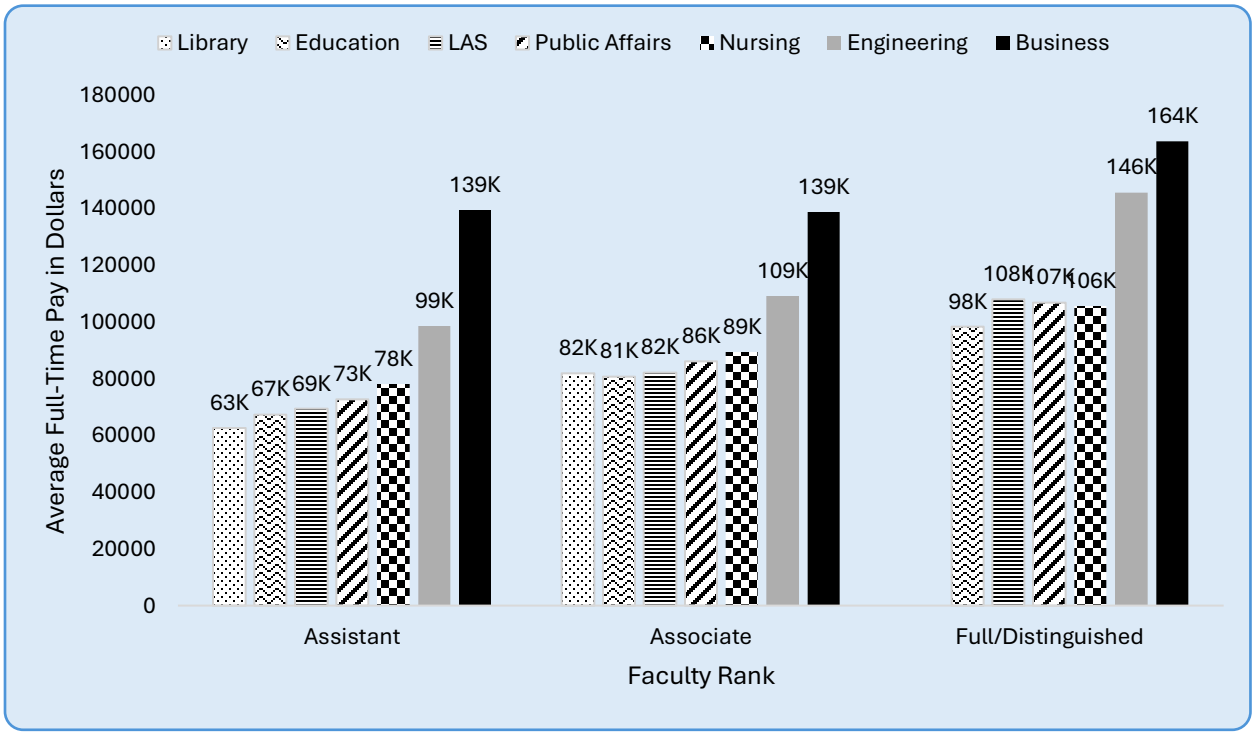

Figure 1 Average UCCS Tenure-Track Faculty Pay by College and Rank

Pay Disparities among UCCS T/TR Faculty Based on Survey Data

Table 2 presents the 2023–2024 salary distribution of UCCS T/TR faculty across various sociodemographic groups based on our survey data. Overall, 44% of T/TR faculty participants earned $90,000 or more, 45% earned between $70,000–$89,999, while 12% had salaries below $70,000. The salary distribution varied significantly by faculty rank; 87% of full professors earned $90,000 or more, compared to only 24% of assistant professors. Associate professors are most concentrated in the $70,000–$89,999 range (64%).

Across colleges, faculty in the College of Business (BUS) and Engineering and Applied Science (EAS) are most likely to earn $90,000 or more (100% and 85%, respectively), while those in the LAS low-paid units and College of Education (COE) are more represented in the lower salary brackets (Table 2). There are some racial/ethnic differences. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Asian/NHPI/ME faculty earned $90,000 or more, compared to 42% of White faculty and 33% of AA/NA/HL/Other faculty. More than half (53%) of male faculty earned $90,000 or more, compared to 40% of female and 29% of non-binary faculty. Marital status appears to have a minimal impact on the salary distribution of T/TR faculty (Table 2).

Table 2 Percentage Distribution of 2023-2024 Salaries of UCCS T/TR Faculty by Sociodemographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Salaries			n
	Below $70,000 (%)	$70,000-$89,999 (%)	$90,000 or higher (%)	
All Respondents	11.8	44.5	43.6	110
Faculty Rank				
Assistant Professor	26.1	50.0	23.9	46
Associate Professor	3.0	63.6	33.3	33
Full Professor	0.0	13.3	86.7	30
College				
AA	66.7	33.3	0.0	3
BUS	0.0	0.0	100.0	13
Beth El	0.0	57.1	42.9	7
COE	12.5	62.5	25.0	8
CPS	0.0	85.7	14.3	7
EAS	0.0	15.4	84.6	13
LAS Low-Paid	29.4	55.9	14.7	34
LAS High-Paid	0.0	48.0	52.0	25
Race/Ethnicity				
White	11.5	46.2	42.3	78
AA/NA/HL/Other	16.7	50.0	33.3	18
Asian/NHPI/ME	7.1	28.6	64.3	14
Gender				
Male	12.5	35.0	52.5	40
Female	9.5	50.8	39.7	63

Non-binary	28.6	42.9	28.6	7
Currently Married/Cohabiting				
Yes	12.7	43.0	44.3	79
No	9.7	48.4	41.9	31

Source: Survey of UCCS T/TR Faculty, n = 110

Given the salary disparities observed across groups of T/TR faculty at UCCS, we now draw on both quantitative and qualitative data to explore how faculty perceive these inequities.

Perceptions of Pay among UCCS T/TR Faculty Based on Survey Data

We examine faculty's satisfaction with their starting wages and their views of the market-driven salary structure at UCCS. As shown in Table 3, fifty-nine percent of respondents were dissatisfied with their starting salaries at UCCS, and 55% disagreed with the statement that using market-driven considerations to determine faculty salaries, resulting in cross-college pay disparities, is appropriate for our campus.

We found no statistically significant differences by gender, race, rank, and college in faculty satisfaction with their starting wages[3]. However, there is a significant association (χ^2 test, p=0.035 in Table 4) between faculty's ranks and perception of the appropriateness of the university's market-driven approach to faculty salaries; As rank increases, the proportion expressing favorable views of the market-driven salary structure tends to increase. We also found differences by college affiliation. Whereas faculty from most of the other colleges expressed negative opinions about the market-driven salary structure, most faculty in BUS and EAS favor this approach. This pattern is statistically significant (χ^2 test, p<0.001) in Table 5.

Next, we analyze perceived fairness in current salaries of T/TR faculty. Table 6 shows a general dissatisfaction with salary fairness among T/TR faculty at UCCS. A large majority (66.4%) of T/TR faculty disagreed or strongly disagreed that their current salary accurately reflects their career productivity and contributions, while only 23% agreed or strongly agreed. Likewise, 61% disagreed that their salary was fair compared to faculty in other colleges, and 70% disagreed that their salary was fair compared to peers at similar institutions, highlighting concerns about both internal and external equity. Perceptions were slightly more positive when comparing salaries within the same college (internal equity); Over a third (35.5%) agreed that their salary was fair relative to other faculty in their college. However, a greater share (41%) felt their salaries within the college were unfair (Table 6).

[3] Results are available upon request.

Table 3 Satisfaction with the Starting Wage and the Market-driven Salary Structure

	Freq. (%)
I was satisfied with my starting salary at UCCS.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	**65 (59.1%)**
Neither agree nor disagree	10 (9.09%)
Strongly agree & Agree	35 (31.8%)
The University approach of using market-driven considerations to determine faculty salaries, resulting in cross-college pay disparities, is appropriate for our campus.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	**60 (54.5%)**
Neither agree nor disagree	16 (14.5%)

Table 4 Distribution and χ^2 Test of the Acceptance of the Market-driven Salary Structure across Faculty's Ranks

	Current title at UCCS			
	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Full Professor	p
N	46 (42.2%)	33 (30.3%)	30 (27.5%)	
The University approach of using market-driven considerations to determine faculty salaries, resulting in cross-college pay disparities, is appropriate for our campus.				
Strongly disagree & Disagree	28 (60.9%)	18 (54.5%)	13 (43.3%)	**0.035**
Neither agree nor disagree	10 (21.7%)	4 (12.1%)	2 (6.7%)	
Strongly agree & Agree	8 (17.4%)	11 (33.3%)	15 (50.0%)	

Table 5 Distribution and χ^2 Test of the Acceptance of the Market-driven Salary Structure across Colleges

	College (LAS into Low vs High Income)								
	AA	BUS	Beth El	COE	CPS	EAS	LAS Low-Paid	LAS High-Paid	p
N	3 (2.7%)	13 (11.8%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	13 (11.8%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	
The University approach of using market-driven considerations to determine faculty salaries									
Strongly disagree & Disagree	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	3 (42.9%)	6 (75.0%)	7 (100.0%)	2 (15.4%)	26 (76.5%)	15 (60.0%)	**<0.001**
Neither agree nor disagree	2 (66.7%)	1 (7.7%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (15.4%)	5 (14.7%)	2 (8.0%)	
Strongly agree & Agree	1 (33.3%)	**11 (84.6%)**	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	**9 (69.2%)**	3 (8.8%)	8 (32.0%)	

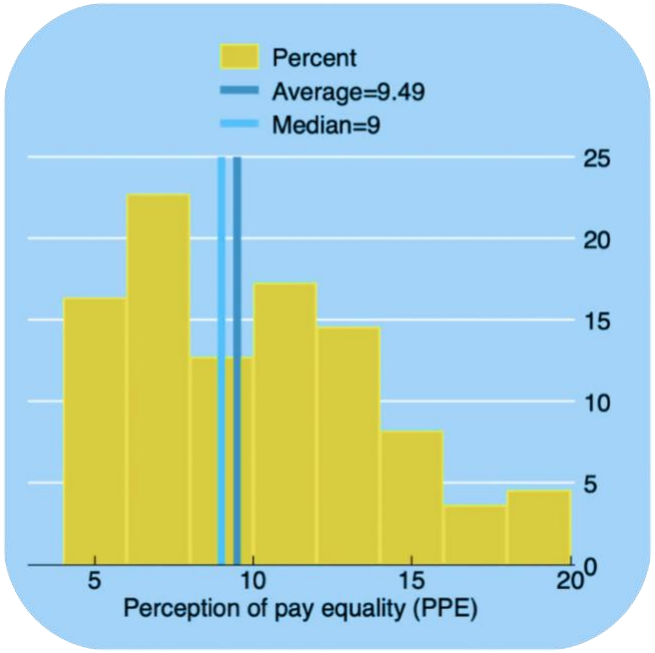

Figure 2 Histogram of PPE with Lines for Average and Median

We generated the perception of pay equity (PPE) score to summarize faculty's responses to those four five-point scales about salary fairness[4], with higher scores indicating a stronger perceived fairness of the faculty's current salary. The PPE ranged from 4 to 20, with a median of 9, an average of 9.49, and a standard deviation of 4.01. As illustrated in Figure 2, the distribution of PPE was skewed to the right, and half of the respondents' PPE scores were 9 or lower. Such a distribution of PPE was consistent with the prevailing dissatisfaction across the four scales and indicated widespread disapproval of compensation fairness.

One-way ANOVA tests showed no significant differences in PPE scores across gender identities, racial/ethnic groups, faculty ranks, and union statuses[5]. However, female faculty members (9.508) and respondents with non-binary gender identities (7.857) showed lower PPE scores, suggesting they perceive their current salaries as less fair than males. Asian/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander/Middle Eastern faculty, the group most represented at the highest pay category, had the highest mean PPE scores (11.429), while African American/Native American/Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx/Other faculty had the lowest (8.111).

Table 6 also displays differences in perceptions of pay equity (PPE) across UCCS colleges. The results show notable variation in how faculty perceive fairness in their salaries, both in relation to their contributions and compared to peers inside and outside their colleges. Faculty in the college of LAS with lower pay reported the lowest perceptions of pay equity, with 82% disagreeing that their salary reflects their productivity, and only 9% agreeing. Conversely, Beth El faculty members had more positive views, with 43% agreeing that their salaries reflect their contributions and 71% perceiving their salaries as fair relative to those of other faculty within their college.

Compared to faculty in other colleges, perceptions of fairness were especially low in COE, CPS, and among low-paid LAS units, where over 85% disagreed that their salaries were fair relative to faculty in other colleges. The average PPE scores further illustrate these disparities. LAS low-paid faculty had the lowest average score (7.6), while Beth El faculty scored the highest (12.9). The differences in average PPE scores across colleges were statistically significant (ANOVA F test, $p = 0.009$), indicating that college affiliation significantly influences faculty perceptions of pay equity. These findings highlight the need for a closer review of salary structures and transparency across UCCS colleges.

[4] The original measures of salary fairness were four five-point scales, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. We presented these measures as three-point scales to make this report more concise.

[5] Results are available upon request.

Table 6 Distribution and Hypothesis Tests of Perception of Pay Equity (PPE) Among T/TR Faculty Across UCCS Colleges

	All Faculty	AA	BUS	Beth El	COE	CPS	EAS	LAS Low-Pay	LAS High-Pay	p
Sample size n (%)		3 (2.7%)	13 (11.8%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	13 (11.8%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	
My current salary accurately reflects my career productivity and contributions.										
Strongly disagree/disagree	66.4	33.3	46.2	57.1	50.0	85.7	76.9	82.4	56.0	0.094*
Neither agree nor disagree	10.9	33.3	30.8	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	8.8	8.0	
Strongly agree/agree	22.7	33.3	23.1	42.9	25.0	14.3	23.1	8.8	36.0	
My current salary is fair in relation to all other faculty in my college.										
Strongly disagree/disagree	40.9	33.3	46.2	14.3	25.0	42.9	53.8	55.9	24.0	0.280*
Neither agree nor disagree	23.6	0.0	15.4	14.3	25.0	14.3	23.1	26.5	32.0	
Strongly agree/agree	35.5	66.7	38.5	71.4	50.0	42.9	23.1	17.6	44.0	
My current salary is fair in relation to all other faculty in other colleges at UCCS										
Strongly disagree/disagree	60.9	33.3	15.4	14.3	87.5	85.7	38.5	85.3	64.0	<0.001*
Neither agree nor disagree	16.4	33.3	38.5	0.0	12.5	0.0	15.4	8.8	24.0	
Strongly agree/agree	22.7	33.3	46.2	85.7	0.0	14.3	46.2	5.9	12.0	
My current salary is fair in relation to faculty with similar qualifications at comparable peer institutions.										
Strongly disagree/disagree	70.0	66.7	76.9	57.1	75.0	42.9	92.3	82.4	48.0	0.109*
Neither agree nor disagree	18.2	33.3	15.4	28.6	12.5	14.3	7.7	8.8	36.0	
Strongly agree/agree	11.8	0.0	7.7	14.3	12.5	42.9	0.0	8.8	16.0	
Average PPE Score	9.49 (4.0)	11.3 (4.2)	11.3 (3.3)	12.9 (4.7)	9.8 (2.8)	9.3 (5.3)	8.7 (3.7)	7.6 (3.4)	10.4 (4.1)	0.009^

Source: Survey of UCCS T/TR Faculty, n = 110; * χ^2 test p-value; ^ ANOVA F test p-value; NOTE: We reorganized the original four items measured as five-point scales into three categories to converse space in the table.

Interview Data & Perceptions of Pay

The qualitative comments demonstrate that faculty's perceptions of pay inequities vary within and across colleges. These perceptions are further discussed in the sections below.

Faculty Satisfied with Pay

Some faculty members expressed satisfaction with their pay and shared their views on their compensation. For example, Nathaniel, an endowed professor in a high-pay department, said, "I am paid too much." They also discussed pay disparities. Mireille, an associate professor in a lower-paying unit, mentioned, "Yes. That's an interesting question…. I know there are significant differences in pay based on primary units." Faculty members from high-pay colleges tended to focus on personal factors when discussing job satisfaction and inequalities. In contrast, faculty from mid- and low-pay colleges, who were generally satisfied with their salaries, highlighted institutional and market factors. They often compared their pay favorably to that of colleagues in other departments or institutions.

Meritocracy and Rational-Choice

Some faculty who felt satisfied with their salaries justified their pay by discussing the concept of meritocracy. Faculty holding these views were typically found in higher-paying colleges or high-pay departments within lower-paying colleges. Faculty members who expressed the concept of meritocracy often attributed salary outcomes to personal effort and choices. For example, Nathaniel, an endowed professor in a high-pay college, when discussing his job satisfaction, also explained how other faculty perceive his salary:

> I hear faculty, they complain about salaries and some people figure out…what my salary is, and they think it's..unfair or whatever…I took a salary cut to get here…they do the extra work to get research contracts over the summer… Faculty members have what areas they wanna work on, and this is how much money is there versus how much fun is there and how much competition is there. Those are all choices faculty members make.

As we will discuss later in this report, faculty also used the concept of meritocracy to justify why faculty across colleges should not be paid equally when discussing the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act.

Job Market and Peer Comparisons

Even satisfied faculty acknowledged structural inequities in the UCCS pay structure. These faculty members frequently made cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental comparisons at UCCS. For example, Nathaniel, previously mentioned, said the following after noting that he was paid too much:

> In my department,[6] there are plenty of faculty that, that make more money than the commensurate faculty in engineering, despite the fact that in industry, their salaries would be flipped. So that's where I see the disparity.

Some faculty members in mid- and low-pay colleges perceived their pay as fair when comparing themselves to peers at other institutions. Faculty from low-pay colleges justified their pay satisfaction by comparing it favorably to peers at other universities, but also explained how other faculty viewed their pay unfavorably through interdepartmental comparisons. Astrid, an assistant professor in a low-pay college, stated the following about her salary and faculty pay at UCCS:

> Pretty favorably compared to peer institutions…The main issue that I'm aware of is the fact that like, you know, being a tenure track professor…(in) Letters, Arts, and Sciences gonna pay a lot less than in business. And that kind of sucks…we all need to live in Colorado Springs.

Faculty members are aware of pay disparities, and they often feel that administrators justify these differences by citing "free market" arguments. Some faculty accept these arguments and are satisfied with their salaries, even among those in the lowest pay brackets, such as tenure-track faculty in low-pay colleges. Interestingly, faculty from high-pay colleges who were satisfied with their pay are male. At mid- and low-pay colleges, satisfied faculty tend to be either female or non-binary. All faculty members who were satisfied with their pay were white.

Somewhat Satisfied

Some faculty members described themselves as somewhat satisfied with their pay. Most were white, one was Latina, and half were men. One faculty member works at a high-pay college, while some are from low-pay colleges. Like those who reported pay satisfaction, perceptions of being somewhat satisfied were mixed.

Salary and Peer Comparisons

Some faculty from high-pay colleges expressed satisfaction with their pay when comparing their salaries to UCCS faculty. However, as discussed above, private market comparisons shape perceptions of pay. Faculty in high-pay colleges believed they could earn significantly more in private industry, which influenced their views on their salaries. This creates a sense of satisfaction but also brings disappointment in knowing the potential salary they forgo to work in academia. Meanwhile, some faculty in low-pay colleges make peer comparisons, yet they are not disillusioned by the possibility of increased pay if they left UCCS. For these individuals, their

[6] To help protect the identity of faculty when they mentioned their home department, we changed the names of identified departments.

pay in private industry would not increase, but they remain satisfied with their current compensation. For example, Lillian, an assistant professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> On a scale of one to 10, I would say seven. Because I've had…some opportunities to see what my colleagues make, and I make much less, not much less… And I… I know it's because I'm in an area that is usually…low pay…It's average for someone in my position here at UCCS, it's less when compared to my colleagues.

This explanation reflects the complexity of gauging pay satisfaction in underfunded disciplines.

Unsatisfied

Most faculty members expressed dissatisfaction with their pay. Many explicitly stated they were unhappy with their compensation. Those who felt unsatisfied were more likely to be minoritized faculty. The majority were women, and many were either LGBTQI or Black faculty at UCCS. These concerns were found across various departments, disciplines, and career stages, not limited to a single area or rank. Of them, the majority were from low-pay colleges, but several from mid-pay and high-pay colleges. Faculty shared a range of grievances, many like those previously noted for faculty who were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their salaries.

Institutional Pay Disparities

Many faculty members discussed notable inequities in compensation among institutions outside of UCCS. Faculty in business, engineering, and computer science were often mentioned as earning more, while those in liberal arts and social sciences tend to have significantly lower pay due to market-based reasons. Faculty from high-pay colleges who voiced dissatisfaction with their salaries attributed their perceptions to institutional pay disparities. For example, Malcolm, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, explains why he feels unhappy with his pay.

> So I know that currently without summer support, I'm a little bit over $130 a year. I have the opportunity to maybe teach an extra class here or there and get an extra 10,000 and that's good. Like, that's good money…We just had a hit the other day in a major journal, which is probably a top-five journal in the field, which is great. There are people who are doing that at other institutions and getting paid a lot more.

This faculty member also discussed the long-term financial effects of remaining at an institution with limited earning potential. His remarks highlight how even higher-paid faculty may feel underpaid compared to their peers elsewhere. Despite widespread dissatisfaction with pay, some faculty members choose to stay because of intrinsic motivators, such as a love for teaching, job flexibility, or personal values. However, these trade-offs are often made reluctantly and under financial duress. Nadia, an assistant professor in a mid-pay college, explains why she continues in academia despite perceiving her pay as low.

> Yeah, it's just, it's, it's so low. My students right now graduating with their master's degree are contracting to get paid more than I get paid. I could make so much more money in the clinical world…I choose it mostly 'cause of the discretionary time, the flexibility of my schedule. I turned down a job making more than double what I make at UCCS to take the job at UCCS.

Faculty across all departments acknowledge they are underpaid, but some are dissatisfied with their pay, claiming the institution compensates them less than colleagues at other universities. Despite comparisons showing institutional inequality, including from faculty in high-pay colleges or high-pay units in LAS, the perception of low pay reinforces the belief that UCCS undervalues its faculty. However, as Nadia and faculty in mid-pay colleges, along with those discussed in the next section, demonstrate, they can earn higher salaries outside academia, reinforcing the belief they are underpaid at UCCS. Similar points were made by faculty in lower-paying colleges, but since low and mid-pay colleges continue to offer lower salaries, the knowledge that these faculty can also make more outside academia, is overlooked by college and university administrators. Similar sentiments are also expressed in the next section of this paper.

Inter-Departmental Pay Disparities

Faculty in mid-pay, but mostly in low-pay colleges, pointed to inter-college pay disparities as their primary reason for being dissatisfied with their salaries. For example, Clara, an associate professor in a low-pay college stated:

> I mean, certainly I think we've got a lot of issues across colleges. And the excuse that's always given is like, oh, business professors and accounting professors and engineering professors, they could all go get jobs being paid more. So they have to be paid more. And it's hard to know if that's true or not, because I could go get a job being paid way more. … I took a $20,000 pay cut to take this job initially.

Faculty challenged the idea that higher salaries in business, engineering, and computer science are justified solely because of external market conditions. They questioned why the value of teaching and academic labor is not equally recognized across disciplines. For example, Emilia, a full professor in a low-pay college, discussed her perspective on why she is dissatisfied with her pay.

> Well, one reason is there's such inequity across colleges and departments. So, I feel like, you know, that we as social scientists do comparable work to professors in engineering at the same rank. And so that's a real inequity. I don't think it should be based on market, you know, such as if your job's in demand, it should be based more on the work that we're doing, which is basically the exact same work. And so that feels really inequitable.

This critique highlights a broader concern about fairness. Faculty members who perform similar teaching, research, and service duties across disciplines believe that the institution should prioritize equity based on effort and contribution, rather than just market demands.

This view spans all ranks and departments. At the heart of this dissatisfaction are deep-rooted structural inequalities in how compensation is decided and allocated across departments and disciplines. Faculty described outdated and unclear salary analysis, unjustified market-based reasons for pay differences, and institutional policies that do not reflect the rising costs of living and increased workload expectations. Next, we discuss faculty's mixed perceptions of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act.

Chapter Three: Perceptions of the Equal Pay for Equal Work ACT (EPEWA)

Conceptually, nearly all UCCS faculty interviewed support EPEWA as a means of addressing faculty pay equity issues. Some faculty believed that the policy was making UCCS more equitable. However, many faculty members were critical of the policy's implementation at UCCS. In this section of the report, we first discuss perceptions of EPEWA based on quantitative data, followed by qualitative data.

Perceptions of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act Based on Survey Data

We explored respondents' awareness and expectations of the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA). Table 7 shows that 74% of respondents were aware of this Act: 43% understood the basic ideas, 25% knew some details, and six percent studied it carefully. Sixty-three percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "salaries on campus are market-driven, so we can do very little to make it equal." However, more than half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "The UCCS is a great place to work because of the equal pay for equal work policies." Their opinions were mostly neutral (43.4%) on the survey question that "Faculty salaries will be more equitable as a result of or since the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act."

Table 7 Awareness and Expectations of the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act

	Freq. (%)
For the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act of 2019,	
I have no idea about it at all.	14 (12.7%)
I know very little about this act	15 (13.6%)
I know basic ideas of this act.	**47 (42.7%)**
I know some details of this act.	27 (24.5%)
I carefully studied this act.	7 (6.36%)
Salaries on campus are market-driven, so we can do very little to make it equal.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	**68 (63%)**
Neither agree nor disagree	20 (18.5%)
Strongly agree & Agree	20 (18.5%)
The UCCS is a great place to work because of the equal pay for equal work policies.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	**63 (57.8%)**
Neither agree nor disagree	41 (37.6%)
Strongly agree & Agree	5 (4.59%)
Faculty salaries will be more equitable as a result of or since the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	45 (42.5%)
Neither agree nor disagree	**46 (43.4%)**
Strongly agree & Agree	15 (14.2%)

We further break down the awareness of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act by gender, race, current title, marital status, and college[7]. In these breakdowns, we see an interesting association with faculty ranks and race. As the rank increases, faculty awareness of the Act also increases (χ^2 test, p=0.035, Table 8). White faculty members have higher awareness of the EPEWA (χ^2 test, p=0.044, Table 9). We find no other statistically significant differences in awareness by gender and college. Colleagues in AA and BUS express stronger support for the statement, "salaries on campus are market-driven, so we can do very little to make it equal" while faculty in other colleges largely disagree with it (χ^2 test, p=0.022, Table 10).

Table 8 Distribution and the χ^2 Test of the Awareness of Equal Pay for Equal Work Act by Faculty Rank

	Current title at UCCS			
	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Full Professor	p
N	46 (42.2%)	33 (30.3%)	30 (27.5%)	
For the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act of 2019,				
I have no idea about it at all.	9 (19.6%)	2 (6.1%)	3 (10.0%)	**0.041**
I know very little about this act	8 (17.4%)	5 (15.2%)	2 (6.7%)	
I know basic ideas of this act.	22 (47.8%)	13 (39.4%)	11 (36.7%)	
I know some details of this act.	7 (15.2%)	11 (33.3%)	9 (30.0%)	
I carefully studied this act.	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.1%)	5 (16.7%)	

Table 9 Distribution and the χ^2 Test of the Awareness of Equal Pay for Equal Work Act by Race

	Race in 3 categories			
	White	AA/NA /HL/Other	Asian/ NHPI/ME	p
N	78 (70.9%)	18 (16.4%)	14 (12.7%)	
For the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act of 2019,				
I have no idea about it at all.	7 (9.0%)	3 (16.7%)	4 (28.6%)	**0.044**
I know very little about this act	11 (14.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (28.6%)	
I know basic ideas of this act.	37 (47.4%)	8 (44.4%)	2 (14.3%)	
I know some details of this act.	19 (24.4%)	4 (22.2%)	4 (28.6%)	
I carefully studied this act.	4 (5.1%)	3 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	

[7] Results are available upon request.

Table 10 Distribution of the Acceptance of the Market-driven Salary Structure across Colleges

	College (LAS into Low vs High Income)								
	AA	BUS	Beth El	COE	CPS	EAS	LAS Low-Paid	LAS High-Paid	p
N	3 (2.7%)	13 (11.8%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	13 (11.8%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	
Salaries on campus are market-driven, so we can do very little to make it equal									
Strongly disagree & Disagree	1 (33.3%)	5 (38.5%)	3 (50.0%)	7 (87.5%)	5 (71.4%)	5 (38.5%)	27 (79.4%)	15 (62.5%)	**0.022**
Neither agree nor disagree	0 (0.0%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (23.1%)	5 (14.7%)	7 (29.2%)	
Strongly agree & Agree	**2 (66.7%)**	**6 (46.2%)**	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (38.5%)	2 (5.9%)	2 (8.3%)	

Interview Data & Perceptions of EPEWA and Transparency

Only a few faculty members shared positive opinions on the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act. One recently hired faculty member supported any policy that promotes transparency in the hiring process. Another faculty member stated that they had seen some changes due to the Act and that it was a tool to ensure transparent negotiations with the administration. For example, an associate professor in a low-pay college stated, "When I started at UCCS, like it was just a negotiation between me and the then Dean, and I felt deceived. I felt lied to." This faculty believes the EPEWA puts more knowledge in the hands of new faculty to assist with job negotiations. Most faculty were, however, concerned about how UCCS interpreted and implemented the Act to address pay disparities on campus.

EPEWA and Transparency

One issue discussed was transparency. Some faculty members perceived a lack of transparency in the results of a university pay disparity study. For example, Sienna an associate professor in a low pay college stated,

> I think that the campus has been making an effort to look into these issues very recently. I know that the system-wide and then the campus sort of rolling onto the campus did sort of a gender analysis in terms of pay inequities…And this is several years ago now. I think that the campus could do a better job at communicating on what it is that they're doing, what they're finding and what they're fixing.

Some faculty members also discussed discovering instances where salary equity is addressed on a case-by-case basis due to EPEWA, which offers some hope for addressing their concerns regarding pay inequity. However, some faculty were skeptical about potential salary adjustments resulting from EPEWA.

EPEWA Skepticism

Some faculty were skeptical about the Act's ability to make salary adjustments. This skepticism was focused on transparency and whether the University would provide public salary information. For example, Eliza, an assistant professor in a mid-pay college stated:

> It should be equal pay for equal work. But unless there's transparency about what you're paying people…Like, how would I know that a male colleague in the same college but in a different department, maybe he's getting paid $4,000 more per year than I am.

Although salary data is publicly available on the CU website, this faculty member wanted the university to be more transparent about sharing this information. This faculty member may be unaware of the website. One issue we found with the CU website is that it is not easily searchable and only provides department and college identifiers, which prevents meaningful

comparisons, as Eliza discussed. Faculty also discussed their reluctance to believe that the EPEWA would address pay inequities due to institutional and cost-of-living variations in Colorado. Other universities in the CU system have larger campuses, bigger departments, more faculty, and are R1 institutions, thus having more resources than the smaller campus and departments at UCCS. Faculty believed that, due to these factors, their concerns about pay would not be addressed by the EPEWA.

UCCS Implementation of EPEWA

Faculty noted that the EPEWA was more about appearing equitable and did little to address salary inequities at UCCS. A consistent theme among faculty is that UCCS has opted to implement EPEWA differently than other campuses within the CU System. For example, Clara, an associate professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> Boulder is interpreting this act in a completely different way and much more flexibly than how UCCS (is). So…I would say…the department, the college of LAS is being really strict about it and saying, oh, we can't negotiate at all.

Faculty expressed frustration that the UCCS interpretation of the EPEWA has created obstacles to hiring and retaining faculty at UCCS, especially those dedicated to DEI. For example, Clara also stated,

> I think it's totally reduced the number of applications we get for jobs because it's so low….it's had a really negative thing on trying to hire diverse candidates because … other states aren't restricted or constrained that way…. it really hurts us in retaining faculty and retaining diverse faculty because it's sort of a well-known thing, …that if you really wanna increase your salary, … You get a job offer from somewhere else, and then the university matches it, and you just do that again and again and again. And now that we have you know (EPEWA), faculty who are really sought after being poached in a sense, particularly diverse faculty. So there's no negotiating for salary, no. …I think that's gonna kill us. I think we're gonna be, I mean, we've been super white for a long time. We're gonna be even whiter in five years at the university, at UCCS.

Some faculty members who discussed retention issues mentioned that they can use external offers to boost their salaries, but they cannot negotiate a larger percentage increase, which was a common practice in the past. The belief is that higher administration is concerned about equity across the department, and this concern limits their ability to negotiate to retain faculty. As a result, faculty perceived that UCCS is losing candidates and faculty to other universities and is unable to recruit talented faculty competitively.

Interpreting Substantially Similar Work

Faculty also expressed concerns about how UCCS interprets substantially similar work. Those in high-pay colleges (EAS, COB), when discussing substantially similar work, seemed to emphasize meritocracy, arguing that individuals who work harder should be compensated more for their efforts. For example, Malcom, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, stated, "But if somebody is doing the same work at a substantially higher level, then they should be able to be paid substantially more money…." Similarly, Sally, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, stated:

> I just think it's kind of a pipe dream…Like, okay, let's look at the Utopian society about it...your English professor and your computer science professor get paid exactly the same amount of money, you know, at each level of their…raise structure…I think it would make the English faculty feel really good, and I think it would make the computer science faculty feel really bad.

Sally then describes, based on the speaker's experiences, how college students feel that English courses are much easier than STEM courses. She points out that students don't need to put in as much effort in English classes, whereas STEM students study between 25 and 30 hours weekly in each class. Sally continues:

> And I think that's where the sort of fundamental inequity of it all is, is that we can't, how do you compare English to computer science? You know, the only metric we have is comparing us to industry or comparing us to other universities, right? …..If we were to try and do some type of equal pay across all disciplines, we would probably start to get excellent candidates in fields that don't usually pay well. So you'd see probably better candidates in history and English and Women's Studies. I think you would find worse candidates on the other side, right?....But I think we'd lose some of the better candidates on the engineering side, right?

Other faculty members also voiced concerns about how UCCS defines substantially similar work; however, they argue for more equitable pay. For example, Celeste, an assistant professor in a low-pay college:

> So we could do research, we could teach…putting in the exact same amount of time, same effort, even more effort for people in certain disciplines. And your work will still not be substantially similar to people who are paid more. Also, you know, fields like Sociology and WEST and History that are female dominated, they define substantial similarity as within unit. So in essence, you're doing substantially similar work as other women who are also underpaid. And the university can say, look, you are all underpaid because you are doing similar work. And your work is so different from these, your colleagues in other departments or other colleges. I think the substantial similarity is a good thing in the policy, but one that has allowed UCCS to not pay attention or express any willingness to, to, you know, address pay disparities that we know exist.

This faculty member expressed frustration that she could transfer to another department and do the same work but earn a higher salary solely because of the departmental difference. She also shared concerns about how the definition of "substantially similar" varies within the college and the unit, even though faculty members perform very similar types of work. Similarly, Nadia, an assistant professor in a mid-pay college, discussed how her workload was not fairly compensated.

> I think measuring like equal comparable service or comparable work would be things like your service load, your publication expectations…. I get paid less money than them. So why do I have different promotion standards than another department in my same college and I make less money? How? Like, to me, equal pay for equal work would mean we have similar promotion and tenure guidelines and we get paid similar things that it doesn't matter if we're all in that same college….And there's certainly an argument that can be made the other way, like in our department, we're required by our code of ethics and by our accreditation standards to have lots of service involvement. So we, we have to, in order to keep our program be much more involved in the community… We still get paid less and we have higher threshold for promotion and tenure. So equal pay for equal work would be like, that doesn't make any sense.

This faculty member's frustrations stem from the belief that she and her department colleagues are doing the same work. However, she and her colleagues earn less than faculty members in a different department, even though her department has higher productivity expectations than faculty in the same college. This example shows how fairness is judged within the department, not by productivity or other objective measures. These pay disparities within departments in the same college highlight the unfairness of EPEWA and pay inequity at UCCS.

Reproducing Pay Inequity

Interwoven throughout perceptions of EPEWA is a belief that the Act has influenced the recruitment and retention of DEI faculty. Faculty discussed this concern briefly in the previous section. All faculty members who voiced these worries were women, some from racially minoritized backgrounds. One faculty member mentioned that EPEWA was a good start but it does not fully address issues related to workload and salary inequalities. A major concern is how to compensate those who perform extra service work, especially women and racially minoritized individuals. For example, Lillian, an assistant professor at a low-pay college, questioned how EPEWA was being implemented at UCCS and whether there was oversight. Her primary goal was to promote greater equity at UCCS by addressing the uneven distribution of service work, particularly in relation to DEI issues. For example, she stated,

> At faculty assembly the provost has been talking about recognizing kind of quote unquote… the "invisible" work that is usually done by faculty of color in women and just to guarantee, for example, to just like bringing up issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in meetings. It's usually the same voices that do that.

Faculty who raised DEI equity concerns with EPEWA shared issues previously discussed regarding the act's implementation within colleges, but also pointed out that disparities exist across colleges (e.g., sociologists are paid differently in the College of Public Service compared to LAS). Emilia, an associate professor in a low-paying college, voiced her worries about how the EPEWA might perpetuate existing inequalities.

> People become professionals in my field do a lot of nonprofit work and things that are low paying. But that doesn't mean faculty should, in my view, faculty shouldn't make less because they're still doing the same work as the other faculty. So they're, they're reproducing that inequity that already exists in society.

Gideon, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, provides an example of how the University reproduces pay inequities through EPEWA. This faculty member stated the following about the impact of the EPEWA on him personally:

> And I'm also familiar with the Equal Pay Act, and so I know that I actually got a raise after the Equal Pay Act. I was like, what? Why <laugh> give it to them (lower paying colleges)? Right. But it made sense. Because you know, it's kind of more interdepartmental or within your college, I guess.

According to the faculty member, he stated that people in his department received a raise because faculty in a specialty area were paid more than those in other areas. To address this pay inequity within the department, UCCS decided to provide additional compensation to underpaid faculty in his department. While this approach created a more equitable distribution of pay within the department, it further widened pay disparities with lower-paying colleges.

Chapter Four: Quantitative Analysis of Commitment to UCCS Based on Survey Data

The following indicators highlight three aspects of faculty's institutional commitment. Two five-point scales assess how proud faculty are to be part of UCCS and how much they care about UCCS's future. As shown in Table 11, 61.8% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they're proud to be members of the Mountain Lion family. Additionally, 85.5% truly care about UCCS's future. Three ten-point scales measured respondents' plans to remain at UCCS. Higher scores indicate a higher likelihood. The average for a five-year plan to remain at UCCS is 7.88, with a standard deviation of 2.59, indicating that respondents are very likely to stay with UCCS in the near future. The average likelihood of staying decreases to 6.46, with a standard deviation of 3.04, when projected over the next ten years. Interestingly, when asked about retiring at UCCS, the average increases to 7.16, with a standard deviation of 2.99.

Several hypothetical scenarios also reflect institutional commitment. Five ten-point scales measure people's likelihood of leaving UCCS (higher values indicate a higher likelihood). Among the reasons to leave, higher salary (7.39), better health care benefits (7.01), and a higher rank (5.83) at another institution were the highest-ranked options.

Table 11 Summary Statistics of Institutional Commitment Indicators

	Mean (SD)/ Freq. (%)
I am proud to tell others that I am part of UCCS.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	16 (14.5%)
Neither agree nor disagree	26 (23.6%)
Strongly agree & Agree	**68 (61.8%)**
I really care about the future of UCCS.	
Strongly disagree & Disagree	5 (4.55%)
Neither agree nor disagree	11 (10%)
Strongly agree & Agree	**94 (85.5%)**
I want to stay in the next five years.	7.88 (2.59)
I want to stay in the next ten years.	6.46 (3.04)
I plan to retire at UCCS.	7.16 (2.99)
I would leave UCCS if I was offered ...	
a higher salary at another university.	7.39 (2.48)
better health care benefits at another university.	7.01 (2.56)
a higher rank at another university.	5.83 (2.81)
better tuition waiver benefits at another university.	4.89 (2.86)
more research support or more research opportunities at another university.	4.75 (2.63)

Next, we examine institutional commitment by gender (male, female, non-binary), race (White, African American, and Asian), faculty rank (assistant, associate, and full), and college (Library/AA, Business/BUS, Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences/Beth El, Education/COE, Public Service/CPS, Engineering and Applied Science/EAS, and Letters, Arts, and Sciences/LAS). As in the first report, we divided LAS (the largest college) into low-paid and high-paid units (all bi-variate descriptions and tests are available upon request).

Currently married or cohabitating respondents (see results in Table 12) have a stronger preference to stay at UCCS for the next five years (t test, p=0.006) or to retire at UCCS (t test, p=0.041<0.05), relative to single faculty (not in co-residential relationships). Respondents from AA, Beth El, and COE reported a stronger preference to leave UCCS within the next ten years compared to respondents from other colleges (ANOVA test, p = 0.007; see Table 13). As shown in Table 14, full professors were more likely to express a desire to retire at UCCS (ANOVA test, p<0.001).

Assistant professors expressed a stronger tendency to leave UCCS for higher ranks at other institutions than professors at higher ranks (ANOVA test, p=0.048 in Table 14). Non-white faculty members expressed higher preference to leave UCCS for a higher rank (ANOVA test, p=0.030 in Table 15). They also expressed a higher tendency to leave UCCS for more research support or opportunities (ANOVA test, p=0.005 in Table 15).

Table 12 Institutional Commitment by Marital Status with P-values from T Tests

	Currently married/cohabiting (Yes=1)		
	No	Yes	p
N	31 (28.2%)	79 (71.8%)	
I want to stay in the next five years.	6.786 (2.927)	8.314 (2.325)	**0.006**
I plan to retire at UCCS.	6.152 (3.142)	7.519 (2.868)	**0.041**

Table 13 Institutional Commitment by College with P-values from ANOVA Tests

	College (LAS into Low vs High Income)								
	AA	BUS	Beth El	COE	CPS	EAS	LAS-Low-Income	LAS-High-Income	p
N	3 (2.7%)	13 (11.8%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	13 (11.8%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	
I want to stay in the next ten years.	4.000 (1.000)	7.700 (2.162)	2.917 (2.417)	4.600 (2.948)	7.857 (3.761)	6.145 (3.193)	7.030 (2.713)	6.674 (3.071)	**0.011**

Table 14 Institutional Commitment by Current Ranks with P-values from ANOVA Tests

	Current Ranks at UCCS			
	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Full Professor	p
N	46 (42.2%)	33 (30.3%)	30 (27.5%)	
I plan to retire at UCCS.	5.853 (3.015)	7.400 (2.827)	8.900 (1.927)	**<0.001**
I would leave UCCS for a higher rank at another university.	6.260 (2.626)	5.826 (2.713)	4.171 (3.066)	**0.048**

Table 15 Institutional Commitment by Race with P-values from ANOVA Tests

	Race in 3 categories			
	White	AA/NA/ HL/Other	Asian/ NHPI/ME	p
N	78 (70.9%)	18 (16.4%)	14 (12.7%)	
I would leave UCCS for a higher rank at another university.	5.362 (2.855)	6.636 (2.530)	7.442 (2.156)	**0.030**
I would leave UCCS for more research support or more research opportunities at another university.	4.215 (2.447)	6.008 (2.089)	6.323 (3.096)	**0.005**

Qualitative Analysis of Commitment to UCCS Based on Interview Data

In qualitative interviews, faculty were invited to reflect on their morale and commitment to the institution. Our interest in this area was informed by the premise that compensation affects morale, which, in turn, influences institutional commitment.

High Morale & Commitment among High-Paid Faculty

Faculty who expressed high morale and institutional commitment were either faculty in high-pay colleges or were part of a high-pay unit within LAS. Julian, an associate professor in a low-pay college, but in a high-paying department, discussed how pay impacts his morale and commitment:

> My department morale is pretty good because… we know what we're paid. We know it's better than a lot of other departments…So, within our department, morale and commitment aren't a problem. I think in other departments…you know, people are upset that they went on to get this, this PhD…then they're paid at this low level.

For high-paid faculty, pay and other institutional resources influenced their morale and commitment to UCCS. For example, Marcus, an associate professor in a high-pay college, stated, "so institutional resources matter to me as much as pay. So I, I think that, you know, the, the pay does not really make a huge impact on my morale..." Interviews revealed that faculty in high-pay colleges receive resources unavailable to faculty at other colleges. For example, faculty in high-pay colleges receive summer research funding, tiered publication incentives, tiered course-release incentives, increased travel funds, higher summer teaching pay, etc. These institutional resources serve as added benefits and incentives that enhance morale and commitment. Job flexibility was also mentioned in interviews as enhancing faculty morale. The faculty members who expressed a dedication to UCCS because of their pay or prioritized institutional resources were all male, heterosexual, and white.

Splintered Perceptions of Commitment and Morale

Some faculty members discussed splintered perceptions of commitment and morale. For example, Nadia expressed her commitment to the university while also mentioning low morale. Nadia, an assistant professor at a mid-pay college, stated,

> I could say I can make a lot more money, but I'm making this choice... Like I have joined for this salary, I agreed to it. So I am committed. I don't think it's great for my morale. It's disappointing. And I also have a substantial part-time income because I practice still… I have student loans…it's Colorado Springs…I'm working constantly and that's not good for my morale. I would love to not have to, I would, I would love to do it because I wanna do it, not because I have to do it, but in order to like, make things work in this community where cost of living has just skyrocketed in recent years.

Nadia describes how various factors influence her morale and dedication to UCCS. Although Nadia remains committed to UCCS, her morale is low, and she appears stressed in ways that higher-paid college faculty do not. Others mentioned a decline in morale related to institutional processes such as the annual merit review (AMR) but emphasized that faculty still maintain their commitment to UCCS. For example, Fiona, an associate professor at a low-paying college, stated:

> I mean, I have always been more driven by my own career and work style than my institution. So most of the time it's something I try to ignore…I do some consulting jobs and you know, just try and like supplement…It's irritating. It can definitely get me down. I don't think it affects my work because I like work… And yet I don't see anyone on our team who's less dedicated to our work because of it.

Some faculty with splintered views also discussed low commitment to UCCS. Emilia, a full professor in a low-pay college, stated the following about commitment and morale to the university:

> It has decreased over time. I mean, as I said, I'm probably the person who has been here the longest. And I feel like less and less committed and loyal and just care less about the university. I care about students a lot and I care about other faculty, you know, the individuals who are terrific and amazing to work with, which is why I've stayed here. But I'm tired of doing so much service for the university…if it were valued, our pay would be higher for doing those things that would consider, those things valuable, but they don't.

For some faculty members with split views, pay is only part of the calculus of their commitment and morale at UCCS. For example, Adrian, an associate professor in a mid-pay college, expressed some commitment to UCCS but expressed frustration with the cost of living that could impact his long-term prospects at UCCS:

> I'd say I have mixed feelings about it. I really like my college, I like my department and I like my colleagues. I really like, I like, especially my new dean. … However, you know, given if…it was less expensive to live in Colorado, I feel like I would be, I wouldn't have my fillers out more for, for what other opportunities might exist. But given that…basically on a single income and I'm priced out of a home here, like, you know, if, if I get a, a similar opportunity somewhere else and it's less expensive to live, I, I feel I would take that.

Those faculty who expressed split views regarding morale or commitment were mostly heterosexual white females. Exceptions include one black female, one black gay male, and a white gay female. A faculty member from a high-pay college also had mixed views, but he was a white male who secured a higher-paid position at a research one institution. He was committed to working with students and completing his service commitments before leaving UCCS. Since he secured a new position, he was less dedicated to UCCS. An example of faculty from a high pay

college who held split views of morale and committee is provided by Sally, an assistant professor who expressed:

> I am at a point in my career where I have spent 20 years doing the altruistic thing. You know, I made my sacrifices, I took my pay cuts and I did it because I wanted to give back. I have now reached the selfish portion of my life, <laugh>. And I want to earn for me, you know, I wanna retire in like five years. In order to do that, I need to make a lot more money. So that's kind of like, that's where I am. I'm in a slightly different position than some people. But if the pay wasn't an issue, you know, then I would stay longer, you know? But now that the pay is an issue, I don't have any incentive to stay here, you know?

A sense of frustration resonates with Sally. It is a frustration connected to pay, but also university budget issues and individual sacrifices have left them in a situation where they are struggling to retire on their desired timeline. Interestingly, two faculty members who expressed that pay affected both their morale and institutional commitment were from high-pay colleges at UCCS. Each of these faculty members' social identities (race/ethnicity or sexual orientation) may have influenced their perceptions of pay. These faculty members embody individuals whose social identities and perceptions of local economic and community conditions create a sense of frustration, possibly, further informing their low commitment to the university.

In the qualitative interviews, some faculty members expressed no opinion regarding the levels of commitment. Instead, they discussed frustration with budget cuts, the high cost of living, concerns about the future of higher education, and the desire for higher pay. However, their responses suggested low commitment to UCCS and low morale, reflecting frustrations related to institutional practices and cost-of-living issues. All these faculty, except for one, were from low-pay colleges, and most were white, heterosexual women. Some of these faculty noted that their spouses' salaries were essential for maintaining a middle-class lifestyle, and that without their spouses, they would have left UCCS.

Chapter Five: Pay Disparities Repercussions

Quantitative Analysis of Pay Disparities Repercussions

Another goal of this research was to examine how pay disparities affected the academic and personal lives of faculty members. To assess the academic impact, we focused on how pay influences a faculty member's decision to take either a year-long sabbatical or a half-semester one. We also consider how pay may influence a faculty member's decision to seek additional compensation beyond their regular pay at UCCS. We also focus on lifestyle choices to help assess the impact of pay inequality. We specifically examined the decisions to purchase a home and to take vacations. In addition, we also considered how school loans and pay influenced these lifestyle choices. We start by examining whether pay affected the length of a sabbatical. Assistant professors have never taken sabbaticals, and more full professors have taken sabbaticals than associate professors (Table 16). Given the salary structure, higher-earning faculty members were more likely to have a sabbatical history than lower-earning faculty members. No other differences were detected in the faculty sabbatical history data[8].

The survey revealed a significant union status difference (Table 17) in future sabbatical plans. Currently married or cohabiting faculty members had clearer future sabbatical plan (32.9% had no clear plans) than their single colleagues (61.3% had no clear plans). For all faculty members, semester-long sabbatical plans were more favorable than a year-long plan. However, the survey did not show differences in sabbatical plans across gender, race, current title, income categories, and college[9].

The survey data revealed significant impacts of pay disparity on faculty's decisions to seek additional sources of income. The survey captured six types of additional income sources, namely grants/funding, summer teaching, teaching for another university as a lecturer, other part-time work unrelated to teaching, rental income, and stocks/mutual funds (see Table 18). Of the 110 survey respondents, 29 (26.4%) had no additional source of income, 38 (34.5%) had one type of additional compensation, 26 (23.6%) had two types, and the remaining 17 (15.5%) cases had three or more types.

[8] Results are available upon request.

[9] Results are available upon request.

Table 16 Current Title and 2023-2024 Salary on Sabbatical History with P-values from χ^2 Tests

	Current title at UCCS			
	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Full Professor	p
N	46 (42.2%)	33 (30.3%)	30 (27.5%)	
Ever taken sabbatical (Yes=1)?				
No	46 (100.0%)	9 (27.3%)	3 (10.0%)	<0.001
Yes	0 (0.0%)	24 (72.7%)	27 (90.0%)	
	2023-2024 contract salary at UCCS			
	Below $70,000	$70,000-$89,999	$90,000 or higher	p
N	13 (11.8%)	49 (44.5%)	48 (43.6%)	
Ever taken sabbatical (Yes=1)?				
No	13 (100.0%)	30 (61.2%)	16 (33.3%)	<0.001
Yes	0 (0.0%)	19 (38.8%)	32 (66.7%)	

Table 17 Future Sabbatical Plan by Union Status with P-value from a χ^2 Test

	Currently married/cohabiting		
	No	Yes	p
N	31 (28.2%)	79 (71.8%)	
Plan of next sabbatical			
For a semester	7 (22.6%)	38 (48.1%)	0.018
For an academic year	5 (16.1%)	15 (19.0%)	
I am not sure now.	19 (61.3%)	26 (32.9%)	

As the contract salary at UCCS increases (see Table 19), the proportion having grants/funding (χ^2 test, p=0.014) and stocks/mutual funds (χ^2 test, p=0.004) also increases. There is no statistically significant impact of contract salary at UCCS on the other four types of additional income sources[10]. We also saw a significant gender difference in additional income sources, i.e., male faculty members were more likely to have rental income (p=0.010) and incomes from stocks and mutual funds (p=0.016) than colleagues of other gender identities (Table 20). To be specific, 20% of male respondents had rental income, compared to 3.2% of females; 35% of males had stocks or mutual funds, while only 14.3% of female respondents had. More

[10] Results are available upon request.

interestingly, none of the respondents with non-binary gender identities reported these two additional sources of income. Having additional income sources did not differ significantly by race and union status. These statistically insignificant results are available upon request.
The survey also showed differences by rank in stocks and mutual funds (p=0.049, Table 21); full professors had a more than doubled probability (36.7%) of having stocks and mutual funds than associate (15.2%) and assistant professors (15.2%). The full breakdown of other income sources by title is available upon request.

The college differences in additional income sources were very interesting (Table 22). Faculty members in CPS had the highest proportion (85.7%) of grants/funding as additional income sources, followed by EAS (69.2%) and COE (62.5%). Faculty in LAS high-paid departments (44%) were more likely to have grants/funding than their low-paid counterparts (26.5%). No respondent from AA had grants/funding. College of education had the largest share of faculty doing summer teaching (87.5%), followed by Beth El and CPS (42.9%). Faculty in LAS low-paid departments were more likely (35.3%) to teach during the summer than their counterparts in LAS high-paid units (28%). No respondents from AA had summer teaching opportunities. For other non-teaching part-time jobs, faculty in CPS (71.4%) and COE (50%) had the highest percentages. Faculty in EAS had the highest percentage (38.5%) of rental income. The breakdowns of all additional income sources by college is available upon request.

Table 18 Summary Statistic of Six Types of Additional Income Sources

	Summary
N	110
Grants/funding	
No	65 (59.1%)
Yes	45 (40.9%)
Summer teaching	
No	75 (68.2%)
Yes	35 (31.8%)
Teaching as a lecturer for another university	
No	103 (93.6%)
Yes	7 (6.36%)
Other part-time work that is not teaching	
No	85 (77.3%)
Yes	25 (22.7%)
Rental income	
No	100 (90.9%)
Yes	10 (9.09%)
Stocks and mutual funds	
No	87 (79.1%)
Yes	23 (20.9%)

Table 19 Impact of Pay Disparity on Additional Income Sources with P-values of χ^2 Tests

	2023-2024 contract salary at UCCS			
	Below $70,000	$70,000-$89,999	$90,000 or higher	p
N	13 (11.8%)	49 (44.5%)	48 (43.6%)	
Grants/funding				
No	10 (76.9%)	34 (69.4%)	21 (43.8%)	**0.014**
Yes	3 (23.1%)	15 (30.6%)	27 (56.2%)	
Stocks and mutual funds				
No	12 (92.3%)	44 (89.8%)	31 (64.6%)	**0.004**
Yes	1 (7.7%)	5 (10.2%)	17 (35.4%)	

Table 20 Gender on Additional Income Sources with P-values of χ^2 Tests

	Gender			
	Male	Female	Non-binary	p
N	40 (36.4%)	63 (57.3%)	7 (6.4%)	
Rental income				
No	32 (80.0%)	61 (96.8%)	7 (100.0%)	0.010
Yes	8 (20.0%)	2 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	
Stocks and mutual funds				
No	26 (65.0%)	54 (85.7%)	7 (100.0%)	0.016
Yes	14 (35.0%)	9 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	

Table 21 Current Title on Additional Income Source with P-value of χ^2 Test

	Current title at UCCS			
	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Full Professor	p
N	46 (42.2%)	33 (30.3%)	30 (27.5%)	
Stocks and mutual funds				
No	39 (84.8%)	28 (84.8%)	19 (63.3%)	0.049
Yes	7 (15.2%)	5 (15.2%)	11 (36.7%)	

Table 22 College Difference on Additional Income Sources with P-values of χ^2 Tests

	College								
	AA	BUS	Beth El	COE	CPS	EAS	LAS Low-paid	LAS High-paid	p
N	3 (2.7%)	13 (11.8%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	13 (11.8%)	34 (30.9%)	25 (22.7%)	
Grants/funding									
No	3 (100.0%)	9 (69.2%)	6 (85.7%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (30.8%)	25 (73.5%)	14 (56.0%)	0.007
Yes	0 (0.0%)	4 (30.8%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (62.5%)	**6 (85.7%)**	9 (69.2%)	9 (26.5%)	11 (44.0%)	
Summer teaching									
No	3 (100.0%)	11 (84.6%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (57.1%)	12 (92.3%)	22 (64.7%)	18 (72.0%)	0.008
Yes	0 (0.0%)	2 (15.4%)	3 (42.9%)	**7 (87.5%)**	3 (42.9%)	1 (7.7%)	12 (35.3%)	7 (28.0%)	
Other part-time work that is not teaching									
No	3 (100.0%)	13 (100.0%)	6 (85.7%)	4 (50.0%)	2 (28.6%)	10 (76.9%)	28 (82.4%)	19 (76.0%)	0.010
Yes	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (50.0%)	**5 (71.4%)**	3 (23.1%)	6 (17.6%)	6 (24.0%)	
Rental income									
No	3 (100.0%)	13 (100.0%)	6 (85.7%)	8 (100.0%)	7 (100.0%)	8 (61.5%)	32 (94.1%)	23 (92.0%)	0.015
Yes	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	**5 (38.5%)**	2 (5.9%)	2 (8.0%)	
Stocks and mutual funds									
No	2 (66.7%)	9 (69.2%)	5 (71.4%)	7 (87.5%)	7 (100.0%)	8 (61.5%)	26 (76.5%)	23 (92.0%)	0.285
Yes	1 (33.3%)	4 (30.8%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (38.5%)	8 (23.5%)	2 (8.0%)	

Finally, current contract salary is related to homeownership rate. As shown in Table 23, the percentage of homeowners increases as the contracted salaries increase (χ^2 test, p=0.020). It's not surprising to see that faculty with higher salaries are more likely to be homeowners. The survey also measures faculty's lifestyles by assessing organic food purchases, spending on hobbies and leisure, and annual donations. Results in Table 23 illustrate that better-paid faculty members spend more on hobbies and leisure (χ^2 test, p=0.026) and donated more (χ^2 test, p<0.001). However, pay disparity is not significantly correlated to people's frequency of purchasing organic food.

Table 23 Impact of Pay Disparity on Homeownership and Lifestyle with P-values of χ^2 Tests

	2023-2024 contract salary at UCCS			
	Below $70,000	$70,000-$89,999	$90,000 or higher	p
N	13 (11.8%)	49 (44.5%)	48 (43.6%)	
Homeowner				
No	4 (30.8%)	9 (18.4%)	2 (4.2%)	**0.020**
Yes	9 (69.2%)	40 (81.6%)	46 (95.8%)	
Annual spending on hobbies and leisure				
Less than $500	1 (7.7%)	12 (24.5%)	6 (12.5%)	**0.026**
$500 to $999.99	3 (23.1%)	13 (26.5%)	9 (18.8%)	
$1,000 to $2,999.99	8 (61.5%)	14 (28.6%)	14 (29.2%)	
$3,000 to $4999.99	0 (0.0%)	8 (16.3%)	7 (14.6%)	
$5,000 or above	1 (7.7%)	2 (4.1%)	12 (25.0%)	
Annual donation				
Less than $500	11 (84.6%)	28 (57.1%)	11 (22.9%)	**<0.001**
$500 to $999.99	1 (7.7%)	14 (28.6%)	10 (20.8%)	
$1,000 to $2,999.99	1 (7.7%)	3 (6.1%)	11 (22.9%)	
$3,000 to $4999.99	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	3 (6.2%)	
$5,000 or above	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.1%)	13 (27.1%)	
How often do you eat organic food?				
Daily or weekly	10 (76.9%)	22 (44.9%)	27 (56.2%)	0.175
Monthly	3 (23.1%)	13 (26.5%)	9 (18.8%)	
Yearly or less	0 (0.0%)	14 (28.6%)	12 (25.0%)	

Qualitative Analysis of Repercussions of Pay Disparities

Academic Impact

Nearly all faculty members across all colleges reported that pay influenced their decision to take a semester-long sabbatical rather than a year-long one. Some faculty members at UCCS were pre-tenure and unsure how sabbaticals worked on campus. Faculty, especially those in high-pay colleges, expressed a desire to focus on a vacation or maintain their current standard of living. For example Julian, an associate professor in a low pay-college, but high-pay department stated:

> Does my pay affect that (vacation)? Right now? It does, because I'm still a younger professor and upward three kids, you know, so I would say I'm not sure I could really afford to take a year sabbatical at the pay right now. My next, certainly my last one, I couldn't afford it. My next one, I could probably do it, but I think we're gonna try, I think we're actually gonna try to take the kids to Austria for a semester.

Other faculty identified affordability as the primary reason for choosing a semester long sabbatical. For example, Lillian, an assistant professor in a low-paid college, expressed the following:

> If I need to, to give up or have half pay, that wouldn't be possible to, to take a longer sabbatical. I would certainly opt for a shorter one with full pay, if that's possible…I cannot right now give up half of my pay, that would make life unsustainable.

Faculty decisions about sabbatical length were influenced by pay disparities but pay was less impactful among lower-paid faculty with spouses or partners who earned significantly higher salaries. For example, Clara, an associate professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> Like when I got tenure,.... That one (her first) I took the one semester because of the pay. Yeah. And then my second sabbatical, …. And at that point, we could afford to do that…It changed not because of my salary, but because of my husband's salary that allowed me to do that.

Clara's perspective shows how different factors affect the length of a sabbatical. Early in a faculty member's career, financial stability and affordability are the main concerns. However, as their financial and family situations change, and if they are married to a high-income earner, these factors influence their decision. A higher-income partner offers the financial freedom to take a year-long sabbatical. In the highest-paying colleges (EAS & COB), faculty members were more likely to report being the sole breadwinner or single and unable to afford a full year off. Faculty across all colleges recognized that a year-long sabbatical would lower their income, which many could not afford.

Additional Income Sources

Unlike survey data, where a significant share of T/TR faculty (26%) reported no additional income, nearly all faculty interviewed reported receiving additional pay options beyond their standard contracts. Exceptions included faculty members who chose not to pursue additional

opportunities or opted to focus on securing grants. Some faculty members received stipends for campus service work. Faculty members at the associate or full professor level were more likely to receive stipends for administrative duties, such as serving as department chairs. Some faculty received summer salaries from grant activities or summer teaching. For example, Malcolm, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, stated, "I know that currently without summer support, I'm a little bit over $130 a year. I have the opportunity to maybe teach an extra class here or there and get an extra $10,000 and that's good. Like, that's good money."

In this section of the report, we focus on faculty obtaining additional pay from sources outside the university. Additional sources of pay beyond the university included consulting work, summer performances, curriculum design, evaluation research, selling items online, and serving as expert witnesses. Some faculty sought these opportunities because they viewed them as beneficial to the department or college's interests. In some cases, faculty view the additional work as a component of advancing their research agendas, which are part of their contracted duties at UCCS, while also benefiting underprivileged groups in academia. For example, Lillian, an assistant professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> What I've been doing outside of the university is artistic residencies and working as a choreographer and or a performer…I haven't been paid an honorarium for those because I chose it. Just because, compared to other people in the field, I am in a privilege situation. And those events, those interactions, those artistic residencies, they count as research for me. So I feel it's kind of involved in my contract. So for now I've been asking these people who invited me to just pay for my expenses, like flight tickets, but I have not been paid beyond that.

Some faculty expressed that their extra work was necessary to compensate for what they perceived as lower pay at UCCS. One of those faculty members is Helena, an assistant professor in a low-pay college:

> I think most of us that do, that aren't doing it necessarily for the money. But I definitely have an influx of clients in the summer to pay for my mortgage. You know, I, it's always nice to say like, at least this private practice will pay for my, my utility bill this semester or something like that…. like it has a financial element to. It absolutely does, but I think it's more of a professional development …for the reasons we do do it. But I have to do it. I would be literally paycheck to paycheck if I didn't have my private clients.

The differences seen among colleges show that faculty at high-pay colleges are more likely to see extra pay as a benefit, while some faculty at low-pay colleges see it as necessary to compensate for lower salaries. This distinction highlights systematic variations in how pay inequality affects faculty members' lives. As we explore further in the upcoming sections, understanding how pay inequality impacts UCCS faculty involves considering many factors, such as relationship status and student loan debt, within the context of local living costs and those in the Denver Metro area, as well as other institutional privileges.

Marriage and Pay

Qualitative data show that being married or having a romantic partner enhances faculty members' financial standing across all colleges. There were also differences between colleges. Married faculty at high-pay colleges were more likely to have a nonworking partner, and if they did have an employed partner, they reported feeling financially comfortable. Married faculty members at the assistant or early associate professor levels in low-pay colleges were more likely to express that two salaries are needed to support a family in Colorado. For example, Lillian an assistant professor in a low-pay college stated,

> If I didn't have him (husband), I wouldn't be able to afford my life here with my daughter. If I were a single mom, it wouldn't, I don't know what I would do. I, I would need to think really hard, like where we would live. How, like the childcare situation?

A second income, especially when the partner earns significantly more, provides a financial cushion for faculty members in low-pay colleges. However, sometimes faculty separate from their significant others, and this separation can affect them financially, even at the full professor level. For example, Emilia, a full professor at a low-pay college, stated:

> Yeah, it's really impacted it a lot. So I'm, I moved out of our house into an apartment. I don't know if I'll be able to buy a house again after we sell it. You know, all throughout my career, the reason I've been comfortable and well off is because of his salary.

As a full professor at a low-pay college, she and her husband earned a decent salary, but the financial repercussions of a separation are serious. However, if this faculty member were a professor at a high-pay college, her experience might be different. If she were a faculty member from a high-pay college, Emilia might be better able to handle the financial implications of separation. It is important to note that only one of the faculty members we interviewed reported experiencing separation. Therefore, we do not have data to compare faculty separation experiences in high-pay colleges. Nonetheless, given research showing the importance of an individual’s earnings in their divorce experiences, it is likely they would consider their experiences difficult but manageable.

School Loans

Student loans impacted the financial stability of faculty at UCCS. Many faculty members across colleges had large student loans, except for two international faculty members. Of the two international faculty members, one earned their graduate and undergraduate degrees from a university in their home country, where higher education is free. The other was an immigrant in U.S. schools and had very few loans because the federal government required them to pay for their education as part of the immigration process. As international scholars from racially minoritized backgrounds, they do not represent the experiences of U.S. racially minoritized faculty who have student loans. Our only U.S. racially minoritized scholar in a high-pay college did not discuss school loans in detail but indicated that he rented because of his loans. Given our

small sample of racially minoritized faculty, it was difficult to determine how school loans and income potentially influenced their pay and financial stability.

There were differences across colleges in the proportion of faculty with student loans. Faculty in both mid- and low-pay colleges appeared more burdened by student loans. For instance, Everett, an assistant professor in a low-pay college explained the impact of student loans.

> But all of that to say when I graduated, because the graduate rate of compounding interest is higher than undergrad. After I consolidated all my loans, I owed like $92,000. So I took out a loan for like 30 and then it ballooned, almost more than doubled in that five-year period. So yeah, it's like always on my mind.

Faculty in mid- or low-pay colleges, at the assistant professor or recently post-tenured level, were more likely to express concerns regarding their loans. One faculty member, Clara, an associate professor in a low-pay department, reflected on the impact of student loans when she was an early associate professor. She referred to the impact of lower pay and student loans as a "double wammy." She stated:

> My student loans were at 8% and I'm like, that's ridiculous. 'Cause like you'd think it would ratchet down …but you know, you think the number would move, they'd be variable. But no, it was like stuck at this 8%. It was so bad…So that was from graduate school and, but it is sort of a double whammy where you have people with PhDs starting tenure track jobs or whichever job, you know, with a debt and then getting paid very, very poorly.

Faculty in low-pay and mid-pay colleges were more likely to experience the dual burden of student loans and low or lower salaries, leading to ongoing stress from these financial pressures. However, in high-pay colleges, those faculty did not experience the "double wammy" effect and were more likely to report that they did not have school loans or that their loans were manageable. This implies that higher pay helps these faculty members alleviate the burden of student loan debt.

Another factor regarding faculty student loans is how privilege provides wealth that reduces or eliminates the need for loans. Several faculty members across all colleges, all of whom were white, mentioned that family support helped them pay for school, which was a key reason they did not have student loans. For example, Julian, an associate professor from a high-pay college, stated,

> My parents split, but my mom and dad both helped out. My sister, she had a lot more school bills than I did. So I went to undergrad for free…As, as you well know, I went for free and they gave me a stipend of $15,000 a year to live in Boulder.

For faculty struggling with student loans, their one respite was the Public Service Forgiveness loan. Almost all faculty with student loans were aware of this program and either benefited from it or eagerly anticipated the financial relief of loan forgiveness.

Vacations

T/TR faculty at UCCS made vacation decisions for various reasons, some of which related to their pay. Some faculty members showed no interest in taking vacations, instead redirecting potential vacation funds to retirement savings. Others mentioned they were naturally frugal and preferred to travel as little or as economically as possible, such as with staycations. Several faculty members also noted that student loans limited their ability to vacation. Student loans emerged as another factor affecting faculty's lifestyle choices. Faculty across all colleges discussed how student loans influenced the extent of their vacations. For example, Gideon, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, stated:

> Yeah, because we're paying, you know, a thousand dollars a month for student loans. So it definitely does affect that. Most of our money goes to our needs. I mean it doesn't affect our, the student loans don't affect our needs. It more affects our wants…We wanna go to Europe more often, but we're like, eh, we're probably have to wait until we're done with the student loans before we're able to. We want to redo our kitchen too, but so you know, we have health things and so that takes away money as well. But the student loans is a big chunk, you know, $12,000 a year. Yeah. So that does have a huge effect. The big trip we usually take is domestic.

This faculty member in a high-pay college discusses the constraints on vacations because of school loans. Despite loan payments, the faculty member was able to take week-long vacations. In the low-pay colleges, the scale of the vacations is very different. These folks were more likely to discuss ways to economize on their vacations, such as taking road trips or staying with family. For example, Celeste, an associate professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> Oh, yes. We have foregone vacations. Many years we've also been very creative when we could not go for vacations. It's been a dream of my family for all of us to go to Europe, but we know we have to save toward that. So we've been kind of pushing it forward and trying to convince my son we're gonna go, you know, just not this year. So last year we just stayed in the US. We went to, we decided we were going to Illinois, partly because we found cheap tickets for the whole family from Colorado Springs to Chicago. So we were like, this is it. This is where we are going. Thankfully, we do have people there. So it was, it turned out to be a good time. But we had to stay in not so expensive hotels and try to cut down on things to keep our budgets balanced. This year I'm not sure we're gonna go anywhere… we tend to be creative, so we go to Denver instead…

While data indicate that most faculty tend to take vacations, the extent of those vacations varies by college. In high-pay colleges, faculty are more likely to take more expensive vacations,

whereas faculty in low-paying colleges tend to economize. Exceptions include faculty members who are married in low-paying colleges or single in high-pay colleges. As stated in earlier sections, marriage, especially to a high-income partner, provides funds for vacations, and these individuals are less likely to discuss the need for budget-friendly vacation options.

Retirement Decisions

Faculty members with PERA retirement from all colleges often expressed confidence in their ability to retire. Additionally, faculty who discussed multiple streams of income for retirement indicated they were confident in their ability to retire on their current pay. However, some differences among colleges were evident as well. Faculty in high-pay colleges were the only ones to indicate that pay did not negatively influence their decision to retire. Faculty members in high- and mid-pay colleges often discussed how pay positively influenced their decision to retire. One faculty member in COB discussed wanting to retire by 65, and another at a mid-tier college expressed a desire to retire in the early 60s. Eliza, a faculty member and assistant professor in a mid-pay college indicated how pay impacted their ability to retire:

Does my pay influence? Yes, but in a good way. And that is because CU is very generous with their benefits. … In terms of retirement, CU also has a very generous retirement account. And so I am signed up…the mandatory retirement account that they automatically like set up for me and then like CU I don't know, they put in like the 10% or whatever. But then I also have an additional IRA account too that I contribute to…my hope is that I'm able to retire in my early sixties at the same time that my husband's in his late sixties and we kind of retire at the same time. And then we save a lot of my income too, so that it, you know, it impacts it in a good way.

This faculty member focused on the generous contributions of the CU health and retirement package in determining their ability to retire. However, this was not true for all faculty members at high or mid-pay colleges. For example, Sally, a faculty member and assistant professor in a high-pay college stated:

> Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. 'cause retirement is all about length of time in your investments, right? So the fact that 20 years ago I was making garbage meant that my investments from 20 years ago are not as substantial as I wish they were. Now, you know, and I'm looking at my retirement going, I can't retire for 20 years and I don't wanna work another 20 years <laugh>, you know? So yeah, that's, I mean, don't get me wrong, UCCS actually has a really nice retirement package. Alright? They, I think, automatically match like 8% alright, which is super good, you know, when it comes to retirement packages…But <laugh> on the flip side, 8% of less <laughs> is not great <laughs>. So, that's really where it's, you know, I've spent 20 years not making as much money as I could had I just gone into industry.

Despite their higher pay than faculty at other colleges, this faculty member discusses how past financial investments and lower income from working at a university have delayed their retirement. They compare their ability to retire with the income they would have earned in the private sector. It is important to note that these faculty members also discuss various resources they have for retirement. However, faculty members in low-pay colleges are much more likely to

hold an uncertain attitude regarding their pay and future retirement. For example, Sienna, an associate professor, and faculty member in a low college stated, “Yes, I have no idea when I'm gonna be able to afford to retire. I might just die here.” Similarly, Astrid, an assistant professor in a low-pay college stated,

> I mean, you know, it's the kind of thing where like, it's hard to save because everything is so expensive. So like, saving on my salary is something I try to do. But I also like want to live in the moment and be happy and like, so I, you know, I'm not denying myself vacations to save for retirement kind of a deal. Yeah, I mean, I think it impacts my retirement calculus because I assume I will never be able to retire <laugh> like that just doesn't feel like it's in the cards for me.

As highlighted by Astrid, some faculty members wish to enjoy their lives and are reluctant to sacrifice financially to retire in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, cost-of-living concerns exacerbate the perception that retirement is unattainable. As we will discuss below, pay also influences faculty members' ability to purchase homes.

Buying a Home

Faculty across all colleges discussed primarily renting early in their careers. Most faculty decided to rent to help determine which area of the city they preferred to live in. Faculty in low-pay colleges were more likely to express that they could not afford to purchase a home, leading them to decide to rent. For example, Lillian, an assistant professor in a low-pay college, stated:

> Because I couldn't put down a down payment. So where I was previously in rural (Midwest), <laugh>, the houses were like a third of the price that they are here. Same for rent. So I mean, I'm, I'm making more here, but still we decided to rent because we couldn't afford buying. And we also wanted to see, you know, how things would unfold for me here.

Lillian demonstrates how various factors, such as the cost of living, ensuring UCCS is a suitable fit, and affordability, all contributed to the decision of whether to rent or buy a home. Astrid, an assistant professor in a low-pay college, indicated that she initially rented because of her salary. She explained why she decided to rent when she came to UCCS.

> I had always rented. It was just sort of what I had always done. I moved out here as non-tenure track faculty, so I was IRC and I just didn't think that I was in a position to look at buying that just didn't seem like something that was in the cards at the time. That's changed. I did buy, I live in a house now <laughs> But when I first moved out here, I rented.

After renting, most faculty members decided to buy a house. Some relied on savings, cash gifts, family assistance, revenue from the sale of previous properties, the Faculty Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) offered by the university, or a combination of these to purchase a home. The FHAP program has provided faculty with an important resource, which faculty across all

colleges have used to help purchase a home. For example, Gideon, an assistant professor in a high-pay college, stated,

> There was some out of pocket. I mean, essentially it was all out of pocket. I cashed in some retirement to help with it, so I took a huge tax penalty hit there. I didn't find out until about six months after that UCCS actually has a program where you can get money for a down payment. Nobody told me about that. Like, one of my colleagues told me about it. I was like, what?

Gideon also emphasized the importance of the University finding more effective methods to communicate the existence and benefits of the Faculty Housing Assistance Program. Early-career faculty, even those in high-pay departments or colleges, struggle to purchase a home when they first start their careers at UCCS. For example, Julian, an associate professor in low-pay college, but a high-pay department, discusses how, during graduate school, he was unable to save money. After graduate school, he had student loans before moving to Colorado Springs. He learned about the FHAP program and stated the following:

> And without that assistance program, I probably wouldn't have been able to get into a house as quickly. You know, and then for me personally, it meant I was just hustling, doing every job I could, you know, like every, any extra pay over the summer, the answer was yes to start the jobs (names side jobs at other universities)…So certainly when I was starting out it was a big deal, you know just any extra money I could get and all of it going towards the loans and stuff like that… And it helps that my partner is in a good financial situation as well. So, you know, both of us being in a good financial situation means it's, it's easy, you know?

In addition, as suggested by Julian, marital status also influenced faculty financial standing and their decision to purchase a home. Married faculty discussed how their marital status helped them secure a home purchase. For example, Emilia, a full professor in a low-pay college, stated, "The down payment no, we were able to pay that. Okay. We waited a while and my husband was a lawyer so he didn't, he made more than me and you know, we were definitely well off." Faculty members who were married and had two incomes were more likely to purchase a home in their first two years at UCCS. This was also true for faculty in low-pay colleges. Faculty members across all colleges who were single were the least likely to purchase a home, especially at the assistant professor level. For example, Adrian, an associate professor in a mid-pay college, similarly stated how pay influenced his ability to purchase a home in Colorado Springs:

> I'm priced out here already by the housing market here as a single-income person, easily. Yeah. It's, it's just very expensive to live here. It's very expensive to buy homes. I think the average home in Colorado now is like $500,000. I can't afford that on my salary.

Based on the CORA data presented in report one, on average, faculty members earn approximately $89,000 per year at the Associate Professor level. Even with a higher salary than

low-pay colleges, faculty in mid-pay colleges are struggling to buy a home in Colorado Springs. Like several faculty members in our sample, Adrian mentioned having family members who assisted him with college expenses or provided funding for a down payment. African Americans in our sample were less likely to possess the kind of generational wealth that assists with home purchases. An example comes from an African American assistant professor in a low-pay college who explained that when she and her family first arrived, they waited a few years before purchasing a home. They had to sell their home, and a few years later, they tried to purchase one again. Celeste stated the following about purchasing a home:

> We had reasons to change our residence, and we just couldn't afford to buy any house again in the housing market. And we had to wait for almost two years just looking for like, is there anything out there that we can afford? And that was the time when I realized my job doesn't pay well.

She goes on to explain that she realized her friends, who are community friends but are non-academics, had much higher salaries in private industry, making her aware that she was underpaid. She goes on to state:

> No, I did not have family support, but I, I had, my family had some money saved. I mean, me, my husband we had to save a little bit to pay for the 2% that is required to use the faculty housing assistance loan. So we used that loan. It paid for, I believe it was like 19% of our down payment and then we put down like 2%, which is still substantial. I believe it was, we had to save up $15,000 to be able to buy a house because of closing costs… So it was a combination of the housing assistance loan and some money that we had to save.

This section outlines various factors that influence UCCS faculty members' decisions to purchase a home. Down payments acquired through savings and the FHAP program helped many faculty members purchase homes. However, some racial differences were also observed in family members' ability to provide financial resources for home purchase. African-American faculty were less likely to discuss receiving family assistance for home purchases. This pattern illustrates how generational wealth may influence home purchases and, along with faculty pay and other factors, create a cumulative disadvantage for these faculty members at UCCS. Our analyses also indicates that marriage offers a financial advantage in purchasing a home, even at low-paying colleges.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Our research shows that pay disparities are evident at UCCS and that the EPEWA has done little to address them on campus. Drawing on the suggestions provided in our qualitative interviews, we offer the following recommendations:

- Collect and analyze detailed salary data that include race, gender, and sexuality for all faculty, including Instructional, Research, and Clinical (IRC) Faculty. We recommend that human resources conduct a salary analysis based on the social identities mentioned above and share the results with faculty at UCCS. If there are concerns about safeguarding individual identities, an ad hoc faculty committee might be formed to review the data and report back to the faculty.
- Increase transparency in salary studies and the implementation of the EPEWA. Provide annual data to review how the EPEWA was applied in the previous year. This should include the number of faculty compensated, the departments or colleges involved, and the reasons for salary increases.
- Reevaluate compensation frameworks to focus on equity based on teaching, research, and service, rather than market factors. If campus budgets permit, prioritize fairly compensating faculty in low-pay colleges, followed by those in mid-pay colleges.
- Ensure consistent and equitable application of EPEWA across departments.
- Recognize and fairly compensate extra service work, particularly by women and racially minoritized faculty.

Our research also shows how pay disparities influence institutional commitments and decisions related to vacations, home purchases, seeking compensation beyond the contracted salary, and retirement. Differences were also noted in the impact of student loans. However, pay disparities did not influence decisions about the length of sabbaticals. Generational wealth, racial privilege, marital status, and university housing and retirement benefits help to mitigate some of these disparities. Based on our data, we also offer the following recommendations:

- Ensure equitable access to research support and advancement opportunities, such as expanding summer research funding, travel support, and summer teaching pay to help close gaps in pay and in institutional commitment.
- Promote the Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Faculty Housing Assistance Programs through multiple communication channels and workshops to ensure faculty have access to these resources when starting employment.
- Offer financial planning resources and guidance for faculty members' sabbaticals at the start of their careers.
- Offer workshops on homeownership and financial planning for new faculty.
- Create forums for faculty to share feedback and influence institutional decisions regarding pay distribution at UCCS.