

# Focus on Psychology Faculty

SALARIES, PAY EQUITY, MINORITY REPRESENTATION, AND THE GROWTH OF NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

*Jacqueline Bichsel, Ph.D., Director of Research*

*Jasper McChesney, M.S., former Data Visualization Researcher, CUPA-HR*

*Anthony Schmidt, M.S., Data Visualization Researcher, CUPA-HR*



**College and University Professional  
Association for Human Resources**



## College and University Professional Association for Human Resources

### **About CUPA-HR**

CUPA-HR is higher ed HR. We serve higher education by providing the knowledge, resources, advocacy, and connections to achieve organizational and workforce excellence. Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, and serving over 31,000 HR professionals and other campus leaders at more than 2,000 institutions, the association offers learning and professional development programs, higher education workforce data, extensive online resources, and just-in-time regulatory and legislative information.

### **Citation for This Report**

Bichsel, Jacqueline; McChesney, Jasper; & Schmidt, Anthony (2019, November). *Focus on Psychology Faculty: Salaries, Pay Equity, Minority Representation, and the Growth of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty*. (Research Report). CUPA-HR. Available from <https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/research-briefs/>.

This report was made possible with the support of:



## Tell Your Institution's Story One Faculty Member at a Time

PeopleAdmin's Faculty Information System allows faculty to track and maintain their own professional story, while allowing institutions to use that data to connect work, committees and more to better align with fulfilling the institution's mission.

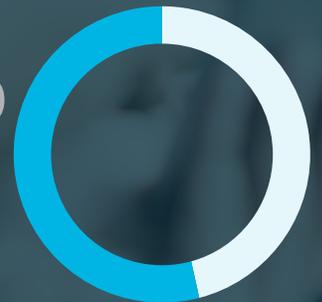
[Learn More](#)



**50%**

of faculty spend their work  
week outside the classroom.<sup>1</sup>

**56%**  
do not have any  
faculty-centric online systems.<sup>2</sup>



Sources:

1. Inside HigherEd 2019

2. NCBI, National Center of Biotechnology Information

# Introduction

Psychology remains one of the more popular undergraduate majors in higher education, ranking behind only business, health professions, and social sciences and history.<sup>1</sup> One reason for psychology's popularity is its versatility — an undergraduate degree in psychology can lead to a career or graduate study in law, medicine, teaching, business, and many other areas.<sup>2</sup>

A sizeable number of psychology faculty complement this discipline's popularity as a major. Overall, psychology faculty make up about 5% of the total faculty population.<sup>3</sup> In this brief, we provide a snapshot of psychology faculty data: how their salaries compare to other disciplines, the representation and pay of women and minorities, and the growth of non-tenure-track faculty.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Social sciences and history were combined. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2018). Chapter 3. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2016* (NCES 2017-094).
- 2 Franek, R. (2018). *Top 10 College Majors* (Article). *The Princeton Review*.
- 3 Across all 34 disciplines surveyed,  $n = 12,378$  psychology faculty out of  $N = 258,378$  total faculty. Source: *CUPA-HR 2018-19 Faculty in Higher Education Survey*.
- 4 Data are from the *CUPA-HR 2018-19 Faculty in Higher Education Survey*, which uses *IPEDS Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)* codes to designate faculty discipline. Data consist of institutional-level median salaries paid by discipline and rank.

# How Do Psychology Faculty Salaries Compare to Faculty Salaries in Other Disciplines?

Figure 1 depicts the pay ratios of selected faculty disciplines compared to what faculty from all disciplines combined are paid.<sup>5</sup> Psychology faculty with all ranks combined are paid \$0.92 on the dollar compared to faculty from all disciplines. Their salaries are also lower than faculty in the social sciences. This disparity exists at each rank but is most notable at the rank of assistant professor. In contrast, faculty in business are paid well above the all-disciplines-combined level at every rank.<sup>6</sup>

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Median Pay Ratios of Faculty Disciplines by Rank

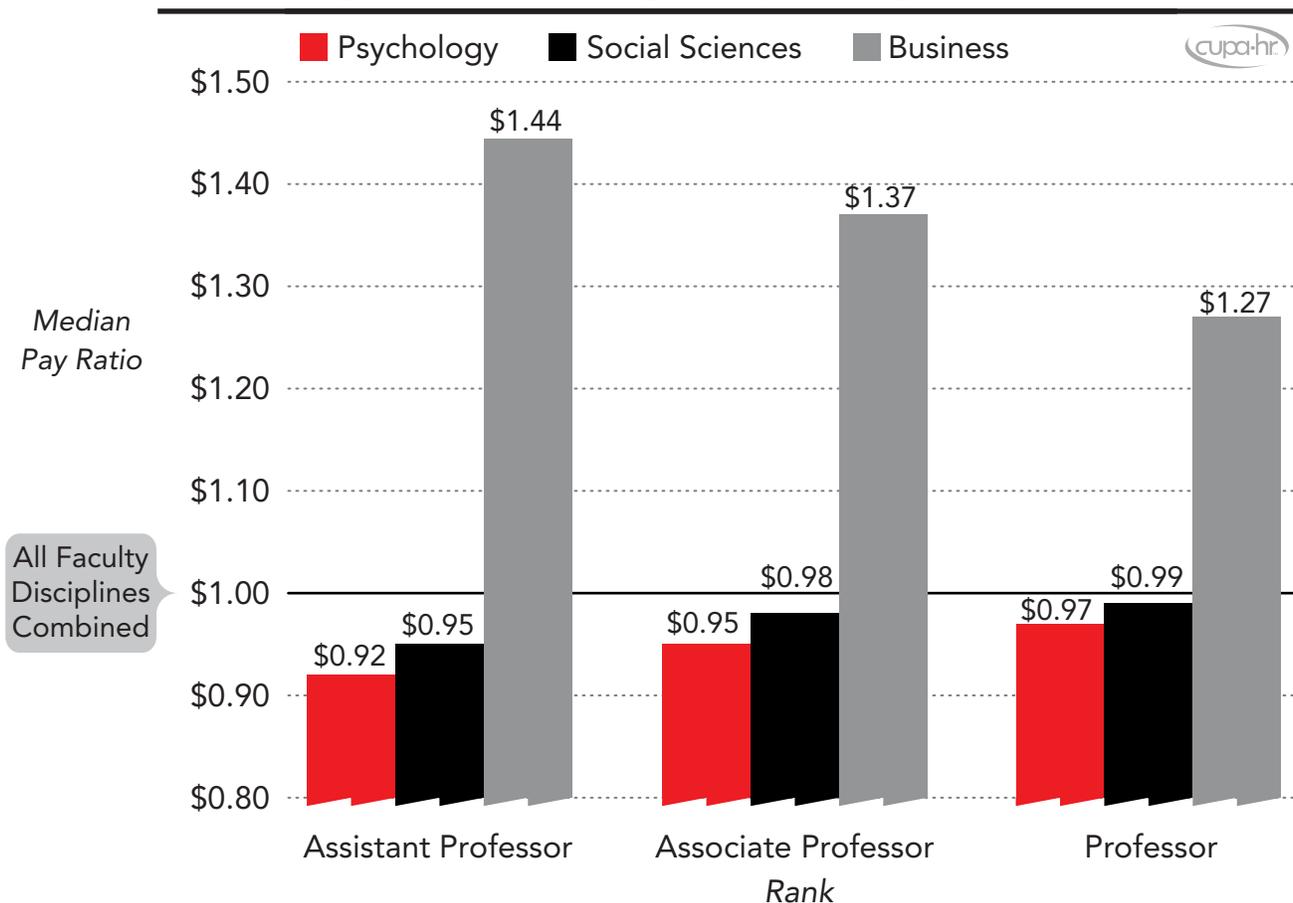


Figure 1

5 Data displayed are for full-time, tenure-track faculty. Pay ratios are derived by dividing the median salary of all faculty combined by the median salary of faculty from the designated discipline.

6 To view salaries from other faculty disciplines, see results available in [DataOnDemand](#) or the [Faculty in Higher Education Annual Report](#).

Psychology faculty have been paid below the median level of all faculty combined for the past 16 years (Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> Their pay ratio was lowest after the recession, when budget cuts forced many institutions to decrease or freeze raises, indicating that psychology faculty sustained an especially hard hit compared to other faculty during this period. Although there was a rebound in 2017, the pay ratio remains low.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### Pay Ratio of Psychology Faculty to All Tenure-Track Faculty

All Faculty Disciplines Combined

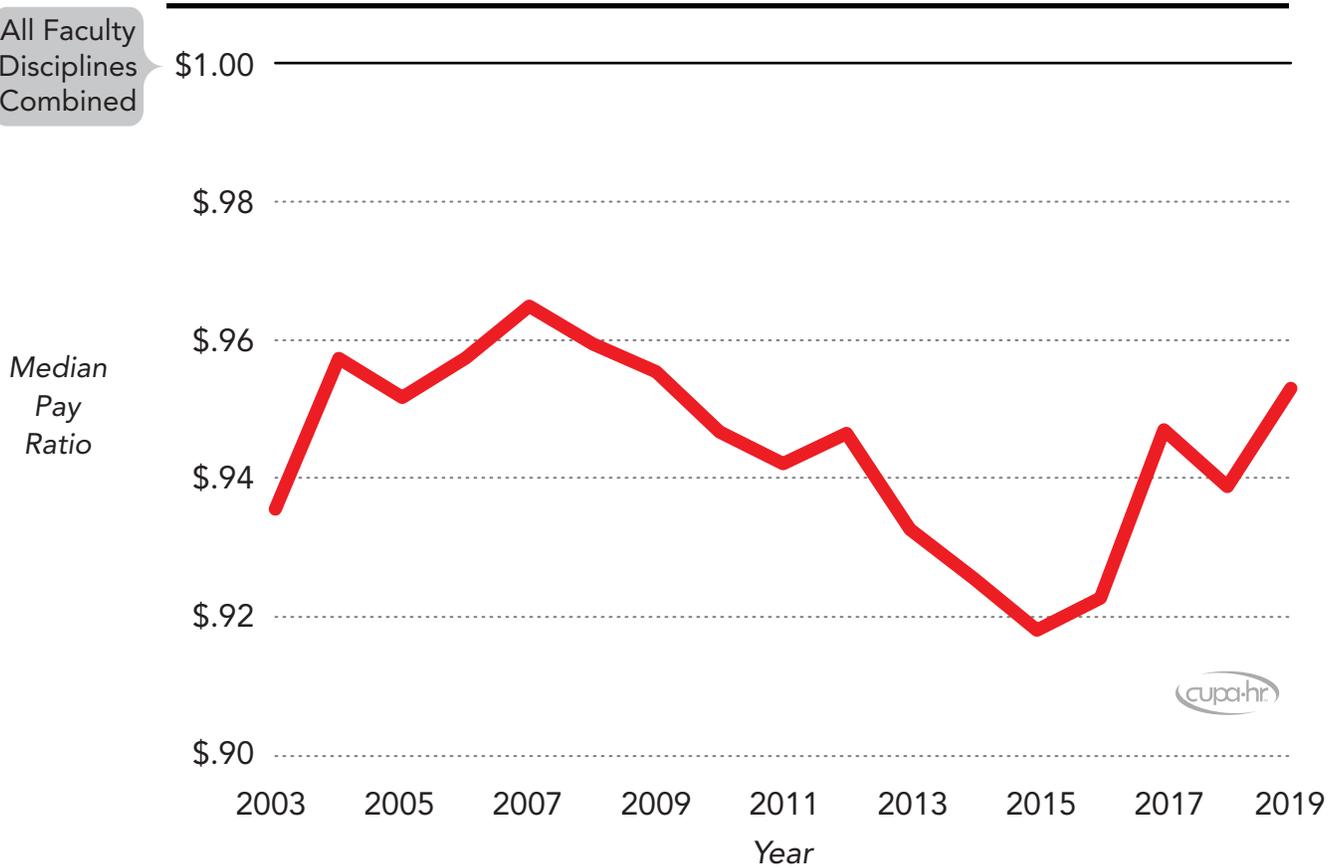


Figure 2

7 Data are for full-time, tenure-track faculty. The \$1.00 mark represents median pay for all faculty disciplines combined.

# Pay and Representation of Women Tenure-Track Faculty

Figure 3 displays median pay ratios and representation of women in tenure-track faculty positions at each rank. The pay gap for women widens with increases in rank for female tenure-track psychology faculty.<sup>8</sup> Whereas new hires (new assistant female psychology professors) are paid more than men (\$1.02), the pay ratio gradually decreases with each increase in rank. Women at the full professor level in psychology are paid \$0.94 on the male dollar. It's notable that this gap at the full professor level for women psychology faculty is narrower than the gap for women faculty with the rank of full professor in all disciplines combined, where women are paid only \$0.89 for every dollar earned by men.

Women are better represented among tenure-track psychology faculty at all ranks than among faculty as a whole. However, as is the case with all faculty, their representation decreases with increases in rank. Whereas women make up nearly two-thirds (63%) of new tenure-track psychology hires, they make up less than half (45%) of full professors.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Pay and Representation of Women in Tenure-Track Faculty

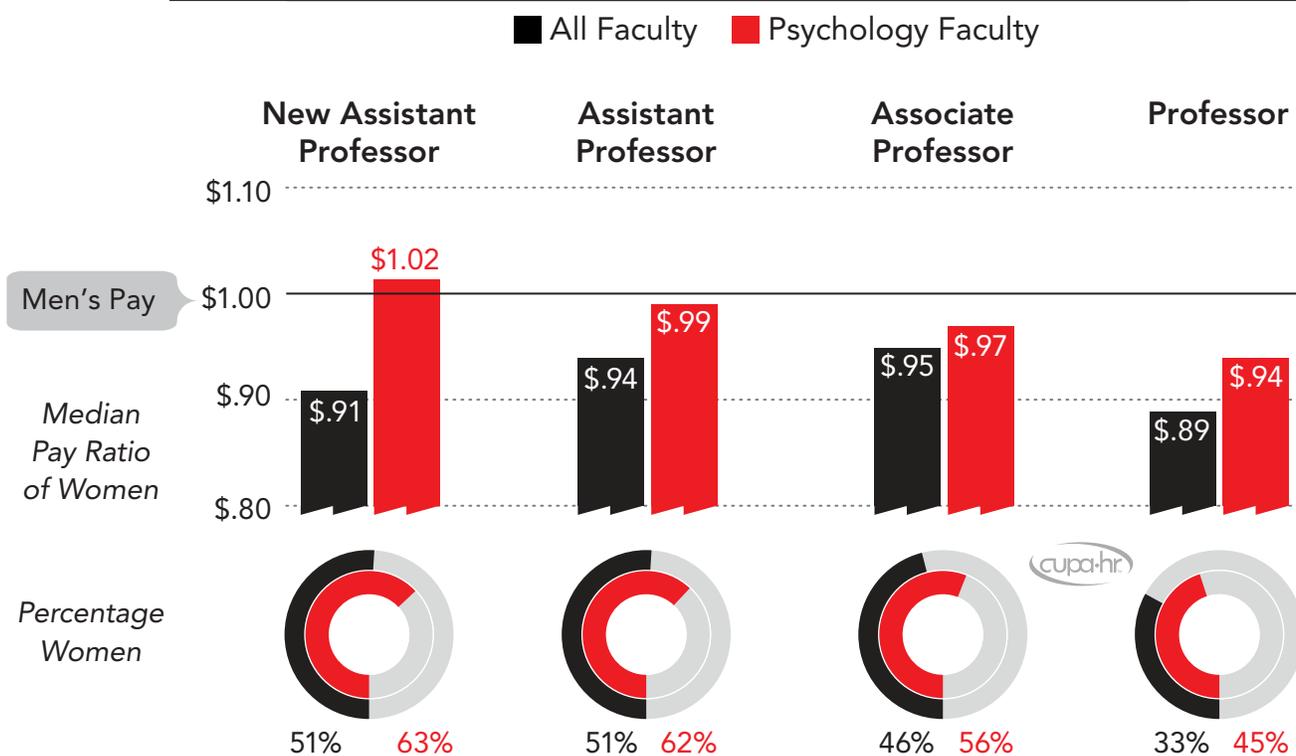


Figure 3

8 The \$1.00 line represents what men are paid at each rank.

# Pay and Representation of Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Tenure-Track Faculty

Figure 4 displays median pay ratios of racial/ethnic minorities in tenure-track faculty positions at each rank. In all faculty positions combined (represented by round dots), minorities are paid more than equitably, and Asians in particular are paid well above equity at all ranks. This may represent an effort to attract and retain minorities in tenure-track faculty positions. The same result is found for psychology faculty (represented as squares), although Asians do not receive the same disproportionate pay in psychology. In addition, at the rank of professor, Hispanic and Black psychology faculty are paid much more than they are for all disciplines combined.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Pay of Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Tenure-Track Faculty

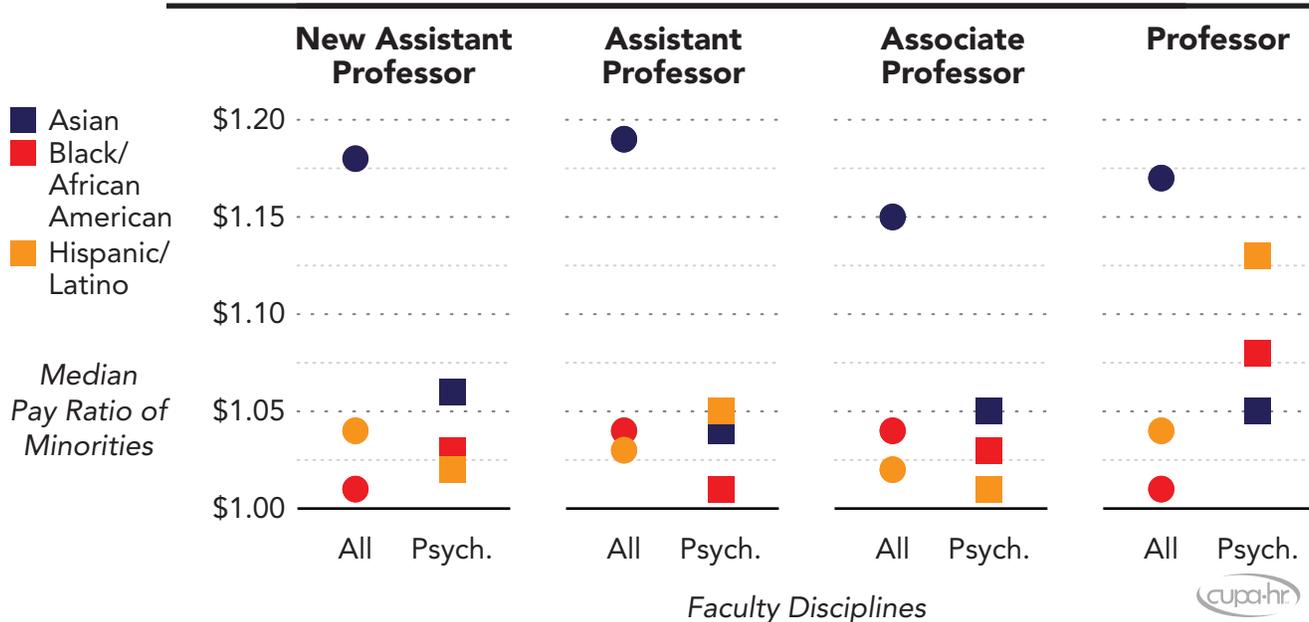


Figure 4

For all tenure-track faculty combined, 24% of new hires (new assistant professors) are minorities (Figure 5). However, their representation decreases with each increase in rank — only 17% of full professors are minorities. The decline in minority representation at each rank for psychology faculty is even more precipitous, from 23% representation at the rank of new assistant professor to 10% at the rank of professor.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### Representation of Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Tenure-Track Faculty

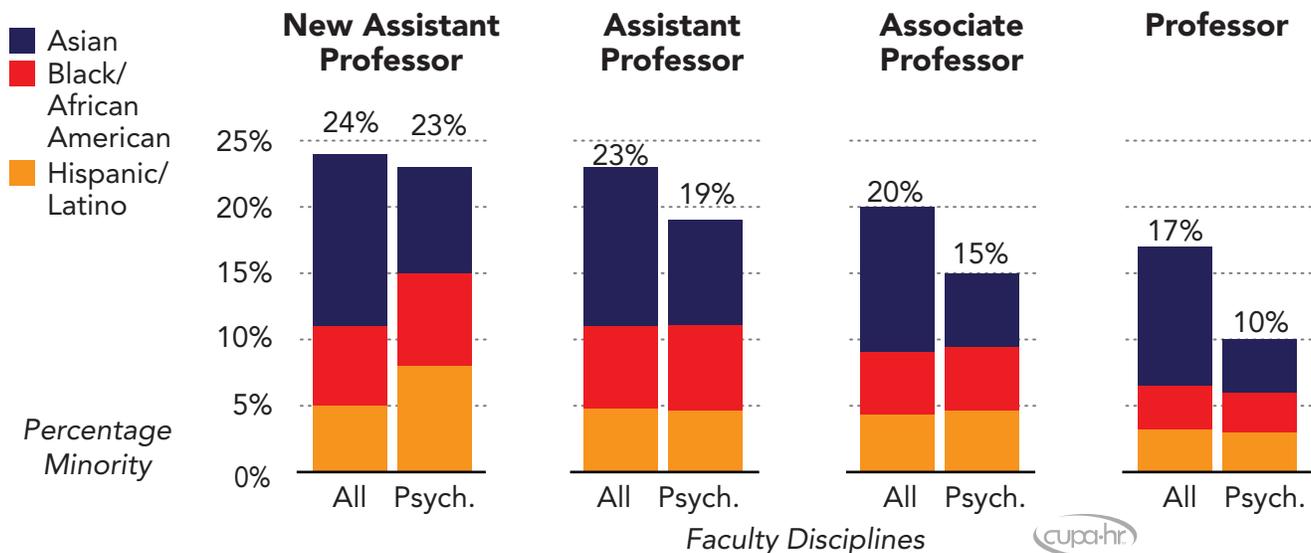


Figure 5



## The Growth of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

As a percentage of all faculty, non-tenure-track (NTT) full-time teaching faculty have risen steadily over the past six years (Figure 6).<sup>9</sup> In 2013-14, NTT faculty made up approximately one-fourth (24%) of all faculty. In 2018-19, they made up more than one-third (34%). In comparison, NTT faculty currently make up only 22% of psychology faculty and have increased proportionally at a slower rate than other disciplines since 2013-14.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Growth, 2014-19

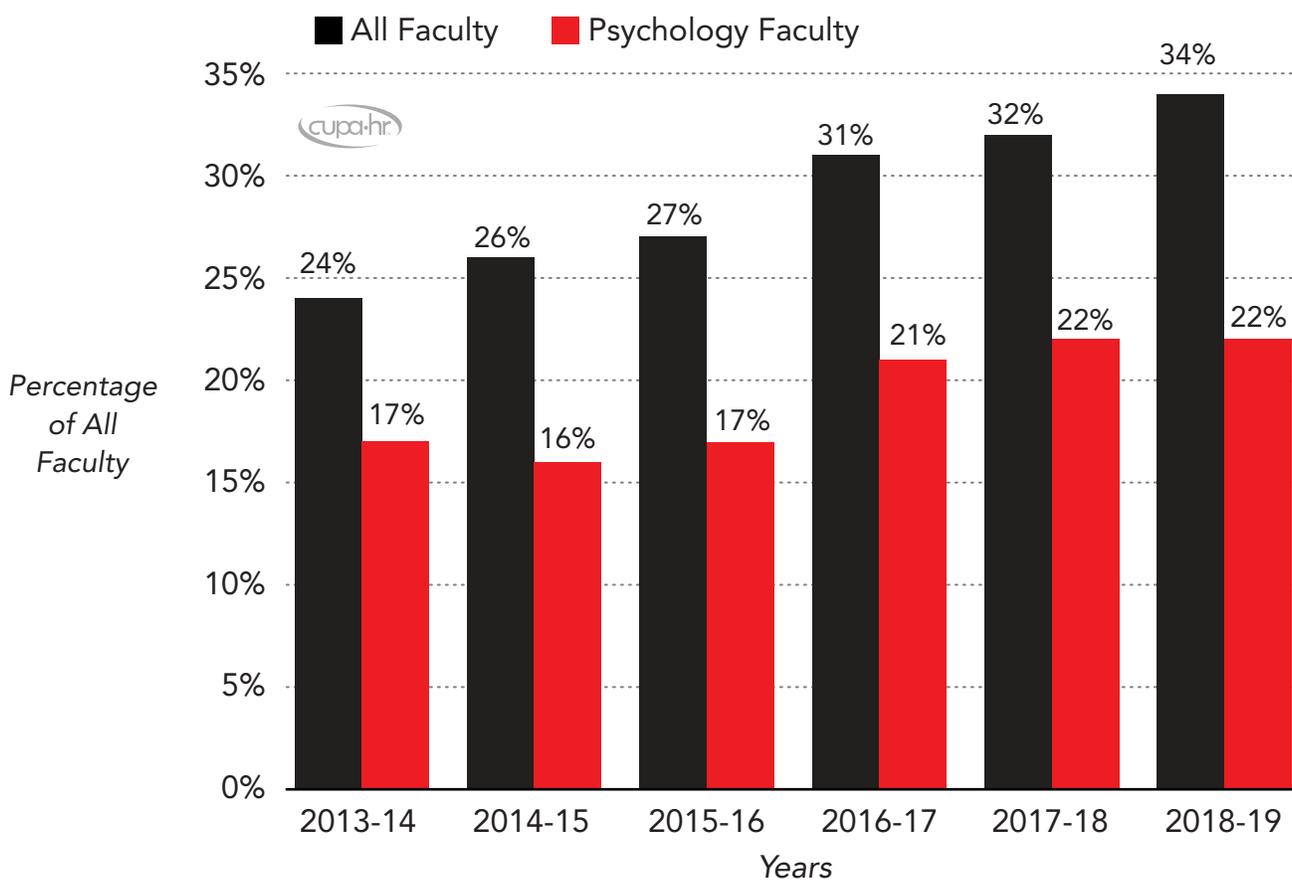


Figure 6

<sup>9</sup> For the CUPA-HR *Faculty in Higher Education Survey*, data are collected separately for tenure-track (TT), non-tenure teaching (NTT), and non-tenure research (NTR) faculty.

# Pay and Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Figure 7 displays median pay ratios and representation of women and minorities in NTT faculty. The pay gap for NTT women in psychology (who are paid \$0.96 on the male dollar) is less than that for all NTT faculty (\$0.93).<sup>10</sup> Women make up more than half (56%) of all NTT faculty. They make up two-thirds (66%) of NTT psychology faculty.

Pay gaps for different ethnicities vary widely. Asian NTT faculty are paid much more than are White NTT faculty across all disciplines, whereas they are paid near equity in psychology. Black NTT psychology faculty have less of a pay gap than they do in all disciplines combined, and Hispanics have more of a pay gap. The representation of Asians among NTT psychology faculty is less than that of all disciplines combined. The representation of Black and Hispanic NTT psychology faculty is approximately equal to that of all disciplines combined.

2019 FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Pay and Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

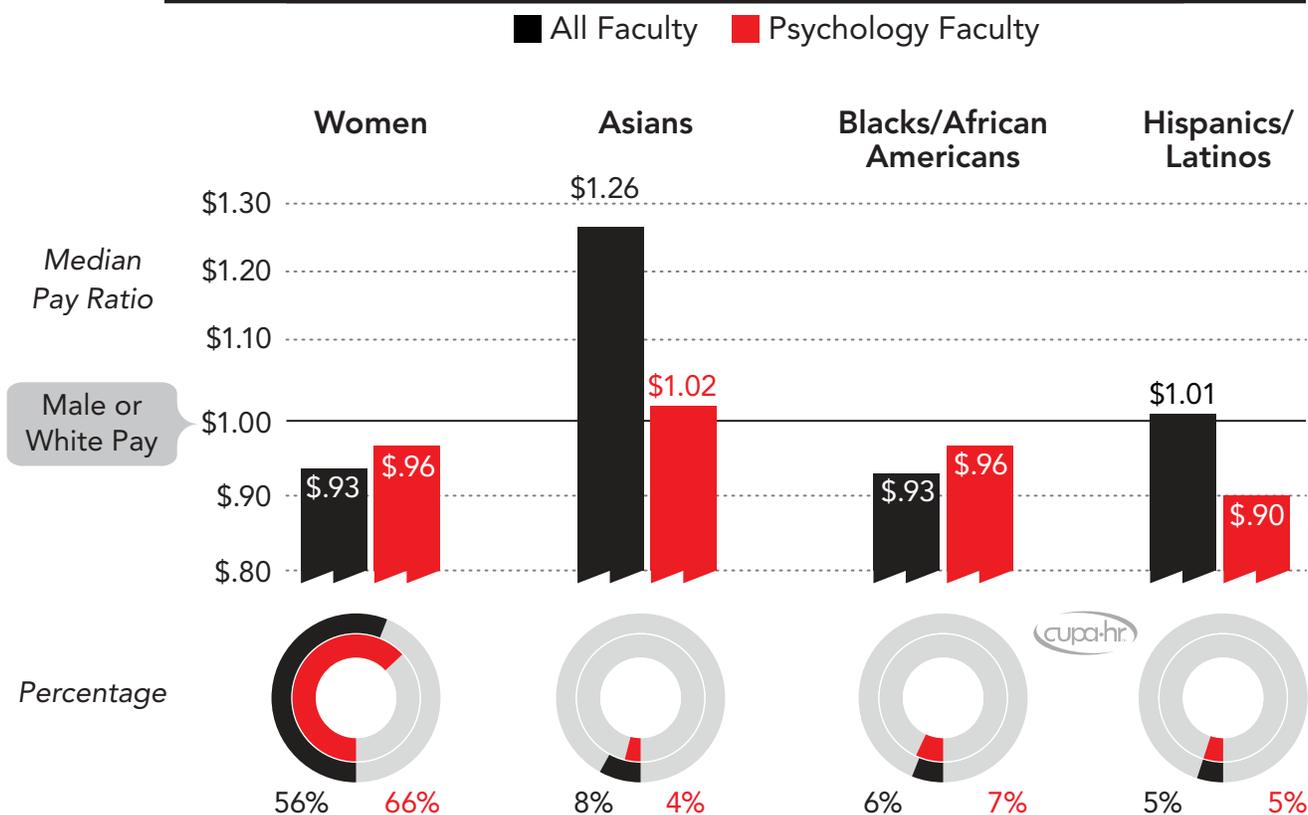


Figure 7

<sup>10</sup> The \$1.00 represents what men are paid for the "Women" category, and it represents what White faculty are paid for the "Blacks" and "Hispanics" categories.

## Summary Points

- Tenure-track psychology faculty are consistently paid less than faculty as a whole across all ranks, and this is established as a long-term trend.
- Although women are better represented in psychology than in all disciplines combined, their representation decreases with increases in rank, a trend seen across all disciplines. The same trend is seen with female/male pay. With each increase in rank, the pay gap between male and female psychology faculty increases.
- Psychology faculty have a lower percentage of racial/ethnic minorities at each rank when compared to all faculty. In addition, the percentage of minorities decreases greatly with each increase in rank. However, minorities are paid more than equitably at each rank, and — at the rank of full professor — Hispanic and Black psychology faculty are paid much more than are full professors of color in all faculty combined.
- The growth in non-tenure-track faculty as a proportion of all faculty has not been as steep for psychology faculty in comparison to other disciplines. Psychology has maintained relatively low numbers of non-tenure-track faculty.