Equity Pay Program:
A Move Towards a Fair Salary Structure for CSU Faculty

By Kevin Wehr, CFA Representation Committee Chair
Sociology, Sacramento State

The new faculty contract keeps alive the push to solve inequities in the faculty salary structure. This is a positive move after four years of state funding cuts and CSU management policies to shift the burden of those cuts onto the faculty and students.

BACKGROUND: In 2007, the contract for the first time took on inversion and compression in the faculty salary structure. Inversion referred to newly hired faculty getting jobs at higher pay than faculty who had been in the CSU for years. Compression was the term for long-time faculty being trapped at the top of a salary ladder that squeezed down on them more and more over time.

The two-year Equity Pay Program of 2007 tried to address these flaws in the pay scale. The first year of the program was implemented and it helped thousands of faculty members. The second year was stopped by the Chancellor after state funding for the CSU declined.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: The second year of the Equity Pay Program is finally back but now it will be run on a campus-by-campus basis. If a campus president implements an equity program, the people who should have received salary adjustments in Equity Year 2 will have to be made whole.

After that is accomplished, a campus can implement a new equity program to address new problems that have arisen from the years of not implementing these adjustments in 2008. Under the contract, faculty through their campus CFA chapter will have the opportunity to be involved in the design of any new equity program.

Each campus needs to come up with its own budget for equity pay. We are all painfully aware that the new equity program will be implemented on a campus at the discretion of each campus president. There is no central statewide funding mechanism. That is different from how funding was handled in 2007/08.

IMPLEMENTATION: Some campuses already have begun to plan implementation of equity pay while other campus presidents, it appears, may need to be persuaded to do so.

CSU managers cannot ignore these flaws in the pay structure. They are a serious morale concern that is driving away quality faculty. Although the data is anecdotal, I know of award-winning faculty members who have left my campus due to lack of acceptable pay, and I can only assume that this is happening across the system. We need this program to keep teachers teaching and students learning.

CFA’s officers, board of directors and bargaining team members will work with CFA campus chapters to help them convince campus presidents to do the right thing. Implementation teams are forming on the campuses. Please contact your CFA chapter to help out.