Faculty Senate Budget and Resources Committee

Annual Report to the Faculty Senate

Academic Year 2025-2026

Submitted by: Delton T. Daigle, PhD, Committee Chair

June 19, 2026

Committee Membership

Senator Delton T. Daigle, PhD (Chair) – Schar School of Policy and Government; Senator Alok K. Berry – College of Engineering and Computing; Senator Victoria M. Grady – Costello College of Business; Senator Burak Tanyu – College of Engineering and Computing; Senator Samuel Huneke – College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Committee Activity

The Committee met regularly throughout the academic year, focusing on understanding the redesigned budget model, seeking systematic transparency in budget information sharing with faculty, and engaging with parallel initiatives on space allocation, cross-college programs, and faculty salary data. Major activities included: a December 2025 briefing with Provost Jim Antony on the budget model framework; preparation and delivery of an update to the Faculty Senate in January 2026; meetings with Interim Provost Ajay Vinzé, VP Renate Guilford, and SVP Dan Stephens in March and April 2026; presentation of a question to President Gregory Washington at the March 19, 2026 General Faculty Meeting regarding budget transparency; engagement with the Space Policy and Procedures Committee and the Cross-College Program Working Group through designated representatives; delivery of an update to the Faculty Senate in May 2026; meetings with the Chief Human Resources Officer regarding faculty salary data access; and preliminary analysis of the released salary data.

Understanding the Redesigned Budget Model

The redesigned budget model classifies schools and colleges as either "Red" (deficit) or "Green" (surplus) based on revenue attribution and cost allocation formulas. Six units face combined structural deficits of approximately $22 million, while four units generate surpluses. Green units contribute to a stabilization fund through a graduated tax structure. Red units must develop three-year recovery plans to address deficits. Revenue attribution formulas allocate undergraduate tuition 20% to major and 80% to course enrollment, while graduate tuition is attributed 100% to major. Overhead rates are 35% for undergraduate and graduate tuition and 15% for law. Space is charged per square foot for facilities use.

Budget Information Requests and Administrative Response

The Committee submitted formal requests for unit-level budget data in January 2026, including: classification of which units are Red versus Green; dollar amounts of surpluses and deficits; FY26 and FY27 budget projections by school and college; stabilization fund contributions; and recovery plan details. The Committee held meetings with administration in March and April 2026 to discuss these requests. Administration provided the budget model algorithm presentation explaining the framework. However, the Committee and administration hold different views on what level of budget detail is necessary to adequately inform faculty about differential impacts across campus.

Survey of Current Budget Information Sharing Practices

During the April 2026 meeting, Interim Provost Vinzé agreed to survey all deans to determine what budget and financial information each school and college is currently sharing with faculty. The survey, distributed to deans in late April with responses due May 1, 2026, asks about: sharing of budget model classification; FY26 budget projections and forecasts; revenue and expenditure information; stabilization fund amounts; multi-year projections; format and frequency of budget communication; and whether updates are provided regularly or ad hoc. The Provost indicated he would share a summary of responses with the Deans' Council and reconvene with the Committee thereafter. Following Committee follow-up communications in late May and mid-June, VP Guilford indicated on June 12 that the Finance Directors and Chief Business Officers are consolidating dean responses and will present analysis at an internal meeting on June 18, with results to be shared with the Committee shortly thereafter. The Committee anticipates receiving the consolidated analysis following that meeting and reconvening with the Provost's office to discuss establishing consistent baseline expectations for budget information sharing across all units.

Evidence of Unit-Level Budget Data Availability

The Committee learned that at least some schools and colleges have shared comprehensive budget information with their faculty, including: classification under the budget model; budget projections versus forecasts; stabilization fund contribution or support amounts; revenue trend analysis; and multi-year budget projections. This demonstrates that unit-level budget data exists, is stable enough for deans to share with faculty, and is being used operationally to make resource allocation decisions and develop recovery plans. However, this information sharing appears to be happening inconsistently across schools and colleges, creating institutional inequity where faculty in some units have comprehensive budget information while faculty in other units have limited or no access to similar data.

Presidential Engagement on Budget Transparency

At the March 19, 2026 General Faculty Meeting, the Committee Chair posed a question to President Gregory Washington regarding systematic budget information sharing with faculty governance. President Washington responded that he would "consider" the Committee's request for comprehensive budget transparency. The dean survey initiative represents one step in this consideration process.

Faculty Salary Data Access

The Committee addressed faculty salary data transparency during the academic year. A standard data request was opened in March of 2026 through the redeveloped HR Data Request process. In the weeks that followed, the Committee learned that the new Chief Human Resources Officer, Christopher Ackerman, had reservations about releasing the "Administrative Faculty" component of the dataset, a category that had been included as a critical informational component of the data pull for more than the last 10 years in the annual salary data release. Administrative Faculty positions are staff roles classified as faculty to enable compensation above standard staff scales. On May 8, 2026, the Committee met with CHRO Ackerman and communicated that the only acceptable outcome was release of the complete dataset, including Administrative Faculty positions. CHRO Ackerman requested approximately one week to consider the matter. After that week passed without response, the Committee sent a follow-up communication on May 21 noting that faculty salary information at public universities is subject to disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and reiterating the Committee's preference for cooperative resolution. CHRO Ackerman responded on May 22 confirming that the university would release the complete dataset and indicating that a delivery timeline would follow shortly. The complete dataset was delivered on June 12, 2026, as an email notification through the HR ticket system.

With the dataset in hand, the Committee conducted a brief analysis of faculty compensation patterns covering the period 2021–2025, drawing on contemporaneous annual HR payroll snapshots that capture all benefited faculty employed on each November pull date (Appendix A – below). Four patterns warrant Faculty Senate attention:

- **Growth distribution by category.** Total faculty compensation grew by $74.3 million (25.4 percent) over the last five years, on a workforce that added 106 positions (4.0 percent). Administrative & Professional faculty captured $35.4 million — 47.7 percent — of dollar growth and 100 of 106 net headcount additions. The 9-Month Instructional category, the university's largest, added $26.6 million in compensation while contracting by 20 positions.

- **Where the administrative growth landed.** Within the Administrative & Professional category, central university administration accounted for $28.7 million — 81 percent — of dollar growth and added 102 net positions, while school/college-based staffing declined by three positions and Library staffing was essentially flat. University Life alone added 44 positions and $7.4 million — roughly a quarter of all central administrative growth.
- **Term instructional faculty earn below the administrative median.** The 482 9-Month term instructional faculty — the largest single subgroup within the teaching workforce — have a median base salary below that of the Administrative & Professional category overall, and below that of the Instructor-rank administrative cohort comprising 88 percent of A&P positions.
- **Stipends widen rather than close compensation gaps.** The 55 Administrative & Professional faculty who receive stipends have a median base salary of $205,419 — nearly twice the $108,054 median for non-recipient colleagues in the same category. With the average $36,122 stipend included, their median total compensation reaches $230,419, approximately twice the median 9-Month Instructional salary. Among 9-Month Instructional faculty, the within-category effect is markedly smaller.

The full analysis, including methodology, transition matrix, unit-level breakdowns, and supporting tables, appears as The Faculty Salary Analysis, 2021–2025, and is also attached to this report. The underlying datasets have been made available to faculty through the Faculty Senate portal.

Following receipt of the dataset, the Committee communicated with CHRO Ackerman, Dawn Oram (Senior Director for Total Rewards), and Kate Astor (HR Metrics & Data Analytics) on June 13 to formalize two questions raised in the Committee's May 29 response: establishing a late November / early December annual release schedule consistent with prior-year practice, and exploring automation of the data pull to reduce the manual workload and improve the predictability of the workflow. A working conversation on these process questions has been proposed for July or early August.

Engagement with the Space Policy and Procedures Committee

The Cost of Space Process (COSP) working group previously developed a methodology to allocate space-related costs to the University divisions based on space utilization. Building on this effort, this year the Space Policy and Procedures (SPP) Committee focused on (1) developing procedures aligned with the University's space management framework and (2) recommending policies to support consistent and transparent space stewardship. In March 2026, Faculty Senate Chair Solon Simmons requested that the Budget and Resources Committee designate a representative to collaborate with the SPP Committee in reviewing draft policy language related to office space use. Senator Burak Tanyu served in this role and provided written feedback on April 3, 2026. Although invited to discuss his feedback at a committee meeting, he was unable to attend due to a teaching conflict. No subsequent communication or meeting invitations have been received, and it remains unclear whether his feedback will be incorporated into the policy document intended to guide institutional stakeholders in space allocation and efficiency. The draft reviewed primarily addressed allocation for faculty office space, with little parallel consideration of administrative spaces, and input was not solicited on laboratory space.

Engagement with the Cross-College Program Working Group

The Cross-College Program Working Group (CCPWG) was convened to develop a clear and actionable plan for expanding interdisciplinary programs and research at George Mason. Historically, the university's budget model has created barriers to interdisciplinary work across schools and colleges, contributing to duplicate courses, reticence to develop collaborative academic programming and research, and disincentives for faculty to teach outside their primary discipline. The working group's charge is to inventory barriers and opportunities, identify resources needed for developing and implementing interdisciplinary programs, recommend incentives and performance outcomes, develop documents that govern and assess interdisciplinary faculty and programs, and consider connections to research initiatives such as the Grand Challenge Initiative. Senator Victoria Grady serves as the Committee's representative to the CCPWG. The working group began its work in Fall 2025 and gathered initial data through assessments, focus groups, interviews, and suggestions from the GMU community across Fall 2025, Winter 2026, and Spring 2026. On June 15, 2026, the CCPWG submitted an interim report to Interim Provost Ajay Vinzé summarizing the data collection process, initial findings, and timeline for remaining tasks. Final recommendations are scheduled for submission in December 2026.

Ongoing Work and Next Steps

The Committee will continue pursuing systematic access to unit-level budget information. Immediate next steps include: receiving and reviewing the consolidated dean survey analysis following the June 18 internal review; reconvening with Interim Provost Vinzé and VP Guilford to discuss establishing minimum baseline expectations for budget information sharing across all units; monitoring three-year stabilization framework implementation and tracking recovery plan progress in deficit units; continuing the salary data analysis with additional historical pulls and cohort-level views; convening the proposed working conversation with HR leadership on annual release scheduling and process automation; supporting continued engagement with the Space Policy and Procedures Committee and the Cross-College Program Working Group; and examining administrative cost efficiency alongside academic unit budget adjustments. The Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate consider establishing regular quarterly budget updates to ensure faculty remain informed as the budget model matures and impacts become clearer across different units.

The Committee appreciates the time senior administrators have invested in meeting with the Committee and the productive paths forward that have emerged on both the dean survey and faculty salary data tracks. The Committee remains committed to working constructively with administration to establish greater consistency and transparency in budget and salary information sharing across the university.

Respectfully submitted,

Delton T. Daigle, PhD

Chair, Budget and Resources Committee

Appendix A - Faculty Salary Analysis, 2021–2025

Prepared by Delton T. Daigle on behalf of the
Budget and Resources Committee
Faculty Senate, George Mason University
Academic Year 2025–2026

Introduction

This report presents an analysis of George Mason University's faculty salary data, conducted on behalf of the Budget and Resources Committee. The dataset draws on contemporaneous annual HR snapshots from November 2021 through November 2025, supplemented by additional contemporaneous pulls extending back to 2014. The records encompass all benefited faculty across four categories — 12-Month Instructional, 9-Month Instructional, Administrative & Professional, and Research — together with supplemental stipend data over the same period.

Three findings emerge from the analysis. First, growth in Administrative & Professional salary expenditure has outpaced growth in 9-Month Instructional faculty — the university's largest category — over the five-year window for which contemporaneous payroll data is available. Second, this administrative growth is overwhelmingly concentrated in central university administration rather than in academic schools and colleges. Third, supplemental stipend payments flow disproportionately to a small cohort of Administrative & Professional faculty who already earn nearly double the base salary of their non-recipient colleagues — placing their total compensation at roughly twice the median salary of the university's teaching faculty and compounding rather than narrowing existing disparities.

A methodological note is in order before presenting these findings. The salary data the analysis works with comes in two forms, and the distinction matters: each annual HR pull is a snapshot of everyone employed on that pull's November date, but each pull also includes retrospective salary columns showing what each currently employed person earned in prior years. These retrospective columns are convenient — they appear in every pull — but they are not suitable for multi-year analysis.

The reason is structural. Any single pull, including the most recent November 2025 pull posted to the Faculty Senate website, contains historical salary columns only for individuals still employed on the pull date. Anyone who left the university between an earlier year and the pull date is absent from the dataset entirely; their salary in those earlier years is not recorded, and the population whose salaries are recorded in the historical columns is a survivor cohort rather than the actual workforce of that earlier year. The 2025 pull's "Salary 11/25/2020" column, for example, does not represent the 2020 payroll — it represents the 2020 salaries of the subset of

2020 employees who were still at the university in 2025. The further back one looks within a single pull, the more severe this distortion becomes.

The practical effect is significant. Comparing the 2025 pull's 2023 salary column against the contemporaneous 2023 pull — which captured everyone employed in November 2023, regardless of whether they remained through 2025 — reveals an understatement of approximately $51 million and 455 individuals, roughly 15 percent of both headcount and dollars at the 2023 horizon. The understatement at the 2020 horizon is necessarily larger. The "+1,113 headcount growth" and "+$191.8 million salary growth" figures often cited from the master file alone should therefore be understood as describing a surviving cohort, not total institutional payroll change.

To address this, the analysis proceeds in two sections, each suited to a different analytical question.

Section 1: True five-year trend, 2021–2025. To produce an undistorted view of how institutional payroll, headcount, and attrition have evolved over five years, the analysis assembles five separate annual pulls — one captured at the November payroll date of each year from 2021 through 2025 — and uses only the contemporaneous salary column from each pull (Salary 11/25/2021 from the 2021 pull, Salary 11/25/2022 from the 2022 pull, and so on). Each year's roster reflects everyone employed at GMU on that year's pull date, capturing departures and new hires as they actually occurred. Findings in this section are stated with confidence.

Section 2: 2025 cross-sectional view. Several findings concern the structure of the 2025 workforce — how compensation is distributed across categories, units, and stipend recipients as of the most recent snapshot. For these questions, the contemporaneous November 2025 pull is fully adequate, and Section 2 uses that single pull. Where Section 2 references earlier years, it does so only descriptively and with explicit acknowledgment of the survivor-bias limitation.

A note for faculty wishing to verify or extend this analysis: the full annual pulls — the 2025 master file along with the contemporaneous 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 pulls used to build Section 1 — are available behind the Faculty Senate firewall. Faculty seeking to make multi-year comparisons of their own should be aware that this requires combining the separate annual files using contemporaneous columns, rather than reading historical columns from any single pull.
The Committee gratefully acknowledges Tim Leslie, Associate Professor of Geography and Geoinformation Science, and Keith Renshaw, Senior Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, for contributing historical salary data that informed the preparation of this report.

Section 1: True-Snapshot Comparison, 2021–2025

The analysis has contemporaneous salary data pulls for November of each year from 2021 through 2025, each capturing all benefited faculty employed as of the respective pull date. These five snapshots allow a direct comparison of institutional payroll, headcount, and attrition unaffected by the survivor-bias limitation discussed in the introduction.

Compensation Growth by Category

Table 1

Faculty Compensation by Category, True Snapshots, 2021–2025

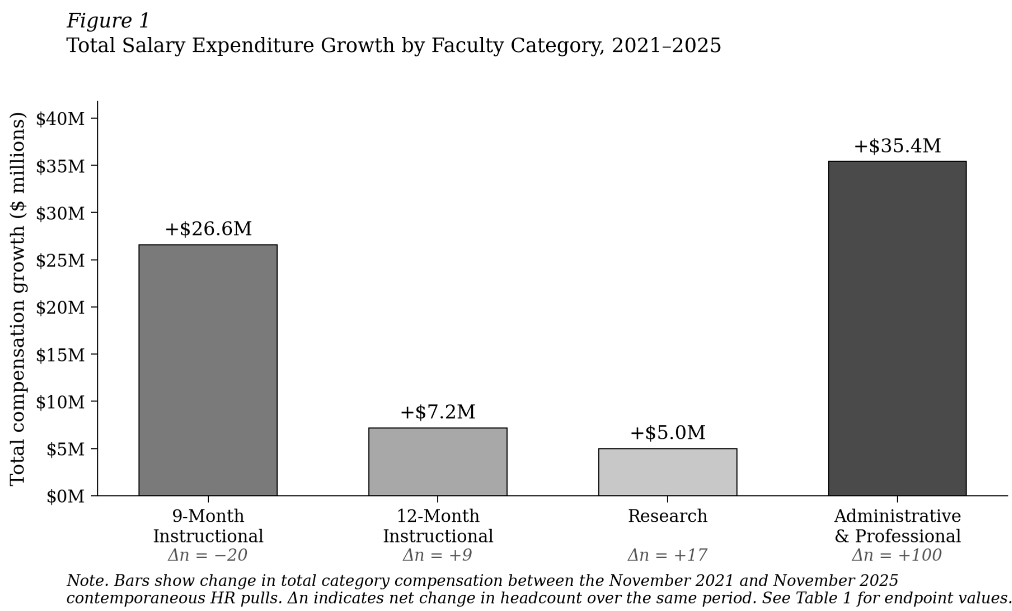
Faculty Type	Metric	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
9-Month Instructional	Mean	$110,407	$117,750	$122,822	$128,492	$132,474
	Median	$98,389	$104,703	$111,460	$116,775	$121,149
	Total	$146.4M	$158.0M	$164.1M	$167.3M	$173.0M
	n	1,326	1,342	1,336	1,302	1,306
12-Month Instructional	Mean	$146,232	$160,044	$161,541	$173,189	$177,992
	Median	$123,421	$136,692	$138,703	$156,346	$160,606
	Total	$25.7M	$28.0M	$28.1M	$32.6M	$32.9M
	n	176	175	174	188	185
Research	Mean	$91,170	$95,458	$96,879	$102,107	$104,702
	Median	$79,800	$78,750	$79,692	$82,450	$84,872
	Total	$21.4M	$26.3M	$27.3M	$28.6M	$26.4M
	n	235	276	282	280	252
Administrative & Professional	Mean	$107,227	$116,051	$120,974	$127,737	$131,435
	Median	$87,790	$95,426	$102,383	$108,010	$110,072
	Total	$98.9M	$112.0M	$118.9M	$127.9M	$134.3M
	n	922	965	983	1,001	1,022
Total — All Categories	**Mean**	**$109,976**	**$117,608**	**$121,959**	**$128,586**	**$132,605**
	Median	**$94,500**	**$101,224**	**$107,206**	**$113,302**	**$117,154**
	Total	**$292.4M**	**$324.4M**	**$338.4M**	**$356.3M**	**$366.7M**
	n	**2,659**	**2,758**	**2,775**	**2,771**	**2,765**

Over the five-year period for which true payroll snapshots are available, total faculty compensation grew by $74.3 million — from $292.4 million to $366.7 million, an increase of 25.4 percent — while total headcount grew by 106 positions, from 2,659 to 2,765, an increase of 4.0 percent. The growth is therefore overwhelmingly attributable to compensation increases for existing or replacement employees rather than to the creation of new positions.

The distribution of that growth across faculty categories, shown in Figure 1, is the central pattern of this section. Administrative & Professional faculty account for nearly half of the five-year increase — $35.4 million, or 47.7 percent of the $74.3 million total — despite numbering 922 in 2021 against the 1,326-person 9-Month Instructional cohort. Administrative & Professional headcount also grew by 100 positions over the period, the largest absolute increase of any category, while their median salary rose 25.4 percent, from $87,790 to $110,072. By contrast, 9-Month Instructional faculty added $26.6 million in total compensation (a 35.8 percent share of the dollar growth) on net headcount that declined by 20 positions; their median salary rose 23.1 percent.

Figure 1

Total salary expenditure growth by faculty category, 2021–2025.



The remaining two categories show distinct trajectories. The 12-Month Instructional cohort grew briskly in both mean (+21.7 percent) and median (+30.1 percent) terms, though on a small base of 185 individuals that includes endowed and distinguished positions whose compensation may not generalize broadly. Research faculty saw modest mean and median growth (+14.8 percent and +6.4 percent, respectively) and a category headcount that peaked in 2023 before contracting — consistent with the high turnover characteristic of a population dominated by grant-funded and postdoctoral term appointments.

Attrition by Category

The true-snapshot data also allows direct measurement of annual category-level turnover by comparing rosters across years. Across the four transitions measured, between 296 and 348 individuals departed their starting category each year — a remarkably stable institution-wide rate of approximately 11.5 percent annually.

Table 2

Departures from Category, 2021–2025

Category	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	Avg Annual Attrition	Total 2021–2025
9-Month Instructional	108	102	101	84	7.4%	26.9%
12-Month Instructional	26	21	15	27	12.5%	42.9%
Research	48	66	70	74	23.9%	59.1%
Administrative & Professional	166	124	111	111	13.3%	41.6%
All categories	**348**	**313**	**297**	**296**	**11.5%**	**35.9%**

Rates vary substantially by category. 9-Month Instructional faculty — the university's largest cohort and the population most insulated by tenure — depart their category at the lowest rate (7.4 percent annually), with 26.9 percent of the 2021 cohort having left by 2025. Research faculty churn the fastest by a wide margin (23.9 percent annually, 59.1 percent cumulative), consistent with a population dominated by postdoctoral and grant-funded term appointments. Administrative & Professional faculty turnover at roughly twice the 9-Month rate (13.3 percent annually, 41.6 percent cumulative); 12-Month Instructional Faculty fall in a similar range (12.5 percent annually, 42.9 percent cumulative).

A definitional note is in order. The departure counts in Table 2 are category-strict: an individual present in a given category in year A but absent from the same category in year B counts as a departure from that category, regardless of whether they have left the university entirely or moved to a different faculty category at GMU. This convention isolates category-level workforce stability and is the basis for both this table and the transition matrix that follows.

Category Movement

A modest but meaningful share of the departures captured in Table 2 reflects internal movement between faculty categories rather than separation from the university. Table 3 shows the full pattern of flows between 2021 and 2025, including departures, new hires, and within-GMU category changes.

Table 3

Faculty Category Transitions, 2021 → 2025

2021 ↓ / 2025 →	9-Month Instr.	12-Month Instr.	Research	Admin & Prof.	Departed GMU	Row Total (2021)
9-Month Instr.	**967**	49	0	4	304	1,324
12-Month Instr.	29	**100**	0	4	42	175
Research	6	0	**96**	3	130	235
Admin & Prof.	11	4	0	**537**	369	921
New in 2025	292	32	156	473	—	953
Col Total (2025)	**1,305**	**185**	**252**	**1,021**	**845**	**3,608**

Note. Bolded diagonal cells indicate individuals who remained in the same category across all four years. Off-diagonal cells within the 4×4 block indicate within-GMU category changes; the far-right column indicates separations from the university; the bottom row indicates new hires not present in the 2021 pull.

The dominant category-switching pathway runs between the 9-Month and 12-Month Instructional categories: 49 individuals moved from 9-Month to 12-Month over the four-year window, and 29 moved in the reverse direction. Together these 78 transitions account for roughly two-thirds of the 113 within-GMU category changes observed in the period, consistent with the practical reality that movement between academic-year and year-round appointments is a routine career transition for tenure-line faculty. Other cross-category flows are uniformly small, and the Research category received no within-GMU transfers from any other category over the four years — all of its growth came from external hires.

Administrative & Professional shows the highest gross turnover of any category — 369 departures and 473 new hires over the period — even as its net headcount grew by 100 positions. Of the 922 individuals in Administrative & Professional in 2021, 537 (58 percent) remained in the same category in 2025; approximately 40 percent had left the university entirely, and a small number (15) had moved into instructional faculty roles.

Where Administrative Growth Is Concentrated

Within the Administrative & Professional category, the growth detailed in Table 1 is highly concentrated by organizational location. Table 4 separates Administrative & Professional staffing into three groups — central university administration, academic schools and colleges, and the University Libraries — across the five-year window.

Table 4

Administrative & Professional Growth by Organizational Group, 2021–2025

Group	n 2021	2021 Total	n 2025	2025 Total	Net Δ n	Δ $
Central/University Admin.	579	$61.6M	681	$90.3M	+102	+$28.7M
School/College	282	$32.3M	279	$37.9M	−3	+$5.6M
Library	61	$5.0M	62	$6.2M	+1	+$1.2M
Admin & Prof Total	**922**	**$98.9M**	**1,022**	**$134.3M**	**+100**	**+$35.5M**

Note. Mason Korea, GMU's only Administrative & Professional regional-campus appointment over this period, is folded into the Central/University Admin. row (1 position in 2021, 0 in 2025). A separate "Regional Campuses" unit label appears in the 2023 and 2024 pulls with three positions each but does not appear in either the 2021 or 2025 endpoints, and is too small to merit separate treatment in this analysis.

Central administration accounts for $28.7 million — 81 percent — of the $35.5 million in Administrative & Professional growth between 2021 and 2025, and for 102 of the category's 100-position net increase. The arithmetic here is worth pausing on: central administration added more positions than the category gained on net, because school/college-based Administrative & Professional staffing actually contracted by three positions over the same period. School/college Admin & Prof compensation rose by $5.6 million in dollar terms — but on declining headcount, which is to say, almost entirely through pay increases for continuing or replacement staff rather than expansion. Library Admin & Prof staffing was essentially flat in both headcount (+1) and dollars (+$1.2 million).

This pattern is not a small effect or a sampling artifact. Over five years, the university added roughly one hundred Administrative & Professional positions, and effectively every one of them landed in central administration.

The next question is which units within central administration drove this growth. Table 5 disaggregates the central total into six identifiable unit groups, plus a residual.

Table 5

Top Central Administrative Units by Compensation Growth, 2021–2025

Unit	n 2021	2021 Total	n 2025	2025 Total	Δ n	Δ $
University Life	175	$13.3M	219	$20.7M	+44	+$7.4M
Provost & Academic Administration*	58	$6.9M	73	$11.2M	+15	+$4.3M
Intercollegiate Athletics	88	$7.7M	90	$10.6M	+2	+$3.0M
Office of Research, Innovation & Econ Impact*	48	$6.0M	56	$8.5M	+8	+$2.6M
Division of Enrollment Management	36	$3.2M	50	$5.4M	+14	+$2.2M
Advancement and Alumni Relations	24	$3.2M	26	$4.9M	+2	+$1.7M
All other central units†	150	$21.3M	167	$28.8M	+17	+$7.5M
Central Total	**579**	**$61.6M**	**681**	**$90.3M**	**+102**	**+$28.7M**

** In the 2021 HR pull, the Provost area was reported as a single "Office of the Provost" unit alongside a separate "Academic Innovation & New Ventures" unit; by 2025 these had been reorganized into Academic Affairs, Academic Administration, and Faculty Affairs and Development. Similarly, the Office of Research, Innovation & Economic Impact in 2025 reflects the consolidation of two 2021 units. Both groupings combine the relevant predecessor and successor units for like-for-like comparison.*

† "All other central units" captures the residual after the six named groups — finance, operations, facilities, IT, communications, executive administration, and various smaller offices. This group is affected by a major 2022–2024 reorganization of the former "Finance & Administration" division into several distinct successor units (Fiscal Services, Auxiliary and Business Services, Facilities & Campus Operations, Human Resources, Risk Safety and Resilience, and others), as well as the emergence of separately reported Information Technology and Institutional Effectiveness functions. As a result, headcount and dollar changes within this group reflect both genuine growth and organizational reshuffling that cannot be cleanly disentangled.

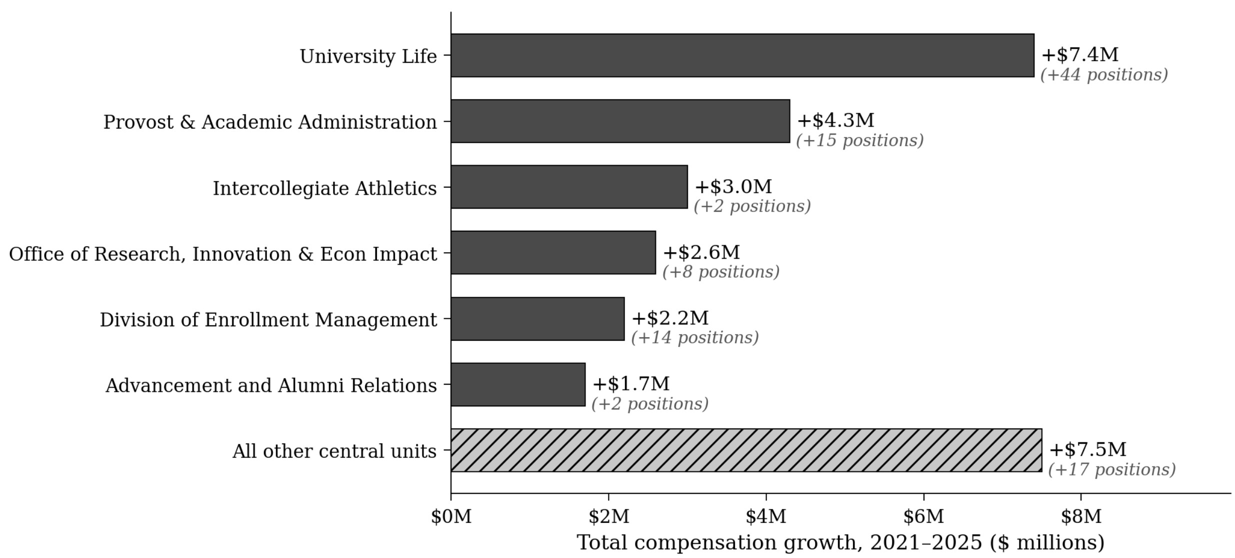
University Life is the single largest source of administrative growth at the university over this period, adding 44 positions and $7.4 million in compensation — more than the next two named units combined, and roughly a quarter of all central administrative growth on its own. Provost & Academic Administration follows at +$4.3 million on +15 positions, reflecting both internal expansion and the reorganization of Provost-side functions described in the note above. Intercollegiate Athletics grew by only two positions but added $3.0 million in compensation, indicating that the bulk of its growth was concentrated in salary increases for existing or replacement positions rather than in expansion of the coaching and operations staff. The Division of Enrollment Management added 14 positions and $2.2 million; the Office of Research, Innovation & Economic Impact and Advancement and Alumni Relations each contributed in the $1.7 to $2.6 million range. Together, these six named unit groups account for $21.1 million — roughly 74 percent — of the $28.7 million in central administrative growth.

Figure 2 displays these unit-level contributions to central administrative growth.

Figure 2

Administrative & Professional compensation growth by central unit, 2021–2025.

Figure 2
Administrative & Professional Compensation Growth by Central Unit, 2021–2025



Note. Bars show change in total Administrative & Professional compensation between November 2021 and November 2025. Position counts in parentheses show net change in headcount over the same period. The hatched "All other central units" bar aggregates the residual after the six named unit groups and is affected by organizational reshuffling described in Table 5.

One coding caveat is worth flagging. Five academic Deans whose appointments are coded centrally to the "Academic Administration" unit rather than to their home schools or colleges sit in the Central row of Table 4 (and within the Provost & Academic Administration row of Table 5). Reassigning these positions to their home colleges would shift approximately $3 to $4 million and five to six positions from the Central row to the School/College row, leaving Central with roughly $25 million in growth and 96 net positions — still by far the dominant driver of Administrative & Professional growth, but with the school/college share modestly larger than reported above.

The findings here can be stated with confidence: over the five-year period for which contemporaneous HR data is available, total university faculty headcount grew by 4 percent while total compensation grew by 25 percent. Administrative & Professional was the only category to add a substantial number of positions, and effectively all those positions were added in central administration rather than in academic units.

Section 2: Cross-Sectional Analysis, November 2025

Section 1 worked across time. This section works across the November 2025 workforce: who is in the data, how compensation is distributed, and what patterns can be read from a single snapshot without comparison to earlier years. The 2025 pull is fully sufficient for these questions. Nothing here depends on retrospective or survivor-cohort calculations.

The analysis turns on three structural features of the current compensation picture. Each supports a finding the Committee believes faculty governance should weigh seriously.

The first concerns the Administrative & Professional category. Nearly nine in ten of its members carry an "Instructor" rank designation while holding administrative or professional staff roles, and the salary dispersion within that cohort is wide enough that aggregate statistics obscure what is actually happening. Some Instructor-rank administrators earn less than the median 9-Month faculty member. Others earn close to twice the median 12-Month faculty member. Both are true simultaneously, and the unit-level data clarify why.

The second concerns Instructional Faculty. The 12-Month and 9-Month cohorts are routinely discussed as a single teaching workforce. They are not. The two categories differ in size, in tenure composition, and in central tendency, and the aggregate medians from Section 1 obscure those differences.

The third concerns Stipends, and here the claim is direct: supplemental stipend payments at George Mason do not close compensation gaps between administrative and instructional faculty. They widen them. The data are clear, and the section documents the finding plainly.

Administrative Faculty in Context

Of the 1,022 individuals counted in Administrative & Professional in 2025, 903 — eighty-eight percent — carry the rank designation "Instructor." Few of them teach. The "Instructor" label here reflects an internal HR convention rather than a teaching assignment: it is a residual rank applied to administrative and professional staff whose roles do not fit elsewhere in GMU's faculty classification system. The result is a single labeled cohort that contains community directors, athletic trainers, financial aid counselors, head coaches, vice presidents, and the university's Chief Financial Officer. Treating them as one population is technically what the data does. Reading them as one population obscures a great deal.

The aggregate numbers are unremarkable. Median base salary for the Instructor-rank cohort is $109,638; mean is $126,296. Both sit slightly below the Administrative & Professional figures overall. On their own they suggest a population earning somewhat below the 9-Month Instructional median ($121,149) and well below the 12-Month median ($160,606). That reading is correct, and it is incomplete.

A closer look at the distribution clarifies what the aggregate hides. The 10th percentile of Instructor-rank administrative salaries sits at $65,856 and the 25th at $83,818 — typical of frontline professional staff. The 75th percentile is $150,184; the 90th is $198,115. Roughly forty percent of the 903 Instructor-rank administrative faculty earn more than the median 9-Month Instructional faculty member. Roughly twenty percent earn more than the median 12-Month faculty member. Both of these statements are true at the same time, and the apparent contradiction resolves only at the unit level.

The unit matters. The Instructor-rank cohort is largest in University Life (n=214) and Intercollegiate Athletics (n=89), where median salaries sit at $83,512 and $77,846 respectively — populations of community directors, residence life staff, athletic trainers, and similar professional positions. By contrast, Advancement and Alumni Relations carries a median of $184,625, Fiscal Services $170,796, and the Office of Research, Innovation & Economic Impact $134,339. Several academic units fall in the $110,000–$140,000 range. The dispersion across units is wide enough that the unit a person sits in is, for most of this cohort, a stronger predictor of compensation than any other variable available in the data.

The upper end of the distribution extends well above what the cohort median or mean suggests. A small number of senior leadership and head coaching positions reach the mid-six figures, and a few extend further. The Committee notes their existence here for completeness; individual records, titles, and salaries are publicly searchable in the dataset behind the Faculty Senate firewall, and the Committee directs interested faculty to that source for detail rather than enumerating positions in this report.

The broader point for faculty governance is the dispersion itself. The Administrative & Professional category contains both compensation patterns that closely track those of instructional faculty and compensation patterns that diverge sharply from them, and the difference is structured by where in the university an individual sits. The Committee believes faculty with a stake in compensation governance at George Mason should examine the underlying records directly, and again directs interested readers to the Faculty Senate website.

Instructional Faculty in Context

The university's teaching workforce in 2025 numbers 1,491 individuals across two categories: 1,306 in 9-Month Instructional and 185 in 12-Month Instructional. Both categories carry the same set of professorial ranks and include tenured, tenure-track, and term-appointed faculty. The categories are often discussed together as "instructional faculty," and at a high level they do similar work — teaching, mentoring, research, and service. Beneath that surface, the two cohorts differ structurally in ways that matter for any conversation about compensation.

The 9-Month Instructional cohort is the university's primary teaching workforce. Of its 1,306 members, 635 hold tenure and 184 are on the tenure track — together, 63 percent of the category. The remaining 482, roughly 37 percent, hold term instructional appointments. The category includes 20 Distinguished University Professors and a smaller number of endowed and named positions. Median base salary for 9-Month faculty is $121,149, with the distribution shaped strongly by tenure status: tenured 9-Month faculty have a median of $147,680, tenure-track faculty $119,952, and term instructional faculty $98,146. The roughly $50,000 spread between the tenured median and the term instructional median is among the more consequential within-category differences in the dataset.

The 12-Month Instructional cohort is smaller and structurally distinct. Of its 185 members, 86 hold tenure, 9 are on the tenure track, and 88 hold term instructional appointments. The tenured share is roughly equal to the term share — a different composition than the 9-Month cohort, where tenured and tenure-track positions together outnumber term appointments by a wide margin. The category also concentrates a small number of senior endowed positions: 4 Distinguished University Professors and 2 Distinguished Professors, all tenured. Median base salary for 12-Month faculty is $160,606, with tenure-driven dispersion sharper than in the 9-Month category: tenured 12-Month faculty have a median of $207,622, while term instructional 12-Month faculty have a median of $126,804 — an $80,000 spread within the category.

The aggregate gap between the two categories' medians — $39,000 — reflects this structural difference, not a uniform premium for year-round appointment. A 9-Month tenured Distinguished University Professor and a 12-Month term instructional appointment occupy the same labeled cohort in different combinations and earn very different salaries. The most analytically useful comparisons within the teaching workforce are like-to-like: 9-Month tenured against 12-Month tenured, 9-Month term against 12-Month term, and rank-by-rank within tenure status. Aggregate category medians invite comparisons that the underlying structure does not support.

One observation deserves direct attention. The 482 term instructional faculty in the 9-Month category — the largest single subgroup within the entire teaching workforce — have a median base salary of $98,146. That figure sits below the median for the Administrative & Professional category overall ($110,072) and below the median for the Instructor-rank administrative cohort discussed in the preceding subsection ($109,638). The Committee notes this comparison without recommending specific action. The structural facts are visible in the data, and the implications are properly a question for faculty governance.

Stipends

The university paid $6.54 million in supplemental stipend compensation to 299 individuals in 2025. The headline finding for this subsection is straightforward, and worth stating directly: the stipend program at George Mason does not close gaps between administrative and instructional compensation. It widens them.

The 299 recipients earn a median base salary of $160,077. The 2,466 non-recipients across all four faculty categories earn a median base of $112,482. Before any stipend is layered on top, stipend recipients are already earning forty-two percent more than non-recipients at the median. The stipend itself extends, rather than offsets, that gap.

The pattern is most pronounced within the Administrative & Professional category. Table 6 lays out the comparison directly.

Table 6

Median Compensation of Stipend Recipients and Non-Recipients, November 2025

Group	n	Median Base	Median Total Comp
Administrative & Professional — recipients	55	$205,419	$230,419
Administrative & Professional — non-recipients	967	$108,054	$108,054
9-Month Instructional — recipients	166	$149,702	$161,389
9-Month Instructional — non-recipients	1,140	$117,612	$117,612

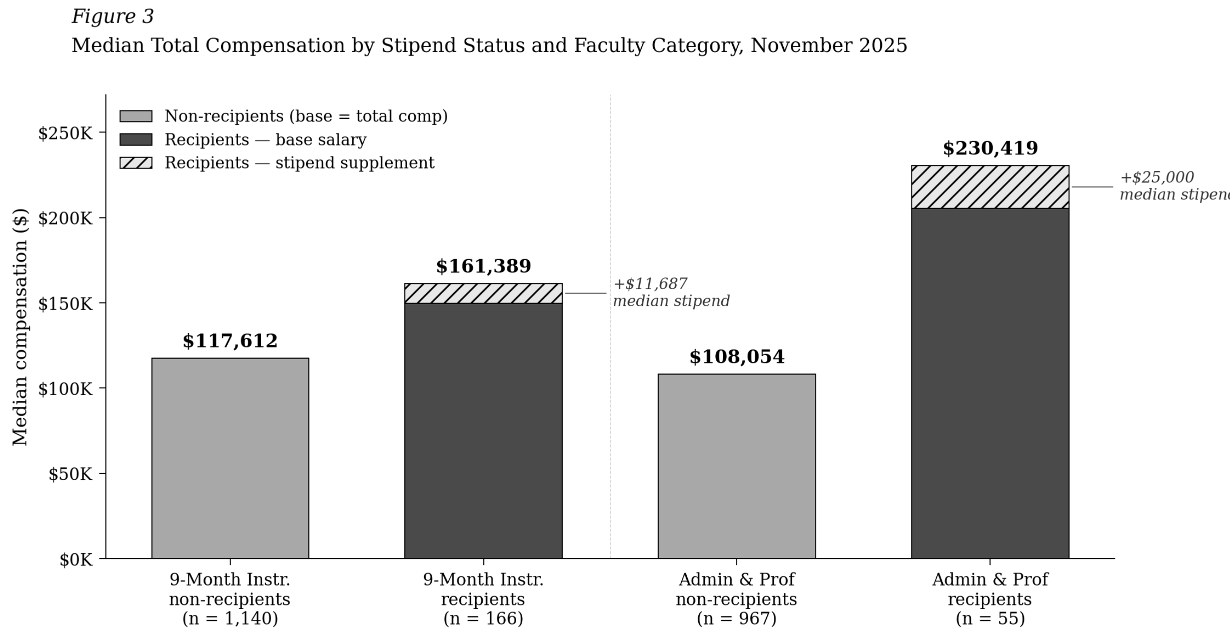
Read across the table, the structure of the disparity becomes visible. The median Administrative & Professional employee who does not receive a stipend earns $108,054 — modestly less than the median 9-Month Instructional employee at $117,612. For most administrative staff, in other words, base compensation is comparable to or slightly below that of teaching faculty. The category is not uniformly overpaid relative to instructional faculty.

The picture changes sharply for the 55 Administrative & Professional faculty who do receive stipends. Their median base salary is $205,419, nearly twice that of their non-recipient colleagues in the same category. With the average $36,122 stipend layered on top, their median total compensation reaches $230,419 — roughly 1.9 times the median 9-Month Instructional salary, and approximately twice the median for the 1,140 instructional faculty members who receive no stipend at all.

Figure 3 displays the four comparison groups side by side.

Figure 3

Median total compensation by stipend status and faculty category, November 2025.



Note. Stipend supplement (hatched) shows the dollar difference between median total compensation and median base salary for recipients. For non-recipients, total compensation equals base salary. Figures reflect the November 2025 HR pull only.

Among 9-Month Instructional faculty, the within-category effect is present but less dramatic. Stipend recipients earn a median base of $149,702 — about 1.27 times the non-recipient median — and with the average $15,761 stipend included, total compensation rises to $161,389, or 1.37 times. The average 9-Month stipend is less than half the average Administrative & Professional stipend. Two patterns hold across both within-category comparisons: stipend recipients already earn more at the base before any supplement, and the supplements they receive are larger in the higher-paid category.

Of the 299 current recipients, 134 — roughly forty-five percent — have received stipends in every year of the Stipend History dataset, suggesting that a substantial share of the program reflects standing administrative or directorship compensation rather than one-time recognition or merit awards. The implication is structural: stipends function for many recipients as a durable component of total compensation, not as an exceptional supplement.

Within Administrative & Professional, the 55 recipients are distributed across central administration (22 recipients, average stipend $45,243), academic schools and colleges (27 recipients, $34,401), and the University Library (6 recipients, $10,417). One coding caveat from earlier in this report applies here as well. Several Dean stipends, totaling approximately $372,000, are coded centrally to the "Academic Administration" unit rather than to the Dean's home college. Reassigning those stipends to the school/college side would reverse which side appears larger by total dollars. The headline patterns above — that recipients earn more at the base than non-recipients in both categories, and that Administrative & Professional stipends average more than twice 9-Month Instructional stipends — hold regardless of how Dean stipends are classified.

Conclusion

Over the five years for which contemporaneous payroll data is now available, George Mason's total faculty compensation grew by $74.3 million — roughly twenty-five percent — while total headcount grew by 106 positions, or four percent. The growth was unevenly distributed. The Administrative & Professional category accounted for nearly half of all dollar growth and added 100 positions, while 9-Month Instructional faculty added $26.6 million in compensation on a workforce that shrank by twenty positions. Within Administrative & Professional, 81 percent of dollar growth and effectively all of the net headcount gain landed in central university administration rather than in academic schools, colleges, or the University Library. University Life alone accounts for roughly a quarter of all central administrative growth. None of these magnitudes depends on retrospective or survivor-cohort calculations; they are read directly from contemporaneous annual pulls.

The stipend data adds a second dimension. The median Administrative & Professional employee who receives no stipend earns $108,054, modestly less than the median 9-Month Instructional faculty member at $117,612. By the base salary number alone, in other words, most administrative staff are not compensated above teaching faculty. The 55 Administrative & Professional faculty who do receive stipends are a different population: their median base of $205,419 is nearly twice that of their non-recipient colleagues, and the average $36,122 stipend layered on top brings their median total compensation to $230,419 — close to twice the median 9-Month Instructional salary. Stipends at George Mason do not close compensation gaps. They widen them, concentrating additional resources on individuals already near the top of the pay distribution.

None of this is to say that administrative growth is inherently unwarranted, or that individuals working in the positions described here do not perform valuable work. But the scale, concentration, and rate of that growth — relative to the experience of the faculty who carry the university's core teaching mission — raise questions that deserve a direct answer from university leadership. The Committee believes faculty governance is entitled to that answer, and that the data to inform it should be as accessible to rank-and-file faculty as it has been to the Committee. The full dataset is available through the Faculty Senate portal for exactly that purpose.

This analysis will continue in the coming months. Areas of intended extension include a longer historical view drawing on contemporaneous pulls from 2014 through 2018 that have recently become available, a closer examination of stipend trajectories for individual recipients, and a cohort-level look at how compensation has evolved within the 482-person 9-Month term instructional faculty subgroup whose median base salary sits below that of the Administrative & Professional category overall. Corrections, context, and counterpoints from administration and from colleagues across the university are welcome.