

The Higher Education IT Salary Report, 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2019

Key Findings

- **A significant salary gap between men and women persists among IT staff.** There are not statistically significant differences in the salaries of male and female CIOs or managers after controlling for other factors. However, female staff members are paid, on average, \$7,023 less than their male counterparts.
- **Education level, age, and institution type are significantly correlated with salary.** IT professionals who hold master's and PhDs can expect to earn significantly more than those with bachelor's and associate's degrees; older employees with more experience tend to earn more than younger employees with less experience; IT professionals who are employed at doctoral institutions—and especially at private doctorals—earn significantly more than those at other types of institutions.
- **With greater responsibility come greater salaries.** The more direct reports managers have, the more they earn. And CIOs who hold a cabinet position at their institution earn about \$30,000 more per year than their counterparts who do not have "a seat at the table."
- **Some higher education IT sectors pay better than others.** Higher education IT professionals who hold positions in data, analytics, and business intelligence; information security and services; research computing/cyberinfrastructure; and executive leadership have higher salaries. Those in academic computing/instructional technology; design, media, and web; and desktop services or client support have lower salaries.
- **Institution type, cabinet membership, and years of experience in higher education prior to one's current institution are the only factors among those we considered that predict CIO salaries significantly.** CIOs at doctoral institutions earn the most; AA/BA institution CIOs earn the least. Controlling for other factors, cabinet-level CIOs earn about \$30,000 more than those who do not hold cabinet posts. For each year of prior experience in higher education at another institution, CIOs earn about \$1,200 more.
- **The three strongest predictors of IT managers' salaries are institution type, the sector of one's position, and years of experience in higher education prior to joining one's current institution.** Managers at DR institutions earn more than their AA, BA, and MA counterparts. Managers from

IT executive leadership, information security and services, and research computing/cyberinfrastructure earn more than peers in other IT sectors. And each additional year of higher education experience at other institutions is worth about \$800 in additional salary.

- **IT staff salaries are significantly predicted by gender, generation, institution type, education level, IT sector, and experience in higher education prior to joining one's current institution.** Even after controlling for other factors, the observed gender gap persists among IT staff, with male IT staff earning about \$7,000 more than their female peers.

Recommendations

- **Higher education IT departments need to perform a systematic and thorough audit of staff salaries to correct for gender-based wage imbalances.** Work closely with HR to determine the best approach for rendering salary adjustments to equalize pay for men and women performing the same roles. Furthermore, take steps to guarantee that equitable salaries are established at the point of hire, as lower starting salaries may result in a lifetime of lower compensation rates and retirement benefits. Establishing equitable compensation packages may generate longer-term benefits such as boosted employee morale and increased retention by signaling to the workforce the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
- **CIOs who want to improve their salary may need to consider leaving their current institution.** Since the significant determinants of CIO salary are few and the CIO position resides at the top of the IT organization chart, the options for bringing home more bacon are limited—finding a new position at another institution, perhaps one that has established the CIO as a cabinet-level position, might be the best option for many. A CIO could also lobby to have one's current position approved for a seat on the president's or the chancellor's cabinet (and request a commensurate bump in pay).
- **Managers who seek to increase their salaries should consider finding a position at a doctoral institution, take steps to develop the requisite skills and knowledge to move into a more lucrative IT sector, or earn a degree beyond their current level of education.** The paths managers choose to increase their earning power are highly individualized, depend on one's threshold of tolerance for disrupting family life (e.g., moving away for a job at another institution), and/or require patience in realizing a higher salary (e.g., earning a PhD over the course of several years).
- **To increase their salaries, IT staff should consider developing a skill and knowledge set that would allow them to move to an IT sector that pays better than their current one, earn a degree higher than their current one, or move to another institution.** A strategy that incorporates several of these efforts may help chart a career path that not only leads to salary increases as a staff member but also allows one to move up the pecking order of IT organizations. For example, completing coursework toward a degree may increase opportunities to switch IT sectors, which may in turn lead to management or executive opportunities at one's current or another institution.