

Pay Equity at Penn State

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### **Executive Summary**

The topic of pay equity was chosen for exploration due to its relevance to higher education today, but also because of its importance as a social justice issue for all people. This problem is unique in higher education because of its presence in today's policies, how many resources can be provided to students to combat the issue, and the lack of provision.

The history of women in the workforce is riddled with examples of discrimination. While the gender pay gap is one of these issues, which has existed since the beginning, it is possibly the most relevant today. The Equal Pay Act was signed into law in 1963, and despite the diminishment of the gap through the 1980's, progress has since stalled. This paper will not only explore the history and provide an overview of the issue of the gender wage gap, but also explore resources available for combating the gap as well as how The Pennsylvania State University can implement services and resources to support their students in fighting pay discrimination. It is important to note that although this document addresses what is commonly referred to as a "women's issue", it is one that requires education and action from individuals of all genders in order to ultimately eliminate the gender pay gap.

Unfortunately, the authors of this paper found very few examples of higher education institutions providing services and resources to students looking to address the pay gap. Penn State offers general salary negotiation resources and some awareness of available external resources, but no active programs. Further, the Penn State Commission for Women features an expired sub-group once dedicated to wage equity. An exploration of the Committee on Intuitional Cooperation (CIC) and the Seven Sisters schools turned up similar results. The University of Michigan has a pay equity information and action webpage and the University of Minnesota offers an annual Summit for Women's Pay Equity. The remaining institutions in the

CIC offered outdated or no resources. The analysis of the Seven Sisters schools yielded two institutions which offer pay equity programming for students: Mount Holyoke College and Barnard College. The University of Alabama deserves recognition for strongly collaborating with the WAGE Project, a pay equity advocacy group and providing workshops on the topic.

Outside resources are more readily found, but not through the government. Local, state, and federal government branches provide only statistics on pay and employment. Nonprofit organizations such as the National Committee on Pay Equity, the WAGE Project, the Institute for Women's Policy Research, and Pay Equity NOW all provide statistics, informational resources, workshops, training, and encouragement for individuals seeking pay equity.

From the exploration of literature and currently available resources, the authors determine that colleges and university can easily provide services and resources to students regarding pay equity. The authors suggest possible interventions including Equal Pay Day, workplace pay audits, \$tart \$mart workshops, pay equity groups, and informational websites for higher education institutions to implement. Specific suggestions for Penn State University can be broken down into four institutional areas which should collaborate to provide institutional resources dedicated to pay equity: Human Resources, Career Services, the Commission for Women, and the Center for Women Students. Many of the authors' recommendations encourage close collaboration between these areas and others, including the Student Programming Association, in order to provide appropriate resources to students.

### **Introduction**

The increase of women entering the workforce during World War II and the subsequent years of advocacy for women's rights led to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which was put into effect on June 11, 1964 (Deslippe, 2004). More than 40 years later, women still struggle for pay equity in the workplace. While the wage gap narrowed in the 1980s, the pace to close that gap slowed in the 1990s to the point that pay equity between women and men continues to be a prevalent issue today (Kahn & Figgert, 1998). According to the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) "[i]n 2010, women who worked full time in wage and salary jobs had median usual weekly earnings of \$669. This represented 81 percent of men's median weekly earnings (\$824)." This glaring and salient disparity continues to highlight the pay inequity for women in the U.S. To some individuals this may not seem like an important issue; however, the pay gap showcases continuing gender discrimination in the workplace and society. Further, it highlights how "[w]omen's wages remain low not only in relation to men's, but in relation to their survival needs. Women are increasingly heads of households and their earnings are crucial in dual-income households" (Khan & Figgert, 1998). More needs to be done to challenge gender inequality in the form of pay inequity in the workplace.

Because universities and colleges provide knowledge that leads to training for professional and specialized fields (Altbach, Gumport & Berdahl, 2011), these institutions are best positioned to educate students on their salary rights. Also, since the pay gap affects women almost immediately after graduating college (Corbett & Hill, 2012), universities and colleges have the unique opportunity to educate students about these rights a significant time before obtaining their first full-time job. Based on the continuing disparity, Penn State University

should develop resources and programming opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff regarding pay equity issues, and negotiation and advocacy skills.

In order to better determine the need for action at Penn State, this paper will first explore the facts of pay equity for women. This paper will provide an overview of existing Penn State resources as well as available resources and options at other colleges and universities, and through external organizations. Finally, this paper will present a series of recommendations for Penn State to consider when they look to provide resources to women and men regarding pay equity and salary negotiation.

## **Overview**

### **Brief History of Pay Equity**

Former U.S. President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law in 1963, “prohibit[ing] arbitrary discrimination against women in the payment of wages” (Kennedy, 1963). Almost 70 years prior to President Kennedy’s signing of the Equal Pay Act, organizations like the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (now known as the American Association of University Women (AAUW)) were consistently analyzing the discrepancies in payment for female college graduates compared to their male counterparts and were advocating for pay equity. After WWII every session of Congress featured a federal bill for equal pay, but none passed until the 1963 Equal Pay Act (Pearsall, 2013).

The signing of this law signified, for many, the start of a new American era where women and men would be equitably treated in the workplace. This period is viewed as the high-profile, public beginning of the movement for equal pay for equal work. In 1963, women were paid 59 cents for every dollar their male counterparts were paid. In 2011, the statistic increased

to only 77 cents for every dollar (Pearsall, 2013). While women's pay has made progress since 1963, it is not yet equitable. There is still work to be done in order to end the gender wage gap.

In 2007, the United States Supreme Court heard and contentiously held the Ledbetter vs. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. case, deciding that employers could not be held accountable for discrimination 180 days after issuing the first discriminatory paycheck, no matter how many more discriminatory paychecks followed (National Women's Law Center, 2013a). This decision overturned the longstanding precedent of previous civil rights statues, and it undermined the public and "Congressional goal of eliminating discrimination in the workplace" (National Women's Law Center, 2013a). In her dissenting opinion, Justice Ginsberg "emphasized that it was up to Congress to correct the Court's 'parsimonious reading of Title VII.'" Taking the rare step of reading her opinion from the bench, Justice Ginsberg instructed that "[o]nce again, the ball is in Congress' court" (National Women's Law Center, 2013a).

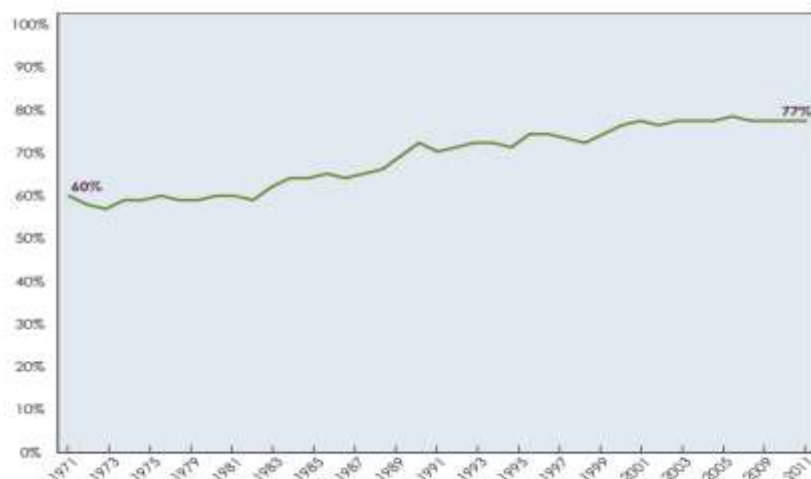
The then new Obama Administration and Congress heeded Justice Ginsberg's advice and acted quickly, and in January of 2009 President Barack Obama signed into law the first substantial piece of legislation of his career: The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. The Ledbetter Act restored individual rights to combat pay inequities in the workplace. Specifically, this legislation provided women with the opportunity to have 180 days to pursue action after each new discriminatory paycheck (National Women's Law Center, 2013b). Twice, in 2010 and 2012, Congress introduced and subsequently rejected the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act. In fact, the Paycheck Fairness Act has been introduced in eight consecutive Congresses. Federal legislators and President Obama have continued to vocalize their support for the Paycheck Fairness Act, and advocacy groups continue to propel the

legislation forward. Pieces of legislation and litigation dealing with equity and rights of women workers are certainly present today, and will likely continue to arise until equity is achieved.

### Current Status of Pay Equity

The time between the 1960s push for pay equity and today's attention surrounding the issue has been characterized by some as a time of stagnancy for the movement (National Women's Law Center, 2013a). While there has been some improvement in achieving pay equity, "progress has stalled in recent years, and the pay gap does not appear likely to go away on its own" (AAUW, 2013a). The 2007 Lilly Ledbetter Supreme Court case rejuvenated national interest in pay equity issues (National Women's Law Center, 2013a), and today a significant problem remains in achieving equitable pay for women. In 2013, the AAUW released an updated version of their report, "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap." AAUW's research indicates that in 2011, "women working full time in the United States typically were paid just 77 percent of what men were paid, a gap of 23 percent" (AAUW, 2013a, p. 3). Below, Figure 1 illustrates the pay gap; specifically, "women's median annual earnings as a percentage of men's median annual earnings for full-time, year-round workers" (AAUW, 2013a, p. 3).

**Figure 1.**  
Women's Median Annual Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Median Annual Earnings for Full-time, Year-round Workers, 1971–2011<sup>1</sup>



Note: Includes people ages 15 and older beginning in 1980; for previous years, includes people ages 14 and older as of the following year. Before 1989, only civilian workers are included.

An additional 2012 study released by the AAUW found that the pay gap affects women as soon as one year after graduating college (Corbett & Hill, 2012). Looking at the most recent data available (from 2009), women just one year out of college were earning an average of 82 percent of the earned salaries of their male peers (Corbett & Hill, 2012). Perhaps more striking, after controlling for factors, such as college major and if both the woman and man were working full time, the same number of hours each week, and in the same occupational sector, women were still earning about 7 percent less than their male counterparts (Corbett & Hill, 2012). One possible explanation for this difference is gender discrimination in the workplace, which remains a serious problem in the workplace and, unfortunately, is not directly measurable which makes it a difficult problem to eradicate (Corbett & Hill, 2012). Another possible explanation is the lack of salary negotiation by women (Corbett & Hill, 2012). The wage gap is a complex problem tied to culture, tradition, and politics (Bennett, 2012). Solving the pay gap will not be a simple or quick process, and it requires dedication from institutions, individuals, and other organizations.

### **Solving the Pay Gap through Negotiation**

As part of the movement toward eliminating the pay gap, advocacy organizations are stressing the importance of negotiation skills for women entering and currently in the workforce. As noted by the AAUW, “[b]ecause benefits and subsequent raises are generally based on initial wages, a lower starting salary could mean a lifetime of lower compensation and smaller retirement benefits” (AAUW, 2013a, p. 17). Oftentimes employers have some latitude when determining salaries, so it is important for women to take advantage of the opportunity to negotiate their salary.

Women face unique challenges when negotiating salaries. Fear of being perceived as boastful or domineering can prevent women bargaining. As succinctly stated in a recent New



York Times article, “This fear of asking is a problem for many women: we are great advocates for others, but paralyzed when it comes to doing it for ourselves” (Bennett, 2012). Strategies that typically work for men (i.e. self promotion) do not work for women (AAUW, 2013a, p. 17; Corbett & Hill, 2012). Facebook’s chief operating officer, Sheryl Sandberg (a self-declared feminist and advocate for women’s equity and leadership) acknowledges the difficulty, saying

“The data shows that men are able to negotiate for themselves without facing any negative consequences, but when women negotiate, people often like them less and want to work with them less. Even if women haven’t studied this or seen this data, they often implicitly understand this, so they hold back” (Bennett, 2012).

Therefore, it is important for women to have access to resources and trainings that can hone their negotiation skills. In her recent book, *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg reiterates the importance of empowering women to forwardly negotiate for their salaries. This paper will later provide a sampling list of available resources available to higher education institutions to provide opportunities for individuals to improve their negotiation practices.

### **Existing Resources**

#### **Current Penn State Resources**

Although Penn State University is a Research I Institution with many resources, amenities, and opportunities available to students, there are no resources, programs, or services dedicated to pursuing pay equity for women. Penn State Career Services, along with each individual college’s career and internship centers do not provide any resources to students or specific information regarding pay equity. Many of the career centers only offer general information regarding salary negotiation during the job search and acceptance process. In addition, student organizations that focus on women’s issues on campus do not provide any

information. While many campus organizations are aware of available external resources, there are no active programs specifically provided to Penn State students.

Besides student organizations and career centers, the Commission for Women does not have any current initiatives or programs involving pay equity. Previously, there was a Wage Equity Committee sub-group of the Commission that identified and made recommendations for areas within the University where there may be gender-based inequalities, but it is currently inactive. The Commission for Women does have two sub-committees: the Consistent Policy and Implementation of Policies, which looks at flex-time, comp-time, and family leave options for women and the Advancement Opportunities/Movement within Competencies across Penn State, which explores outreach and educational opportunities to address issues associated with competency transition. Neither of these sub-committees monitors issues of pay equity or advocate for fair pay. In addition, even though the Office of Human Resources at Penn State does not directly provide students and staff with pay equity information, they do utilize outside consultants, such as WorldatWork, CUPA, and SHRM, to ensure that Penn State's compensation policies for base pay, promotions, and tenure systems are up-to-date and equitable.

Finally, the Office of Planning and Assessment at Penn State does not perform specific assessments on pay equity. The office does provide a yearly report on faculty salaries, which shows the pay gap between male and female faculty members. Although there are many factors which contribute to salary differences within units that cannot be accounted for (such as discipline, rank, length of time in rank, and length of employment), the vast discrepancies between men's and women's salaries is still an issue of enormous importance. According to the report, the data presented may not provide sufficient detail for drawing conclusions about gender or racial inequities (Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits, 2011). The committee indicates that

the data could be useful for discussion and for launching further investigation. In 2010, male faculty members had a higher yearly salary than women in all four categories; professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor. For example, at the University Park campus, the 2010 median salary for male professors was \$121,379 and the median salary for female professors was \$113,868, which is an approximate 7% difference (Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits, 2011). One area that may account for some of the salary discrepancies is the differences in the mean years of service at Penn State. On average, men's years of service is 12 years, while for women it is only 8 years (Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits, 2011).

### **Resources at Other Institutions of Higher Education**

The majority of colleges and universities outside of Penn State are not taking action to educate their students and campus communities on the issue of equal pay. An examination of pay equity offerings at other educational institutions will be useful to those looking to establish a strong set of pay equity and negotiation resources at Penn State. First, universities that are members as of 2013 of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), or the 'Academic Big 10' were examined, including: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Purdue University, University of Wisconsin–Madison, and University of Chicago. These institutions were selected for analysis due to their overall similarity to Penn State in both size and mission. In addition to the CIC schools, the original Seven Sisters schools were researched, including: Barnard College, Bryn Mawr College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, Vassar College (co-educational), and Wellesley College. This examination did not include Radcliffe College, the seventh member of the Seven Sister Colleges, because it is no longer a

female college; it now serves as a co-ed institute for advanced studies for Harvard University. The six colleges of the Seven Sisters were selected due to their original mission to educate women only and to provide women with equitable educative opportunities compared to that of men.

**Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC).** After carefully searching the university and college websites, the career services websites and the women's center/resources websites, it is safe to conclude that a majority of the 18 colleges/universities in this examination do not provide any form of pay equity programming for their student body. Of those that do, programming is limited and/or outdated. From the CIC universities, only two appeared to offer any sort of pay equity programming on-campus: University of Michigan and University of Minnesota. At Michigan, the Center for the Education of Women (CEW) provided a detailed webpage about pay equity facts and action items. The CEW urged students to contact their legislatures in order to enact change in the House and State Senate. Additionally, the CEW, in collaboration with the Career Center, offered *The Gender Wage Gap & Negotiation Skills* workshop to senior undergraduate students. The program provides information about pay equity and advocacy, as well as information and practices related to salary negotiation. Further, for those who do not attend the workshop, the CEW webpage includes links to the resources/materials used (Center for the Education of Women, n.d).

The University of Minnesota will offer its 3rd Annual Summit for Women's Equity Leaders through the University Women's Center. The focus of the 2013 event will revolve around how the University works toward pay equity and enacts equity programs/actions. This program is not specifically geared toward the student body; however, it is a program of note considering the dedication of the University to enact change within the institution (University of

Minnesota, 2009). The other CIC universities lack programs or mention of programs related to pay equity.

**Seven Sisters.** Of the six colleges from the Seven Sisters used in this analysis, only Mount Holyoke College and Barnard College offered or are currently offering any form of salary or pay equity programming for the student body. Mount Holyoke College offers two programs related to equal pay. The first event, *Start Smart Salary Negotiation*, is delivered through the Career Development Center. The announcement for the workshop states that it will, “provide college women who are approaching the job market the knowledge and skills to negotiate salaries and benefits so that they receive fair and realistic compensation” (Mount Holyoke, Career Development Center, 2013). In addition, Mount Holyoke College recently hosted a public lecture by Lilly Ledbetter with a panel of other women who have joined the fight for equal pay and women’s rights (“Lilly Ledbetter and her fight for pay equity,” 2013). Barnard College provides *Negotiating what you are worth?*, a workshop through their Athena Center for Leadership Studies (“Neg1. Fair Pay: Negotiating What You Are Worth,” n.d.). It is important to note, however, that the intent of this program appears to be about negotiating salary and benefit packages and does not distinctively advertise itself as a pay equity program. Other than these two colleges, the remaining four Seven Sisters Colleges lack any campus programming related to equal pay or pay equity.

During a search for programs at these institutions and in an effort to find more substantial programming, a notable program at The University of Alabama was identified. Through the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) and in collaboration with the WAGE Project and the American Association of University Women, Alabama runs a *Start Smart Pay Negotiation Workshop* during Pay Equity Awareness Week and an annual pay equity bake sale. In addition,

the WRC hosts "In the Red" day, "which is an opportunity for women across campus to wear red to represent the inequity in pay between men and women" ("Pay Equity Awareness Week," n.d.). Wright State University, University of Houston, Ithaca College and Rochester Institute of Technology all offer programs that teach women about salary negotiation (Pereyra, 2013).

Overall, the benchmarking analysis highlighted that programming is limited and/or nonexistent across a spectrum of post-secondary institutions. Because colleges and universities are one of the points in students' lives where they plan for their professional and financial future, and because it is also where they begin to understand their rights, it is clear from this analysis that Penn State has an opportunity to be a leader in the CIC and across the country in educating all students and staff, especially women about equal pay and salary negotiation.

### **Other External Resources**

In looking to assess the resources and services available to students at institutions of higher education and the population at large, the largest concentration of resources was found from nonprofit organizations.

**Government Agencies.** Local, state, and federal government agencies have shockingly little to offer anyone looking to challenge or learn about pay inequity. The federal government has statistics available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and information on leave benefits and wages from the Department of Labor. None of these data sets provides information directly regarding pay equity (Centre County; PA Online; USA.gov).

**Nonprofit Organizations.** Information and resources from nonprofit organizations was much more prevalent. Information found would help individuals learn about pay equality, how to determine if a particular company or entity is paying equally, and many other resources to be detailed below.

***National Committee on Pay Equity.*** Each year the National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE) promotes Equal Pay Day. This day is chosen each year to symbolize how far into a year women must work to earn what men earned the previous year. This year that date is April 9<sup>th</sup>. On this day the NCPE encourages individuals to wear red to symbolize how women and minorities are ‘in the red’ in terms of their pay. This committee provides many resources including; ‘Five myths about the gender wage gap’, ‘What do you know about the wage gap?-quiz’, fact sheets, yearly research reports, and state by state gender pay data. They also provide employers with tools to analyze their pay policies, encouragement for individuals to contact House Representatives and Senators, or form WAGE clubs to promote the WAGE Project (National Committee on Pay Equity).

***The WAGE Project.*** The WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project is an organization whose goal it is to end discrimination against women in the workplace. The founder, Evelyn Murphy, authored the book *Getting even: Why women don't get paid like men and what to do about it*. The WAGE Project offers three steps on how to ‘get even’. The first step is to do research about wage gaps, and if there is one in your workplace. Step two is how to convince a boss that you deserve better wages. This is an important step because many women do not feel comfortable having that discussion or advocating for themselves in that way. The third step addresses the possibility that a boss may not take action. The WAGE Project suggests creating outside pressure by going public with your efforts. They also suggest seeking allies such as women’s organizations, anti-discrimination agencies, and to review federal and state anti-discrimination laws. Suggestions and contacts for each of these are provided on the WAGE Projects’ website. They also offer their staff as a coaching resource to help prepare individuals to

follow these steps. Other tools provided by the WAGE Project include calculations for what your job is worth, a wage page, and Work \$mart Workshops (The Wage Project).

***Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR).*** The Institute for Women's Policy Research focuses on employment, education, and economic change, democracy and society, poverty, welfare, and income security, work and family, and health and safety. Within employment, education, and economic change the IWPR tracks the gendered wage gap with fact sheets. The IWPR has also collaborated with the WAGE Project, and provides a link to external resources (The Institute for Women's Policy Research).

***Pay Equity Now.*** This is an organization which focuses on equitable wage for all workers. Their website provides evidence of pay inequality, policies promoting pay equity, and coordinated lobbying. Their main resource is a manual, *Pay Equity; Training and Awareness Raising*, which is designed to be taught as a course informing people about the issues of pay equity and training them how to confront the inequalities (Pay Equity Now!).

### **Possible Interventions**

**Equal Pay Day.** As stated previously, Equal Pay Day signifies the point in a year which women must work to earn what men made the previous year, which again is on April 9th, 2013. Participating in Equal Pay Day is a great opportunity to create awareness and enact change within local communities. There are numerous activities and events that can be held to increase awareness and knowledge of the gender pay gap with an Equal Pay Day toolkit put together by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW). In the toolkit, there is a sample press release and a letter to the editor to provide to local news stations and newspapers that shares what Equal Pay Day is and the activity that will take place (See appendices A and B). There is also a toolkit to help build relationships with local media. Some sample activities



include wearing red for the reasons described earlier, writing blogs and tweets to spread awareness, having an Equal Pay Day bake sale, hosting guest speakers at a local high school, college or community center, and organizing a petition. Local organizations can establish as many or as little activities as they would like to partake in.

**Workplace pay audit.** Another great way businesses can assist in helping to equalize the gender pay gap is to implement a workplace self audit. Self audits are a great way to begin understanding pay discrimination and protect workplaces from pay equity violations. There are many different self audit kits for the workplace to help companies get started. The Employer Equity Self Audit, developed by the BPW assists employers in analyzing their companies' wage-setting policies and establishing consistent and fair pay practices for everyone (See appendix C). The BWP self audit, along with many others, is a ten step guide for employers to evaluate pay equity within their companies. Once companies have completed the audit, they can assess the results of the evaluation and work with the Human Resources department and an attorney to implement changes to the companies' policies (Business and Professional Women's Foundation).

**\$tart \$mart workshop.** Within colleges, hosting a \$tart \$mart workshop is an excellent opportunity for junior and senior college women to obtain salary negotiation skills. \$tart \$mart is specifically designed for college women to help determine what employers are paying for specific jobs and how to negotiate to be paid what they are worth for those jobs (WAGE Project). In a \$tart \$mart workshop, students learn about personal consequences for the gender pay gap, resources to assist in benchmarking salaries and benefits of particular jobs, salary negotiation resources, and how to develop a budget. Students then apply what they learned through role plays exercises at the end of the workshop. The WAGE Project currently conducts \$tart \$mart

workshops on over 100 college campuses all over the United States. By contacting the WAGE Project any college campus can get involved with Start Smart workshops. There are also opportunities to be trained as a Start Smart facilitator so campuses are able to offer these workshops annually.

**Pay equity group.** As discussed earlier, there are many groups and organizations whose mission is to reduce and eliminate the gender pay gap, but local communities and colleges are able to create their own pay equity groups. The WAGE Project promotes members and supporters to develop WAGE clubs. WAGE clubs encourages and allows women to meet regularly to participate in pay equity discussions. Through discussions, WAGE clubs can develop strategies to take action in removing the gender pay gap (WAGE Project). The WAGE Project provides a step-by-step process and various resources to help clubs get started, such as a discussion guide, invitation letter for new members, and sign-on letter to support the club (see appendices D-F). These great resources enable women to engage and promote pay equity within a specific community.

**Website.** Finally, colleges and universities can promote pay equity through the development of a website or webpage. Information regarding pay equity, events the colleges host, and links to other resources should be provided. The website can provide resources for women to use in their own job search process such as negotiating salaries, how to get involved in various organizations, and how to spread awareness about the gender pay gap. Because college career centers focus on career development and often have information regarding salary negotiation for students, embedding the web-page into colleges' career centers website would be very appropriate and beneficial.

### **Suggestions for Penn State**

After analyzing the relevant literature and currently available options dedicated to the issue of pay equity, we recommend that Penn State consider the following suggestions. Our overall goal is for the Penn State Commission for Women, Office of Human Resources, Career Services, and Center for Women Students to fully collaborate together in order to provide a comprehensive portfolio of resources, services, and programming opportunities for all Penn State students, faculty and staff. The below recommendations are intended to serve as a launching point for the institution-wide conversation regarding Penn State's fight for pay equity.

1. **The Penn State Office of Human Resources should perform comprehensive workplace audits for the institution.** The central office should collaborate with departmental human resources representatives in order to complete a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis, perhaps with the assistance of the Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis. Additionally, the Office of Human Resources should partner with Career Services to provide and/or co-facilitate pay equity workshops for faculty and staff in the Penn State community. The involvement of the Office of Human Resources will showcase the institutional commitment of Penn State to the issue of pay equity.
2. **The Commission for Women, Center for Women Students, and Career Services should collaborate to implement a comprehensive portfolio of pay equity initiatives.**  
**These initiatives could include:**
  - a. **Pay Equity Sub-Committee** The Commission for Women should permanently reestablish a sub-committee focused on pay equity. This sub-committee should coordinate and support pay equity programming efforts across the university community, specifically with Career Services and the Center for Women

Students. The sub-committee should work to educate and provide resources to faculty and staff regarding issues associated with wage negotiation, salary bands, bargaining vs. non-bargaining units.

- b. **Website and online resources** Penn State Student Affairs should develop and host a website complete with online resources regarding pay equity and salary negotiation. Online resources should include Penn State and external salary information, negotiation advice, links to external resources from nonprofits, and other relevant information. It should also host a calendar of pay equity and/or salary negotiation workshops occurring throughout the University. It can include links to other University offices hosting pay equity and salary initiatives.
- c. **AAUW Student Chapter** The Center for Women Students should establish a Penn State student chapter for the American Association of University Women (AAUW). As a national advocate for the rights of young women and girls, an AAUW student chapter could provide Penn State with broad access to a variety of services and resources. There is a local AAUW chapter in the State College community, which would be a great collaborative resource for a Penn State student chapter of the organization. In addition, the AAUW student chapter could serve as an organizer and/or collaborator for the efforts of other student organizations at Penn State.
- d. **\$mart \$tart Career Workshops** Career Services should implement an annual \$mart \$tart career workshop. Career Services should endeavor to have a fixed term, full-time staff member as a trained facilitator, and the Center for Women Students should also identify students to serve as facilitators. Career Services

should collaborate with College Internship and Career Centers to develop programming opportunities centered around negotiation – including gender-specific opportunities – and self-advocacy for students.

- e. **Equal Pay Day** The aforementioned entities should host a celebration of Equal Pay Day in future years. The event should be a collaborative effort between institutional entities, community and student organizations, similar to Sexual Violence Awareness Week. Activities could include a series of press releases, encouraging students to wear red in support, “equal pay” bake sales, speakers, and chances for students to make a commitment to fighting for pay equity.
- f. **SPA Lecture Series** The Penn State Student Programming Association should invite a speaker dedicated to pay equity to be part of the Distinguished Lecture Series.
- g. **Support others** The Commission for Women, Career Services, and The Center for Women Students should support interested student organizations and student-driven events. Other organizations already exist in the Penn State community that are dedicated to furthering the equitable treatment of women, and these organizations could serve as natural partners in the institution’s fight for fair pay.
- h. **Assessment** A crucial element to implementing and maintaining pay equity programs will be qualitative and quantitative assessment. Examples of assessment include, but are not limited to: pre/post surveys, focus groups, observations, interviews and data collection from current students, faculty and staff as well as recently hired graduates and professionally rooted alumni. These studies are necessary in order for Penn State to evaluate program effectiveness,

efficiency, outcomes and success. They will allow for improvements in processes and collaborative relationships, and for necessary adjustments in services and information provided. Further, assessment will be useful when establishing program and resource credibility during budgetary meetings. This effort can be done in collaboration with the Office of Planning and Assessment.

To reiterate, these recommendations should serve as a launching point for Penn State's efforts to support pay equity and to empower its students to be self-advocates for equitable pay. Interested parties should also consider reading the resources used to develop this paper, as they provide a more complete picture of the issue and possible interventions for Penn State.

### **Conclusion**

After examining the relevant literature and resources available, it is evident that colleges and universities need to provide more services and resources to students regarding issues associated with pay equity. Striving for equitable pay is and will continue to be an exhausting process that will require extensive collaboration between individuals, communities, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Colleges and universities should play a central role in educating men and women about the issue and in seeking a solution. Penn State has an opportunity to be a national leader and serve as a leader in the pay equity movement, minimizing and ultimately eliminating the pay gap between men and women.

**Reflection: Authors' Note**

Overall, we found the results of our paper to be discouraging. We were discouraged by the lack of resources available to women, particularly at colleges and universities. Moreover, we were disheartened to learn about the extensive and largely unsuccessful legislative efforts associated with eliminating the gender pay gap. Thus, the process of researching the issue and writing the paper was challenging. It was difficult to find information that was – in many cases – non-existent. While this project was certainly informative, we marvel at the fact that we still feel somewhat unprepared to begin negotiating for our own equal salaries. As Sheryl Sandberg and others note, the elimination of the wage gap is a highly personal issue that requires individual dedication and courage to be a self-advocate.

On the other hand, we were encouraged to find relatively new non-profit resources and services dedicated to eliminating the gender pay gap. Organizations like AAUW and the WAGE Project provide opportunities for individuals as well as post-secondary institutions to become active in the fight for pay equity. Hopefully, organizations and public demand will continue to raise awareness of the issue and fuel action and advocacy efforts.

We recognize that our feelings or discouragement can serve as motivation to support Penn State and other institutions and organizations in becoming advocates for women. As outlined in our paper, the resources and services are available for colleges and universities to immediately begin taking action. We genuinely feel that Penn State has a unique opportunity to take the lead in this regard – serving as a model for other higher education institutions while inspiring women and men students to fight the pay gap. In the future, perhaps other institutions can benchmark against Penn State.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Sample Equal Pay Day Press Release

taken from the BPW website

For Immediate Release

Contact: local spokesperson

Phone: 555-555-5555

Working Women of City/State Commemorate Equal Pay Day

Business and Professional Women Calls for Passage of Paycheck Fairness Act

City, State, Date – Business and Professional Women (BPW) in City/State will mobilize on Tuesday, April (date), 2012 to call attention to the persistent and sizable gap between men’s and women’s wages. According to latest US Census Bureau on average, full-time working women earned 77 cents to every dollar earned by men. The gap is even worse for women of color. Over a lifetime of work this loss adds up, as women lose out on \$9,575 per year and \$434,000 in a lifetime due to the wage gap.

April (date) symbolizes the day when women’s wages catch up to men’s wages from the previous year. Every year in April, Business and Professional Women’s Foundation along with hundreds of other women’s, civil rights, labor, and community organizations come together for a national day of action promoting fair pay known as Equal Pay Day.

“The bottom line for women and businesses is that pay discrimination happens and steps need to be taken to remedy it. This persistent wage gap not only impacts the economic security of women and their families today; it also directly affects women’s retirement security down the road.” said Barbara Henton, Chair of BPW Foundation.

Describe your local Equal Pay Day activity.

“Women and their families can no longer afford to be shortchanged. BPW/State/Local is committed to working to eliminate the wage gap,” said State or Local BPW President or PR Chair. “We encourage businesses to pay women fairly, push for laws that will enforce current equal pay legislation and educate women on how to negotiate for higher salaries.”

#### ***About Business and Professional Women’s Foundation***

***Business and Professional Women’s Foundation is creating successful workplaces by focusing on issues that impact women, families and employers. Successful Workplaces are those that embrace and practice diversity, equity and work life balance. BPW Foundation supports workforce development programs and workplace policies that recognize the diverse needs of working women, communities and businesses. BPW Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) research and education organization.***

**Appendix B****Sample Equal Pay Day Letter to the Editor**

taken from the BPW website

Each paper has specific rules, so remember to check before you submit. In general, follow these basic guidelines.

- Make it relevant. Connect to a recent article, op-ed, or editorial.
- Keep it short. There is a rough limit of 250 words for letters.

Dear Editor:

According to latest US Census statistics on average, full-time working women earned 77 cents to every dollar earned by men. It's hard to believe that in 2012 when women make up nearly half of the workforce they earn 23% less than their male counterparts.

Over a lifetime this loss of earnings adds up. On average, women lose out on \$9,575 per year and \$434,000 in a lifetime due to the wage gap. In a bad economy I am extremely concerned about pay inequity not only for myself, but for my family.

To recognize this persistent gap, on Tuesday, April 17 [*Name BPW Local Organization*] will celebrate Equal Pay Day – the point in the year when a woman's wages catch up to a man's wages in the previous year. As working women we know that eliminating the wage gap is good for families and business, which is why Equal Pay Day is recognized every year.

An important way to address pay inequity is through federal legislation. The Paycheck Fairness Act will strengthen the Equal Pay Act by closing loopholes and strengthening penalties to guarantee that women workers are not shortchanged solely because of their gender. Unfortunately the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress was not able to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, however it came very close. We must see this bill passed in the current Congress.

Here in [*name of your City/County*] we will join hundreds of working women advocates across the country to educate women and men about pay inequity and demand passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Sincerely,

Name  
BPW Local Address

Phone Number

[NOTE: This is a sample letter. Please edit and use your own personal stories.]

**Appendix C****Employer Pay Equity Self-Audit**

taken from the BPW website

**Recruitment**

- Does your hiring process seek diversity in the qualified applicant pool for positions?

**Evaluate Your Compensation System for Internal Equity**

- Do you have a method to determine salaries and benefits?
- Do you write position descriptions, seek employee input and develop consensus for position descriptions? In unionized workplaces, do you involve union leaders?
- Do you have a consistent job evaluation system? Are jobs scored or assigned grades? Are positions where women and minorities work scored or graded according to the same standards as jobs where men or non-minorities work?
- Could a method be used for ensuring consistent pay for people with substantially similar levels or experience and education who hold jobs calling for substantially similar degrees of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions, even though job titles may be different?

**Evaluate Your Compensation System for Industry Competitiveness**

- Do you have a method to determine the market rate for any given job? Do you ensure that market rates are applied consistently? (i.e.—Can you be confident that men are not being compensated *at or above* market rates while women are compensated *at or below* market rates? Can you be confident that non-minority workers are not compensated *at or above* market rates while minority workers' compensation is *at or below* the market rates?)
- Would your company benefit from a fresh approach that updates position descriptions; assesses skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions of various jobs; assigns grades or scores; and ensures consistent application of market rates and external competitiveness?

**Conduct a New Job Evaluation System if Needed**

- Do you have up-to-date position descriptions for all occupations?
- Do you establish criteria for assigning values to skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions of jobs? Do you challenge basic assumptions about the value of skills before assigning points or grades? (i.e.—Do you consider how caring for sick people, small muscle dexterity in typing, and other such skills may have been undervalued in jobs that have been traditionally held by women?)
- Do you ensure agreement among worker representatives and management on criteria to evaluate jobs?
- Do you assign scores or grades to jobs and allow worker input?
- Do you compare your system with market rates and other external competitiveness factors? Do you consider whether the market has under-compensated certain occupations or professions before making adjustments?
- Do you assign consistent compensation to jobs within similar grades or scores, and do you use market rates and other external competitiveness factors consistently?

**Examine Your Compensation System and Compare Job Grades/Scores**

- How does pay compare for positions with similar grades or scores within your company? On average, are women and minorities paid similarly to men and non-minorities within the same grade or job score? Are there legitimate reasons for any disparities in pay between jobs with similar grades or scores? Can corrections be made to ensure consistency in assigning grades or scores?
- How long do men, women and minorities stay within job grades or scores before moving up? Do men or non-minority workers move up faster? What are the reasons that some workers move up faster? Can you take action to ensure that all workers have equal opportunity for advancement?

#### Review Data for Personnel Entering Your Company

- At what grades or positions do men, women and minorities typically enter your company? Within those grades and positions, are salaries consistent, or do men, women and minorities enter at different pay levels?
- How does negotiation affect entry-level salaries? Are men able to negotiate higher starting salaries than women or minorities?
- How do new hires compare in salary to those already working in the company in the same grades or positions? Do men, women and minorities entering the company get paid higher or lower than those who already hold the same positions or grades? Are there differences by gender or race?
- Are changes needed to ensure that new hires are treated consistently and incorporated into existing compensation systems on a compatible basis?

#### Assess Opportunity for Employees to Win Commissions and Bonuses

- Are men, women and minorities assigned projects or clients with high commission potential on a consistent basis?
- Are men, women and minorities with similar levels of performance awarded bonuses on a consistent basis? Do they receive bonuses of similar monetary values?

#### Assess How Raises are Awarded

- Is there a consistent method of evaluating performance for all workers? Do men, women and minorities receive consistent raises based on similar performance standards? (i.e.— Are all workers with outstanding evaluations awarded the same percentage increases? If not, what are the reasons for the difference?)
- Are men, women and minorities with similar levels of performance awarded bonuses on a consistent basis? Do they receive bonuses of similar monetary values?

#### Evaluate Employee Training, Development and Promotion Opportunities

- How are workers selected for participation in training opportunities or special projects that lead to advancement? Are there differences by race or gender? If so, what can be done to widen the pool to reflect equal opportunity?

#### Implement Changes Where Needed, Maintain Equity and Share Your Success

- Have you made changes to ensure consistency in evaluation of jobs, assignment of grades or scores, advancement within the system, performance evaluation, compensation levels, raises, bonuses, commissions and training? Have you evaluated your compensation system periodically to ensure that it meets equal employment opportunity goals?



- Do you maintain openness about compensation with your workforce? Do you regularly post job openings and salary ranges within the workplace? Do you allow employees to discuss compensation issues on their own time?
- Are you reaping the rewards of a productive, loyal workforce, and using your success as a competitive tool to attract the best and brightest workers?

## Appendix D

### Sample WAGE Club Discussion Guide

taken from the WAGE PROJECT website

This Discussion Guide provides format for WAGE Club meetings. Your WAGE Club may choose to spend one meeting or several meetings on a particular topic. You may want to skip around in the sequence of topics. This is only a guide. Your WAGE Club also might want to consider inviting expert guest speakers who will talk with you about salary negotiations, wages, or career ladders. Getting Even: Why Women's Don't Get Paid Like Men and What To Do About It and The WAGE Project's website, [www.wageproject.org](http://www.wageproject.org) are key resources for the Discussion Guide and WAGE Club meetings.

Please send The WAGE Project feedback on your club's experience with the guide if you use it. We appreciate your thoughts on the the discussion questions, resources and research exercises and welcome your suggestions on materials that you feel we should add, delete or explain in more detail.

The First WAGE Club Meeting:

Opening:

- Get To Know the WAGE Club
- To get to know your WAGE Club it is a good idea to do a bit more than just simple introductions. Here are a couple of other questions to get you started:
  - "Tell us something about your life outside of work that will help the club get a better sense of who you are."
  - "Share with us a story that would help others better appreciate your interest in being here."

Discussion:

What is a Wage Club?

- A wage club is a group of women who come together for personal support and who help each other take action personally or collectively to help close the wage gap.
- The WAGE Club works together to close the wage gap by exploring the problem of gender discrimination at work and helping each other develop strategies for eliminating the personal financial cost of that discrimination.

WAGE Club meetings and activities may include:

- Using the Getting Even book and the WAGE club discussion guide as platform for exploring issues and taking action on pay discrimination
- Sharing personal stories about how the wage gap and gender discrimination have personally affected each member
- Discussing the overall problem of the wage gap and other forms of gender discrimination
- Strategizing with club members about how each member can work to address the wage gap and discrimination she faces at work
- Conducting community-based outreach to spread the word about how the wage gap affects women's lives and what WAGE clubs can do to help women get even
- Discuss the dual purposes of the WAGE Club: support and action for each and every club member. The WAGE club should play both a support and action role in helping each of the club members to Get Even. WAGE club participants provide a sympathetic

community and personal encouragement for others seeking to achieve pay equity. In addition, WAGE club participants play an active role for each other by helping other club members plan and take tangible steps to close the wage gap at their workplace.

- To help provide focus for the group, the meetings may be organized around the topics included in this discussion guide. Each topic also includes a meeting preparation section, which suggests reading, research, thinking, and/or use of WAGE Project website which will help make the WAGE club meetings effective.

Establish the Basics:

- At the first meeting of your WAGE club, you should also get the basics established. Establish a format, facilitation structure and schedule for your future meetings. Lay some ground rules about confidentiality, and agree on a process for including new members in your club.
- Regular meetings will ensure that the club is able to effectively work on strategies with each member. Some WAGE Clubs will be able to meet weekly, others bi-weekly, others monthly.
- Whatever your club decides, try to set a convenient regular time, date and accessible location to make members' attendance easier. It is also a good idea for your club to firmly commit to regular start and end times, to ensure that members' participation does not intrude on other responsibilities.

The WAGE club should be a place where women can candidly discuss pay inequality without being concerned that their statements will find their way back to their employer. At the first meeting, the importance of confidentiality should be discussed and policies should be established to protect the confidentiality of participants in the WAGE Club. Since the matters discussed in the WAGE Club could potentially jeopardize women's jobs, it is essential that the club clearly establish what level of confidentiality is expected of club participants.

Confidentiality considerations may include:

- Confidentiality of discussions – “What is said at WAGE club stays at WAGE club.”
  - Use of WAGE Club membership contact list for club business only
  - Use of personal contact information rather than work contact info for WAGE club communications
- Confidentiality of club membership
  - Will your meetings be open or closed?
  - If you decide your club will be a closed club, with new members added by invitation only, it is essential to establish a process for adding new members to your club. This will prevent club depletion and ensure that things keep going over time which will help make your WAGE club's individual and collective efforts successful. To build your club, ask those who attend the first meeting to bring others to the next.
- Who will facilitate meetings?
  - Select or elect a facilitator or co-facilitators for meetings or designate different members on a rotating basis.

Wrap Up:

- After the discussion of WAGE Clubs, and once you have covered the basics, consider wrapping up by inviting participants to share a bit more about their goals/reasons for participating the club.
- Ask participants to:
  - “Say more about what brought you to this meeting.” Imagine that it is 6 months later, and you are getting what you want out of this club. How would you know that? What would be different in your life? How would the group be going?”
  - Establish a plan for next meeting. Choose from the topics listed below as a means to begin your club’s effort to Get Even! Go over the preparation guide for the section you choose so that you can get started Getting Even at your next meeting.

Topics:

Topic 1. “What Does the Wage Gap Cost Me?”

Topic 2. “ Do Other Women’s Stories Sound Like Mine?”

Topic 3. “Isn’t It Time I Get Paid Fairly?”

Topic 4. “How Do I Get Even?” Part 1: My Research and Strategy

Topic 5. “How Do I Get Even?” Part 2: Evaluate your Wage Gap

Topic 6. “How Do I Get Even?” Part 3: Identify Allies

Topic 7. “How Do I Get Even?” Part 4: Practice

Topic 8. “How Do I Get Even?” Part 5: Action and More Action

**Appendix E****Sample WAGE Club Invitation Letter**

taken from the WAGE PROJECT website

**JOIN THE [YOUR GROUP/COMMUNITY/ STATE] WAGE CLUB!****Together We Can Close the Wage Gap and Get Paid What We Deserve!**

The GROUP of [YOUR STATE/COMMUNITY] invites you to participate in a new groundbreaking initiative to help close the wage gap between women and men at work. Women in [YOUR STATE/COMMUNITY] and throughout the country will lose between \$700,000 and \$2,000,000 over the course of a lifetime because of the wage gap. According to the 2005 Census Bureau, women working full time, year-round still have median earnings of only 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. This is unfair. The difference in what women earn is not going away unless we do something about it. The personal cost of the wage gap means real losses for you and your family every day. It may mean that you cannot set aside tuition for your children to go to college, afford health insurance for your family, or you have to turn the thermostat down to save on heating bills.

The [Group name] of [YOUR STATE/COMMUNITY] is on the cutting edge of a new grassroots movement to help women get paid fairly. In partnership with the *WAGE Project*, founded by Dr. Evelyn Murphy, economist and former Lt. Governor of Massachusetts, we are starting an innovative initiative to help close the wage gap in 10 years.

On [DATE] we will launch a WAGE Club, a place where you can explore what being paid and treated unfairly at work can cost you and your family. It's a place to talk about your experiences with unfair treatment at work and hear the stories of other women. It's a place to get information about what you should be earning and ways to mobilize yourself and others to get paid fairly.

Please come to the first meeting. See how being involved in a WAGE Club might help you get paid what you deserve. And bring along friends who are interested in pay equity. This is an important opportunity for your financial empowerment.

The first meeting will be at [time/place]. To RSVP or for more information contact [name email number] and check out the WAGE Project website at [www.wageproject.org](http://www.wageproject.org).

**Appendix F****Sample WAGE Club Sign-On Letter**

taken from the WAGE PROJECT website

We the undersigned women's rights, civil rights, employee rights, unions and professional organizations, in collaboration with the National Committee on Pay Equity and the WAGE Project, are proud to announce our commitment to an innovative collaborative grassroots program designed to help close the wage gap between women and men at work.

Whereas in 2006, more than four decades after the passage of the 1963 Equal Pay Act, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act banning sex discrimination in the workplace, full-time working women in the United States still earn only 77 cents for every dollar a full-time working man makes.

Whereas the average American full-time woman worker loses between \$700,000 and \$2 million over the course of her lifetime as a result of the wage gap,

Whereas, over time, these significant financial losses undermine the ability of women to compete in the workforce and provide for themselves and their families,

Whereas the wage gap is primarily the result of various forms of persistent sex discrimination against women in the workplace,

Whereas the undersigned are groups that have a longstanding commitment to protecting women's rights, workers rights and support for fair pay for women at work.

We the undersigned organizations do hereby:

Declare our support for a new national grassroots collaboration through forming WAGE Clubs to close the wage gap with strategic grassroots activism led by women workers who come together to talk about the wage gap and obtain the tools, support, advocacy skills and momentum they need to get even at work.

Commit to collectively launch 100 groups participating in WAGE Club program activities with the goal of building a nationwide grassroots movement working to close the wage gap once and for all.

Evelyn Murphy  
President  
The WAGE Project