



College salary survey Adams top in tenure, but not pay

By **LEE SHEARER** - lee.shearer@onlineathens.com
 Published Thursday, January 21, 2010

Michael Adams, the longest-serving president at any of the state's three major public research universities, also is the lowest- paid.

PRESIDENTIAL PAY

Top administrators at Southeastern Conference universities have very different salaries, but most got well above the national median of \$436,111 in 2008-09.

SCHOOL	COMPENSATION
Auburn	\$727,761
Alabama	\$604,161
Arkansas	\$307,640
Florida	\$523,668
Georgia	\$604,864
Kentucky	\$399,612
LSU	\$400,000
Mississippi	\$455,460
Miss. State	\$455,460
South Carolina	\$535,000
Tennessee*	\$166,871
Vanderbilt**	\$1,275,309

* Partial year
 ** 2007-08. Vanderbilt is a private university.
 Source: Chronicle of Higher Education

Top administrators at Southeastern Conference universities have very different salaries, but most got well above the national median of \$436,111 in 2008-09.

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according to the Chronicle's separate survey at private universities and colleges. Life University President Guy Riekeman was the state's second highest-paid president, with total compensation of \$753,106.

Nationwide, pay raises for college presidents are leveling off.

Presidential pay rose about 2.3 percent from 2007-08 to 2008-09.

Adams' 2008-09 compensation package was \$604,864, trailing Georgia Tech President Bud Peterson, who made \$634,138, and Georgia State University President Mark Becker at \$629,776.

The numbers are included in the latest annual survey of college presidents' salaries done by the Chronicle of Higher Education, which showed college presidents' salaries are leveling off after several years of rapid growth.

In addition to base pay of \$255,516 and a salary supplement of \$125,203, Adams' compensation package includes \$150,000 in deferred compensation, \$14,475 in a retirement account, \$40,000 in longevity pay and a \$19,400 housing allowance. A private source furnishes a car for Adams, according to the survey.

Adams' pay still is higher than most presidents in the Southeastern Conference. Of the presidents of the 12 SEC schools, only Auburn University President Jay Gogue makes more, with annual compensation of \$727,761, according to the survey.

Gogue is one of 11 presidents of public colleges who make \$700,000 or more, topped by Ohio State University President Gordon Gee, whose total compensation is nearly \$1.6 million.

Gee was the only public university president to top \$1 million. By contrast, 23 private college presidents were paid \$1 million or more in 2007-08.

The state's two highest-paid college presidents lead private universities. Emory's James Wagner came close to the \$1 million club at \$980,089,

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The average pay increase for college presidents over the previous four years ranged from 7.6 percent to 18.9 percent, according to the Chronicle.

Adams' salary may seem like a lot, but it's not out of line for the chief executive officer of an organization with a \$1.2 billion budget like UGA, said Lindalee Lawrence of Lawrence Associates, an executive compensation consulting firm in Massachusetts.




Leaders of nonprofit organizations like colleges historically have made less than executives of comparable private and for-profit companies, but the gap has been closing in recent years, she said.

"People expect to be paid what they're worth. Otherwise, they can go to another place," Lawrence said.

Adams' pay may slip again in the next presidential salary survey a year from now.

Georgia workers, including college presidents, got no pay raise this year because of the state budget crunch. And like other workers, Adams actually will take a pay cut this year because he won't get paid for six unpaid furlough days university system employees were forced to take in the 2009-10 academic year.

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald on Thursday, January 21, 2010

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Reader Comments

Posted by: [MATT31](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 12:14:02 am

+ 7 Rating

sure hope he goes somewhere else.

Posted by: [admjas](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 12:25:25 am

????????????? oooooohhh- I want to,But i wont.

Posted by: [redlightstplight](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 4:56:14 am

Why are they paid so much?

Posted by: [bosshawg](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 5:29:04 am

maybe he could make it on \$500 for two wks labor after furlo days of course we probably dont need insur. or retirement

Posted by: [sws](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 6:33:36 am

Heck, Adams is still making less than the new Defensive Coordinator- \$604,864 versus \$750,000. What's wrong with this picture?

Posted by: [Neoconfromhell](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 6:34:40 am

Evil, windfall profits?

Posted by: [retired007](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 6:35:40 am

+ 1 Rating

Well, if you include the money he stole (per book "Behind the Hedges"), Adams would be the highest paid in the country . . .

Posted by: [Kaveman](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 6:42:02 am

+ 3 Rating

As a fundraiser/figurehead, he's still vastly overpaid. Hundreds of other people in Georgia could do the job as well as Adams, they just don't have the political connections.

Posted by: [Kaveman](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 6:44:54 am

Many other public university presidents have given back a lot of their salaries to help heir schools deal with state budget cuts. Adams ain't one of them.

Posted by: [nocomment](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 7:01:00 am

+ 2 Rating

Perhaps he should find a more lucrative gig. Please!!!

Posted by: [whitney](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:07:37 am

+ 2 Rating

Maybe every employee at the University who makes over \$100,000 per year can take an extra day or two of furlough. Then maybe folks making less than \$30,000 won't have another pay cut.

Posted by: [roebling](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:14:19 am

Hope he takes the hint.

Posted by: [solomongrundy](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:38:40 am

In the University, big pay raises usually only come by switching schools. This is true for the academic side as well as athletics. Adams is the lowest paid of the three because he has been here for more than a decade. Should he choose to leave, it would almost certainly be because another school offered him 100k+ more a year for salary.

Coaches get huge pay raises when they switch schools or teams, i.e. Grantham. Some coaches get lucky. They are head hunted, their current school matches or beats the offer, and they get to stay. Something like this happened six or seven years ago with President Adams, too. He farmed himself out, Ohio was willing to give him a

fat pay raise, and Georgia turned around and beat it. (Nevermind this was the same year he told all the faculty they weren't getting a pay raise and must stick together and tighten their belts)

But, for the most part, to get a big pay raise in a University job, you almost always have to go to a different school to get it.

Posted by: [jackstilton](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:38:50 am

It is hard to determine what Adams should make since he really Sucks, but he thinks he is the Athletic Directory too, so that should make him worth a little more.

Adams has a fat check of 1.5 million when he decides to leave.

"UGA president Michael Adams has at least \$1.5 million in deferred pay waiting whenever he moves on â€¦ half of it residing with the foundation that tried to dump him five years ago."

<http://www.alanpowell.net/?go=viewnews&newsid=2915>

Posted by: [marshalld](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:44:09 am

+ 1 Rating

It's comforting to know this right after our children had to pay \$100 in extra fees this semester.

Posted by: [jdg1385](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 8:48:56 am

+ 3 Rating

"People expect to be paid what they're worth. Otherwise, they can go to another place," Lawrence said."

Seems to me there are a lot of executives in both the public and private sectors that have an over inflated idea of what they are worth. This false belief is usually reinforced by the boards of directors, who in turn get to have their salaries inflated. Executive salaries are out of control in this country.

Posted by: [ABHReader2008](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 10:28:34 am

"Many other public university presidents have given back a lot of their salaries to help heir schools deal with state budget cuts."

Kaverman, can you give us a cite for this? Reference? Examples? Anything- other than postulation?

Posted by: [barryhollander](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 10:52:59 am

+ 1 Rating

re: ABHReader2008

From a Washington Post article:

William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland, turned down \$100,000 in deferred compensation last year, one of several higher education leaders to take pay cuts. His compensation for the year totaled \$490,000.

From the Chronicle of Higher Education:

The president and provost of Stanford University are taking immediate 10-percent cuts in their salaries as part of an overall plan to trim the university's budget, and other senior administrators have also volunteered to take salary reductions, the provost, John W. Etchemendy, said on Tuesday in a letter to faculty and staff members.

Same site, different story:

At many public universities, presidents have volunteered for pay freezes and cuts in an effort to show solidarity with their campuses, which are going through periods of shrinking budgets and rising tuition.

No time to look for more, but they're out there.

Posted by: [zimdooley](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 10:55:09 am

Why does Adams get a \$19,400 housing allowance, when the University has that beautiful house on Prince Avenue for him? Milk it, bro!!!!

Posted by: [MrCharlieW](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 11:07:47 am

He is overpaid until we get a national champ football team

Posted by: [MrCharlieW](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 11:11:55 am

I liked it when we were paying for his spouse, you know like having a royal king

Posted by: [manurestopper](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 11:26:06 am

TAKE A HIKE MA. Nobody likes you. You are underpaid for a reason, so LEAVE!

Posted by: [Open-Minded](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 12:40:26 pm

I'd imagine the University President has little say in what his pay is; it is true, though, that major players in higher education have tried to corporative the incentive program saying it'll attract the top talent and then self-servingly soaking-up the resulting deluge. Generally, many university types are quick to say their compensation is "sacrificial" and that they could make at least "two to three times more in the private sector."

Even with a state legislature gearing-up to protect education at all costs ... the public is right to assume that the levels of spending in education, as in other areas of the budget, are out of kilter. There'll be no magical moment when top paid administrators seek their salaries halved, or worse, but as the economic fall-out circumscribes funding there will be a renewal of the age-old concept that education and educators work at a sacrifice because they believe so strongly in what they are doing. It's not a new breed we are looking for but the old breed; the reason U.GA., for example, originally housed the President was because it didn't have the money to compensate him very well. No one should cry for higher education or believe this idea that massive dedicated funding creates a critical mass of excellence or think that "top talent" will refuse its obligation to education were compensation more reasonable.

Posted by: [educateddawg](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 1:05:01 pm

I don't hear anyone asking Marc Richt or Mike Bobo to defer his salary and help the budget situation. ZimDooley, Mr. Adams does stay in the house on Prince Ave. The housing allowance is to pay for the bills of that house

(property taxes, utilities, insurance, maintenance, etc.)UGA's academic rankings have done nothing but rise since Adams has been here. New academic and student centers, more Rhodes Scholars. He didn't create this mess, the Board of Regents did. I get the feeling alot people posting are still upset over the handling of Vince Dooley. "A hit dog will holler".

Posted by: [dontbother](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 1:26:16 pm

+ 1 Rating

educateddawg, I beg to differ with you. Adams has a house on Lake Oconee and another one listed in Mary's name on Renfrew Dr. Give me proof the \$19,400 for housing is paying the property taxes, utilities, etc.

Posted by: [ponsoldtmsncom](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 2:04:46 pm

in terms of national reputation among other academics, adams has caused lasting damage to uga. he has no credibility outside the state. the regents are to blame. he should have been let go many years earlier. the pay of academic bureaucrats is highly inflated by the internal hiring of "compensation consultants", just as has happened in corporate america. people serving on our boards just aren't doing their jobs.

Posted by: [educateddawg](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 2:29:53 pm

dontbother, thank you and I stand corrected. UGA didn't pay for those 2 houses I assume, correct. ponsoldtmsncom, what damage are you referring to? Can't be any worse than what was caused by Davidson or Knapp. You show me one major department that's ranked lower now than it was before Adams started.

Posted by: [educateddawg](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 2:34:00 pm

dontbother, somebody has to pay the property taxes and insurance there. You know ACC is not gonna let that go for free. As much as the lights are on during the night, the Georgia Power bill has got to be something. There also seems to always be a UGA police car out front there, who are they protecting. Just wondering, thanks again dontbother.

Posted by: [witchesbrew](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 2:52:10 pm

Oooo...I am so sorry that Adams' has to take furlough days(boo-hoo). If you calculate the income lost by Adams for those furlough days at about \$2,000.00 p/day, that is about a month's pay for the average UGA employee (if they are lucky) before taxes, insurance, etc. If the other highly paid people on campus would take a cut in pay(in addition to furlough days) it would greatly help UGA financially and would show their dedication to the university. But that will never happen. It's all about "the money" in their pockets, not the welfare of preserving jobs for the worker bees who keep the wheels spinning on their substandard wages.

Posted by: [bellybelle](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 3:07:57 pm

adams does not stay in the pres house on prince at all. its used for ceremonies and special guests. the uni police protect the property not the man. all they do is just drive up and down the driveway then go get coffee

Posted by: [solomongrundy](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 3:25:46 pm

Educatedawg, President Adams does build many new buildings. He seems to understand, cynically, that Presidents aren't remembered by monied people for the great talent (professors) they have hired or cultivated. College Presidents are remembered for the buildings built and increased enrollment. The increased number of Rhodes Scholars, Carnegie Fellowships, etc. probably has more to do with HOPE and rapidly increasing tuition costs at out of state public universities and private universities than it does with Adams. When Chapel Hill, Michigan, Princeton, Cornell, Stanford, etc. have 7-15 percent tuition increases for years on end, many of the brains who would have gone elsewhere are forced to stay local. This is a boon for Georgia and UGA, but I wouldn't point too much of the praise Adams's way.

Many of the students who do go on win Rhodes scholarships and other academic accolades are often recruited out of high schools in the Honor's Program. They are given many, many perks that the average student does not (special courses, travel money, etc. all designed to make them better award candidates on paper). These awards are a nice way to bring some attention to UGA, but the rewards do not accurately reflect the education of the general population student. Many of them (the general students) have to take extra semesters at UGA, not because they partied too hard, but because they cannot take all the courses they need to graduate in four years. And that is due to hiring freezes and a decade long shrinking of tenured faculty.

Posted by: [dowhat](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 9:16:19 pm

-1 Rating

Say what you want to, but Adams has done a heck of a job, and UGA is getting a deal. So get over it.

Posted by: [bellybelle](#) at Jan. 21, 2010 at 11:02:41 pm

job doing what? like solomon said the economic downturn did more.

Posted by: [antinomus44](#) at Jan. 24, 2010 at 11:10:23 pm

But for this man being Sonny's personal boot licker, he wouldn't be where he is today. It's funny to see a Republican making that kind of money off the doll of the taxpayer, and no one seems to care, but if a public school teacher is being forced to go on furloughs, have their insurance premiums jacked up, and pay drastically cut, you private school fundamentalists and home school fetishists see nothing wrong with that. Start at the top and start with this son of gun's salary, along with the Richt. Let them practice what they preach for everyone else, for a change.

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