

University Faculty Senate

February 18, 2026

Our university has flourished under the leadership of a succession of dynamic and talented Provosts. The search for Wake Forest University's next Provost is expected to be led by the University's next President. As the contours of that search are shaped, the University Faculty Senate believes the upcoming search will be most successful with adequate engagement of the faculties of the schools the next Provost will oversee, including faculty involvement in the search process. In the end, the following principles, which have been embodied in our past Provosts, should guide the next search process and ultimately the selection of the next Provost of Wake Forest University.

An Effective Advocate for Academics

The Provost serves as the connector between the faculty and the President, as well as and finally the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate hopes the next Provost will be a strong advocate for academic interests to the President and the Board, rather than just acting as the President's enforcer downward. Closely related to this role, the next Provost will work to absorb bureaucratic and external pressures so that faculty can focus on teaching and research.

A Champion of Shared Governance

The next Provost will view shared governance not as an obstacle or challenge, but as a necessary element for legitimacy. The Faculty Senate seeks to be consulted *before* decisions are made, not just informed of them afterward. The next Provost will respect the Faculty Senate and uphold the faculty handbook. They will recognize and acknowledge that the faculty holds the primary responsibility for the curriculum and academic standards.

Academic Credibility

Wake Forest University should not prioritize a "corporate" manager who will treat the university solely as a business. Instead, the Provost must command intellectual respect with a legitimate research and teaching record that suggests they understand the rigors of the tenure process and the demands of scholarship. Moreover, the Provost must show genuine appreciation for the Wake Forest University liberal arts education. The Provost should respect the role of the liberal arts in preparing Wake Forest students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional students alike) to be citizens in our complex world and the preservation of knowledge. In doing so, the next Provost must remain informed regarding each of Wake Forest's strengths, whether in the humanities or sciences, support and build the others.

Above all, the next Provost should be a staunch defender of academic freedom for all members of our community, protecting faculty from political pressure, donor influence, or administrative overreach regarding what is taught and researched.

Leadership

As Wake Forest University is an institution that promotes the values of leadership and character, the next Provost should have the capacity to make decisions that move the academic mission forward while respecting intellectual curiosity and independence. Leadership does not mean dedicating time to each operational detail within the University. Instead, leadership means articulating a vision and strategy, providing resources to accomplish that strategy, and enabling members of the faculty to pursue that goal. The latter requires attention to certain areas of administrative competence, such as hiring and tenure review, but does not require top-down management. Finally, the next Provost should be committed to long-term, sustainable goals that further Wake Forest's academic mission and be wary of following trends or short-term benefits.

Financial Transparency and Fairness

As the chief financial and strategic officer for the academic mission, the Provost will acknowledge faculty concerns over the budget process and strategic decisions that are implicitly or explicitly part of it. Relevant budgeting processes should be conducted transparently. Faculty should be assured that resources (tenure lines, research funds, space) are distributed based on strategic needs and merit, not favoritism or office politics. If budget cuts are necessary, the Provost should be honest about their severity and the faculty should be involved in the difficult choices of what to prioritize.

Emotional Intelligence and Accessibility

The next Provost will be accessible to the community. They will be engaged on campus, with students as well as faculty. They will be a person who listens to and understands others and recognizes that faculty have lives that are broader than what they teach and research, lives that include families, health, and work-life balance.



Senate Committee on Athletics - February 18, 2026



- **German World Cup Team** selects Graylyn as base camp for FIFA World Cup 2026; will train @Spry



- **FAC meeting Feb. 17.**
Transfer portal (fb: 35 out, 24 in), practice schedules, online courses
- **G-league player ruled ineligible.** Some basketball players with pro experience have tried to play college this year (Alabama, Baylor, BYU, Santa Clara, ...) Various court decisions.

Senate Fringe Benefits Committee Report

The six members of the Senate Fringe Benefits Committee who serve on the University Fringe Benefits Advisory Committee (FBAC) were invited to attend an orientation for the FBAC held on January 20. The public summary of that meeting is attached. The final page of that document presents a summary of the changes to fringes benefits made in the previous year. It was also noted that nationally medical costs are projected to rise 8-10% this year and prescription costs to rise 10%. The first meeting of the full FBAC will be held on February 18. Public summaries of FBAC meetings are posted on the HR website <https://hr.wfu.edu/benefits/fbac/> and are included with Senate committee reports. Last year the FBAC decided that this year it would consider the possibility of offering a High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with Health Savings Account (HSA).

The Senate Fringe Benefits Committee met January 23 and agreed to meet February 17 when the agenda for the February 18 FBAC meeting is known. The committee sent to HR a request that the university consider offering domestic partner benefits. WFU offered domestic partner benefits before legalization of same-sex marriage but no longer offered these benefits once same-sex couples could legally marry.

Concerns about WFU fringe benefits can be addressed to any member of the Senate Fringe Benefits Committee.

Senate Fringe Benefits Committee members:

Michaelle Browsers

Jennifer Claggett

Ellen Kirkman, Chair

Christopher Knott

Sarah Morath

Kiran K Solingapuram Sai

Whitney Simpson

Fringe Benefits Advisory Committee

Orientation

January 20, 2026

Agenda

- Welcome
- FBAC Charter Overview
- Annual Benefits Evaluation Calendar
- Total Rewards Program
- Health Care Terminology
- Overview of Health Care Plans
- Health Care Cost Drivers
- Trends and Considerations
- FY26 Fringe Budget Overview
- Recap of 2026 Benefit Plan Changes

FBAC Charter Overview

Purpose: The Fringe Benefits Advisory Committee (FBAC) serves as an advisory body to the University and advises regarding the evaluation of benefit priorities while balancing the University's financial position, faculty and staff members' interests and needs, the competitive market for faculty and staff members, and the external benefits landscape.

Responsibilities:

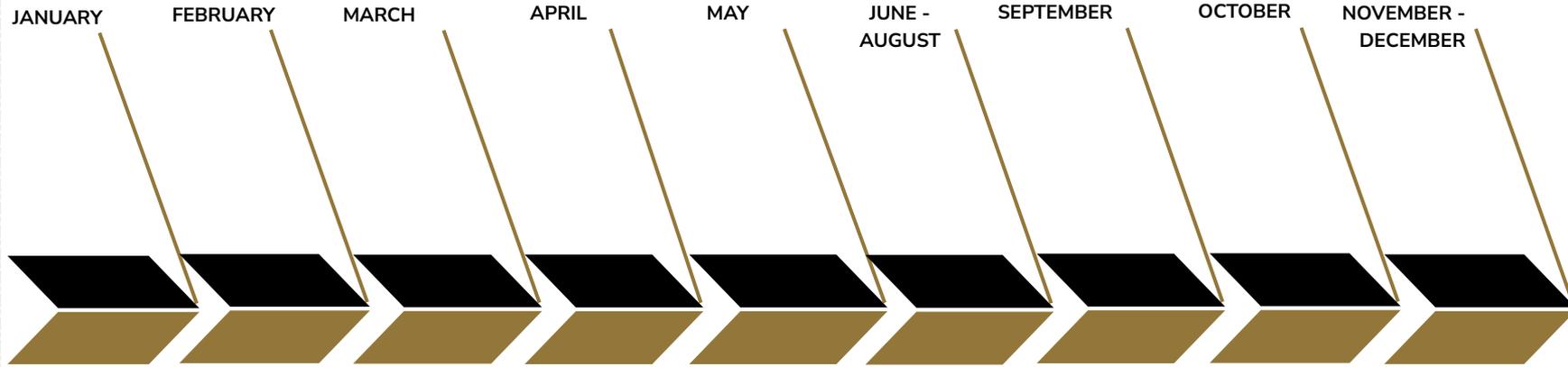
- To understand existing employee benefit programs;
- To help define alternatives and improvements to benefits to promote the health and wellbeing;
- To provide input on benefits plan and program design, costs, funding, and competitiveness;
- To recommend communications about employee benefits; and
- To share non-confidential employee benefits updates as directed/approved.
 - Matters identified as confidential should not be shared with non-committee members.

Membership: The FBAC comprises representatives from the Faculty Senate Fringe Benefits Committee (up to six) and representatives from the Staff Advisory Council Fringe Benefits Committee (up to six), including the chairs of both committees. Membership in the FBAC is contingent upon membership in the respective committees.

Cadence: The meetings will be virtual and typically monthly from January - May and in September.

Discussion Materials: HR will email materials to committee members in advance of each meeting.

Annual Benefits Evaluation Calendar



●BOT MTG

●BOT MTG

●BOT MTG

●**FBAC ORIENTATION**

●**BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION**

- New plan year begins; benefits reset
- Annual Stop-Loss Renewal
- Communication for new programs

●**1st FBAC MTG**

- Claims update
- Review benefit Considerations; *quick wins & major projects*
- Renewals, if needed
- RFP updates, if needed

●**2nd FBAC MTG**

- Claims update
- Finalize benefit considerations
- Review medical & rx plan design
- Review dental plan design
- Review peer data
- Renewal status, if needed
- RFP update, if needed

●**3rd FBAC MTG**

- Claims update
- Benefit plan recommendations
- Medical plan recommendations
- Dental plan recommendations
- Renewal & RFP updates, if needed

●**4th FBAC MTG**

- Claims update
- Renewal & RFP updates, if needed
- Communication strategy & timing

●**SUMMER BREAK**

- Monitor medical claims
- Finalize medical & dental premiums
- Recommend premium changes to Budget / Finance

●**5th FBAC MTG**

- Claims update
- Share medical & dental premiums
- Communication plan
- Annual Benefits Enrollment resources
- Flu shots

●**ANNUAL BENEFITS ENROLLMENT**

●**BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION**

- Eligibility files
- Contracts
- Id cards
- Annual Stop-Loss RFP

Total Rewards Program

WFU-Paid*

2,306

- 403(b) Employer Contributions
- Basic Life Insurance and AD&D
- Child Care Resource Assistance
- Employee Assistance Program
- Elder Care Choices
- Fitness Facilities
- Flu Shots
- HELPS Program
- Leaves of Absence & Disability
- Medicare
- Paid Time Off (PTO)
- Paid Holidays
- Social Security
- Thrive
- Tuition Concession
- Weight Management Program
- Work/Family Resource
- Workers' Compensation

Faculty/Staff-Paid

- 529 College Savings
- Graylyn Pool discounts
- Legal
- Retirement Contributions;
 - pre-tax and post-tax Roth
- Sporting Event Discounts
- Student Debt Counseling
- Supplemental Aflac Plans
- Theater Discounts
- Vision
- Voluntary Life Insurances
- Whole Life Insurance

Shared Cost

2,384

Medical (WFU pays 67-82.8%)

2,643

Dental (WFU pays 15%)

Flexible Spending Accounts

Health Care

38

Dependent Care

Child Care Center

Total Rewards Package Example:

Salary: \$65,000 per year

Fringe: \$19,370 per year (29.8% of salary)

Total: \$87,370

*Some items, like PTO and the Fitness Center, are not paid by the fringe budget but by the department or University budget.

Health Care Terminology

Premiums: This is the pre-tax amount taken directly from your paycheck in exchange for coverage.

Cost-Sharing: When an organization and its employees share the cost of the employee health plan. Employees also share the cost of the health plan at the time of service through copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles.

Copay: The fixed fee you pay at the doctor's office during each visit.

Deductible: This is the upfront annual cost before insurance starts to pay. For example, if you have a \$1,000 deductible, you will need to pay \$1,000 of your health care expenses before your insurance starts to pay for it. Copays are not included in your deductible.

Coinsurance: This is the share (or percentage) of your covered health care costs that you pay after you've met your deductible. For example, if your coinsurance is 20%, you would pay 20% of a medical bill and your insurance would pay 80%. This cost is in addition to your copayment, or office copay.

Out-of-Pocket Maximum: This is the total amount you pay annually before your health care insurance starts paying for 100% of covered services. You reach your out-of-pocket maximum by combining the money you've spent toward covered health care services (medical, pharmacy, & behavioral health) with copays, deductibles, and coinsurance.

Overview of Health Care Plans

Self-funded: The employer assumes the financial risk for providing benefits and outsources the administration of the plan to a 3rd party administrator (like Aetna). This offers more flexibility to meet the specific needs of the organization and allows additional savings on member costs. More than 90% of companies with 1,000+ employees are self-funded.

MEDICAL PLAN

- **3rd Party Administrator:** Aetna/CVS for medical, pharmacy, & behavioral plans
- **Cost-Sharing:** WFU pays 67% - 82.8% & employee pays 33% - 17.2% (depends on plan and tier)
- **Stop-Loss Insurance:** Insurance that picks up cost on catastrophic claims
- **Medical Plan Costs:** Claims and administration fees

Fully-insured: The insurance carrier (like MetLife) sets a fixed monthly premium, takes on 100% of the financial risk for paying members' dental claims, handles the administration and claims processing.

DENTAL PLAN

- **3rd Party Administrator:** MetLife
- **Cost-Sharing:** WFU pays 15% and employee pays 85%
- **Dental Plan Costs:** Claims and administration fees

Health Care Cost Drivers

Healthcare Industry

- Industry consolidation
- New technology
- New medications on the market
- Inflation

Utilization

- The way members use health services, doctors, medicines, surgeries, etc.
- Location of services performed drives cost
- Employees and dependents participating in covered plans

Overall Health

- Preventive Care: Early detection promotes positive health results
- Disease Management: Proactive outreach to assist members with managing complex health issues

Trends and Considerations

Higher Ed Challenges

- Attracting & Retaining Talent
- Controlling Benefit Costs
- Training and Developing Employees

Peer Data

- Medical and dental plans are competitive
 - Most dental are 100% voluntary (employee-paid)

Health Care Trends

- Medical cost rise 8 - 10% annually; not including increased utilization
- Prescription drug cost rise 10%+ (specialty 20%+) annually
- High-cost claims is the largest driver of health care expenses
 - ~1% of covered members
 - WFU has a higher prevalence of chronic conditions than benchmarks
- Influx of targeted solutions (i.e. carve out cancer program)

Evaluating Contract Renewals

- Competitive pricing
- Networks

FY26 Fringe Budget Overview

Fringe Budget Breakdown:

Statutory Benefits

- Medicare
- Social Security FICA
- Unemployment
- Workers' Compensation

Medical: Self-funded medical plan

Dental: Fully-insured dental plan

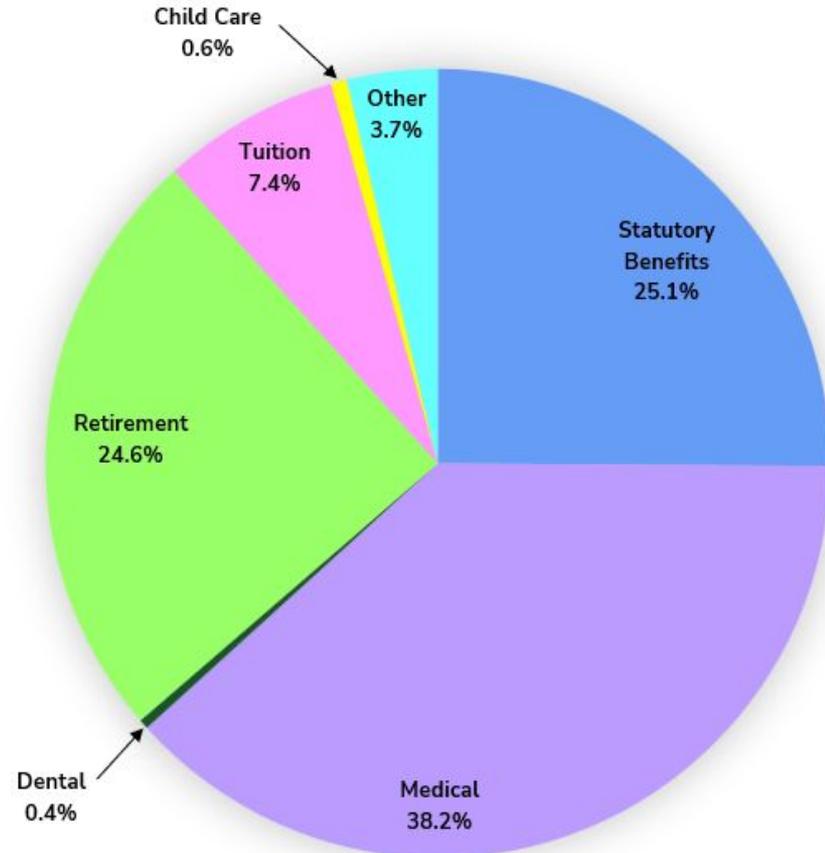
Retirement: 403(b) Employer contributions

Tuition Concession: Employees, children, & spouses

Child Care: Added a child care center 09/30/2024

Other

- Professional services
- Compliance & Audit services



Note: The full-time faculty and staff fringe rate is 29.8%.

Recap of 2026 Benefit Plan Changes

Medical:

- Added Dermatology to Teladoc Health Oct. 1
- Enhanced infertility benefits
- Offering a new Chronic Disease and Medication Management Program with Tria Health
- Diagnostic labs/x-ray cost-share is changing, so only a copay applies.

Vision:

- Enhancing frame frequency and frame/lens allowance.

Flexible Spending Annual Maximums:

- Health Care: \$3,300 per individual (\$660 carry over) Dependent Care: \$7,500 per household (no carry over)

Legal:

- Expanding services for parents, grandparents, and
- In-laws in the Ultimate Advisor Plus (High) Plan.

Student Loan, Education, and Financial Wellness:

- Offering a new student loan, education, and financial wellness program with Fiducius.

Premiums:

- Medical, dental, vision, and legal plan premiums are increasing for 2026. See [Benefits Guidebook](#) for details.

Voluntary Benefits (Remaining the same)

- Aflac (Cancer, Specified Health, & Accident)
- ARAG (legal)
- McGriff (FSA & COBRA)
- New York Life (life insurance & LTD)

Salaries committee: Questions for consideration

- How do Wake Forest faculty salaries compare with peers? with prior years?
 - Is there a gender gap & how does it compare with peers?
- Do we have trouble attracting new faculty based on our salary offers?
 - ... with particular focus on assistant professors
- Are merit pools distinguishable from COLA pools? Can they be? Should they be? Can faculty promotion be incentivized by accompanying salary increases?
- Do librarian salaries need more regular market reviews?
- How can this committee and the Senate be represented in administrative decisions at the University, especially given our charge and the enterprise-wide goal concerning compensation?

Data from AAUP and Wake's OIR

- Reynolda campus
 - Overall: by aggregate rank (TT and NTT mixed)
 - School-specific: by TT rank and NTT rank separately
 - Peer comparisons: by aggregate rank
 - Peer comparisons: by gender and aggregate rank
- Note: some data is for “all faculty” and some is for “continuing faculty”

Descriptive stats from AAUP; compiled by OIR [all Reynolda; all faculty]

ALL FACULTY (New & Continuing)	MEANS		MEDIANs	
	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Assistant - TT	\$91,430	\$95,417	\$80,688	\$80,007
Associate - TT	\$118,464	\$122,545	\$104,731	\$109,029
Professor - TT	\$161,631	\$164,267	\$146,847	\$150,641
Assistant - NTT	\$71,591	\$70,304	\$64,000	\$64,434
Associate - NTT	\$92,030	\$97,628	\$78,629	\$82,783
Professor - NTT	\$128,531	\$124,263	\$116,676	\$106,805

Descriptive stats from AAUP; compiled by OIR [all Reynolda; continuing faculty]

CONTINUING FACULTY	MEANS		MEDIAN	
	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Assistant – TT	\$91,346	\$95,612	\$80,262	84,840
Associate – TT	\$117,316	\$122,389	104,584	109,029
Professor	\$158,982	\$166,523	145,478	151,518
Assistant – NTT	\$71,943	\$74,776	64,000	66,507
Associate - NTT	\$93,472	\$98,261	78,782	83,576
Professor - NTT	\$127,716	\$132,833	116,676	122,510

Descriptive stats from AAUP; compiled by OIR [WF College; all faculty]

ALL FACULTY (New & Continuing)	MEANS		MEDIANs	
	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Assistant - TT	\$83,604	\$84,329	\$78,187	\$78,788
Associate - TT	\$104,640	\$108,264	\$102,721	\$106,739
Professor - TT	\$150,066	\$153,529	\$143,740	\$147,410
Assistant - NTT	\$66,100	\$67,379	\$62,458	\$64,086
Associate - NTT	\$79,296	\$81,506	\$76,888	\$79,168
Professor - NTT	\$103,033	\$101,744	\$91,109	\$91,651

Descriptive stats from AAUP; compiled by OIR [WF College; continuing faculty]

CONTINUING FACULTY	MEANS		MEDIAN	
	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Assistant – TT	\$83,352	\$87,422	\$78,078	\$83,410
Associate – TT	\$104,572	\$109,306	102,618	107,872
Professor	\$148,911	\$155,947	143,021	149,100
Assistant – NTT	\$66,282	\$68,450	63,208	64,791
Associate - NTT	\$79,881	\$84,327	77,900	82,066
Professor - NTT	\$103,058	\$108,037	90,441	94,963

Peer comps (means)

Institution	COL Region	Fac Sen	G14	% NTT^	COL Factor†	PROFESSOR		ASSOCIATE		ASSISTANT	
						Unadjusted	COL Adjusted	Unadjusted	COL Adjusted	Unadjusted	COL Adjusted
						2024-25	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25
Boston Coll	<i>Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH</i>		✓	26%	111.6	214.3	192.0	136.8	122.6	132.2	118.5
Emory University	<i>Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA</i>	✓		25%	100.9	213.3	211.4	135.8	134.6	113.7	112.7
George Washington U	<i>Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV</i>		✓	34%	108.6	203.0	186.9	131.8	121.4	108.1	99.5
Tufts U	<i>Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH</i>	✓	✓	40%	111.6	180.0	161.3	132.3	118.5	110.6	99.1
Wake Forest U	<i>Winston-Salem, NC</i>		✓	33%	91.4	153.7	168.2	115.2	126.0	81.9	89.6

Equity ratios:
women (W) /
men (M)

Full

Means;
all schools;
TT/NTT mixed

[prior yr: 89.9%]

"Professor"	↓W/M (%)
University of Notre Dame	82.5
University of Richmond	85.0
Boston College	86.1
Northeastern University	86.2
Dartmouth College	86.8
Southern Methodist University	87.1
Vanderbilt University	87.9
New York University	89.1
Wake Forest University	89.9
Pepperdine University	90.7
University of Miami	92.6
Boston University	92.9
Tulane University	93.5
Emory University	93.5
Tufts University	93.7
American University	95.2
Brandeis University	95.5
Lehigh University	96.4
George Washington University	98.7
Brown University	99.1

Equity ratios:
women (W) /
men (M)

Associate

Means;
all schools;
TT/NTT mixed

[prior yr: 91.4%]

"Associate"	↓W/M (%)
Tulane University	88.0
George Washington University	88.3
Northeastern University	90.3
Emory University	91.6
University of Notre Dame	92.9
Southern Methodist University	93.0
Brandeis University	94.1
University of Richmond	94.2
Tufts University	94.6
Boston College	94.7
Wake Forest University	94.7
Dartmouth College	95.0
University of Miami	95.1
Vanderbilt University	95.3
New York University	95.4
Lehigh University	96.2
American University	96.7
Brown University	97.1
Boston University	98.0
Pepperdine University	100.1

Equity ratios:
women (W) /
men (M)

Assistant

Means;
all schools;
TT/NTT mixed

[prior yr: 96.6%]

"Assistant"	↓W/M (%)
Tulane University	83.1
Pepperdine University	87.3
George Washington University	87.4
Southern Methodist University	88.0
Lehigh University	88.8
Northeastern University	89.5
University of Notre Dame	89.9
New York University	91.0
University of Miami	91.4
Emory University	92.1
Brandeis University	92.2
Brown University	93.6
Vanderbilt University	93.7
Boston University	93.7
Wake Forest University	94.3
Tufts University	94.6
American University	95.9
Boston College	96.6
University of Richmond	96.7
Dartmouth College	98.6

This data suggests...

- We need better data
 - ~~Medians for continuing faculty; *discipline-specific data within the College.*~~
 - Potential action items: **(1)** Work with OIR on better data for medians and continuing faculty; **(2)** Work with College on understanding discipline-specific comp [this could be esp relevant for understanding any gender differences]
- New assistant prof hiring salaries could be on the low end?
 - Potential action item: **(3)** Can department chairs present examples to admin (esp from the College) on losing promising assistants based on low salary offers?
- **(4)** We need to understand & inquire about: Senate involvement in University decisions... based on the salaries committee's charge & Wake's enterprise-wide goal E-2 per the [Campus Climate Task Force](#)