

# Gee's \$1.6 million pay leads pack of public university presidents

## Other leaders of public universities earn far less

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BY **ENCARNACION PYLE**

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Ohio State President E. Gordon Gee remains the top-paid public-university leader in the country.

With a total compensation package of nearly \$1.6 million, Gee was the only public-school leader to top \$1 million for the 2008-09 school year, according to a *Chronicle of Higher Education* survey released today.

He was the highest-paid in 2007-08 as well, with a total package worth more than \$1.3 million.

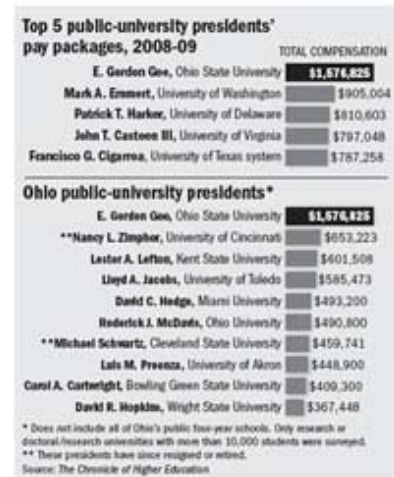
Only two other public-college leaders brought in more than \$800,000 last year. University of Washington President Mark A. Emmert had a \$905,004 package and University of Delaware President Patrick T. Harker had an \$810,603 package.

By comparison, 23 private-college presidents were paid at least \$1 million in 2007-08, according to *The Chronicle*. The newspaper does not have private-school data for the following year yet.

The median compensation package for public-college presidents last school year was \$436,111 -- 2.3 percent more than in 2007-08. The increases the previous four years ranged from 7.6 percent to 18.9 percent annually, *Chronicle* Editor Jeffrey J. Selingo said.

The bad economy, fiscal crisis facing many states and scrutiny of big raises likely led to the slowdown, observers said.

"The economic meltdown has had a tremendous impact on big salaries across a lot of the nonprofit, independent and public sectors," said Lindalee A. Lawrence, president of Lawrence Associates, a Massachusetts-based compensation-consulting firm. "And there's no question the scrutiny is increasing."



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E. Gordon Gee

Gee's total compensation includes \$802,125 in base salary, a \$500,000 supplemental retirement plan, \$225,000 in deferred compensation and \$49,700 in retirement pay. He also received club dues and use of a house and car.

"I hope I earn that salary every day," Gee said. "That's my goal."

Gee said his pay is commensurate with his position as the nation's most experienced college president. He has led five schools over nearly 30 years. He also was the highest-paid college leader in the country while at Vanderbilt University before he returned to Ohio State.

As with a growing number of college leaders, Gee has given money back to his school since the economic downturn.

In the 2008-09 school year, he pledged \$1 million to create an endowed fund at Ohio State that will cover tuition and fees for one student at each class rank for four years.

This academic year, Gee gave his raise and bonus -- worth \$220,000 -- to student scholarships.

*To view the Chronicle's database of public university executive compensation, go to <http://chronicle.com/stats/990/public.htm>.*

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