This year’s Faculty Salary Report is unusual for several reasons. Firstly we are reporting on a now defunct policy, although in light of the ongoing payment of off-scale salaries, it could be claimed that this has been true of reports for many years. In any case, in light of Brother Ronald Gallagher’s statement that Goal Two of the current policy is not feasible, and as the Faculty Salary Policy Task Force approaches the conclusion of its work on a new policy, we find ourselves reporting on an artifact, rather than a working policy. Nevertheless, given that this is still the reported policy in the faculty handbook, we present our report on the faculty salary policy, Goals One, Two and Three. For reference the goals are stated below.

Salary Goals:
1. The average of salaries by rank should minimally be the average salaries by rank of Pacific States IIA institutions, as defined and published yearly in Academe, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and on Web sites.
2. To maintain competitive salaries, the budget process should also consider a smaller cohort of comparable institutions: the other schools in the WCC and Manhattan College. Many of these institutions have professional schools, which pay significantly higher salaries, particularly in the ranks of associate and full professor. In light of this, the College should aim for the median of the assistant professor salary scale at Saint Mary’s to be at the median of assistant rank average salaries at these cohort institutions, as available yearly in the sources noted above.
3. The College should aim for a salary structure that is equitable across ranks, with particular attention given to the competitiveness at the assistant professor level. The salary structure should have a range of salaries, from assistant through full professor, consistent with the Pacific States IIA.

Goal One

Goal One presents what appears to be good news for the faculty, particularly those at the assistant professor rank. As the attached graph indicates, our average reported salaries at the associate and full professor ranks overtook those of the PAC-IIA schools in 2004-05, and have remained above them since that time. We note that at the full professor level, we actually recorded a small drop in the average paid salary, but this is as a result of retirements of faculty at the top end of the scale. The news at the assistant professor rank is apparently excellent, however. As the data indicate, the last two years have seen impressive growth in the salaries paid to our assistant professors, to the point where our assistant professors are now almost at the level of associate professors at the PAC-IIA institutions. These great gains have come about despite the scale receiving no increase for each of the past two years. In fact, the average reported salary for assistant professors is now $74,800 compared the top level of the assistant-II scale which is $67,493. As the campus community is now aware, this is due to a few off scale hires that have been made over recent years. These hires make our analysis relatively meaningless to the majority of faculty who remain “on-scale”. It is worth noting, however, that we are in fact giving an “apples-to-
apples” comparison in that other Universities and Colleges are likely also paying differential salaries and these would also be in the reported data from these other institutions.

Goal Two

Goal Two presents a somewhat less rosy picture. The SMC calculation is based on the midpoint of the assistant professor scale; that is, halfway between steps 3 and 4 on that scale. Given the lack of a cost-of-living increase for the past two years this amount has not moved from the level of 2008-09. This is clearly shown by the flat-lining of the Saint Mary’s salary in the attached graph. In the meantime, while the increases have been relatively small, our WCC+1 colleagues have continued to move further ahead. The differential from our Goal Two target (that is, how far behind we are) has risen from 7.6% in 2004-05 to 16.8% for 2010-11.

Goal Three

Again the conclusions here are ambiguous. Given the freezing of the scale, it can be claimed that the equity across ranks has remained unchanged for two years. If we again look at the Goal Two graph, however, we see that the differential salaries, which are almost all paid at the assistant level, have led to a narrowing of the scale. The policy states that our salary range should be “consistent with the Pacific States IIA.” This is clearly not the case.

Conclusion

As mentioned, this report is likely the penultimate one reflecting the current salary policy. Over time, the change in the academic profile of members of the WCC, in addition to the small sample size of schools and the lack of institutions reporting demonstrates a need for a new policy and the work to create such is well underway (near completion). Another clear lesson, of course, is that any new policy, if we do not adhere to it, is meaningless. The disparate conclusions that can be reached from looking at Goals One and Two make a mockery of the policy as it is written. In addition, Goal Two as a target has been dropped with no substitute in place. We hope these lessons are learned in the implementation and continued use of the new policy, whatever that may be.