Recently Purdue examined how its staffing patterns compare to Public Research Institutions. The study followed the methodology of the American Institute for Research’s study, Labor Intensive or Labor Expensive, examining hiring trends of colleges and universities over time. The study used the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data to examine staffing patterns. When examining the most recently available national data we see that Purdue’s overall percentage of staff compared to faculty and grad staff is comparable to Public Research Institutions (both 52%). However, the break down of staffing is different. Purdue has a lower percentage of full-time and part-time faculty, a much larger percentage of graduate assistants, a much lower percentage of professional staff, and a much higher percentage of nonprofessional staff than the average for Public research Institutions.

When examining Purdue’s internally defined staff groupings it is clear that growth has not been uniform across classifications. Faculty's largest areas of growth have been in Clinical/Professional, Lecturers, and Adjunct Faculty which have all seen an over 40% increase, while Tenure Track Faculty have only increased 7.6%. Additionally, among staff groups, professional staff (-3.0%) and clerical staff (-28.3%) have been the two areas at Purdue to see declines while administrative staff have increased 75%. The administrative staff grouping is defined as positions with the direct supervision of the work force of a recognized unit and/or duties and responsibilities involving the performance of exempt staff administrative activities defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act. The primary duties and responsibilities of the staff administrative positions consist of carrying out the non-manual work that is of substantial importance to the management or operation of the unit. There has been a clear shift in non-faculty staff positions over time from lower skilled positions to positions covering more responsibility, but the university has also clearly made invested growth in administrative areas.

Additionally, while the total number of employees at Purdue has increased 13.5%, or a total of 1,866 individuals, between 2001 and 2013, the relative percentage of the overall staffing categories of faculty, staff, and grad staff have not changed dramatically. Faculty and grad staff have increased slightly while general staff has declined slightly.
The administrative classification covers many positions that are traditionally thought of as administrators such as academic and administrative executives, business managers, admissions officers, bursars, and athletic administrators. However there are several that one might not traditionally consider as administrative positions including chefs, buying and purchasing agents, estimator/designers, general communication specialists, and writer/editors, among others. Examining the growth of the administrative staff grouping by the four broad areas of responsibility on campus one sees that the largest growth has occurred in research areas such as the Office of the Vice President of Research, Discovery Park, Bindley Bioscience Center and the Cancer Research Center. The research areas account for 152 of the new employees, making up a roughly 425% growth in staff and 440% growth in salary. The central administrative units including areas such as the President and Provost Offices, IT, Student Services, and Marketing and Media show an approximately 75% growth in staff and salary. The auxiliary units of Housing and Food Services and Athletics saw an approximately 50% growth in staff and 75% growth in salary. While the academic units saw an approximately 50% growth in staff and salary between 2001 and 2013. It should also be noted that the Office of Development falls under central administration in the above graphs. However, to better match our peers practices in regards to advancement, the Development Office was moved under the Purdue Research Foundation in 2013-14. This will remove 121 administrative positions from Purdue’s budget beginning with fall 2014.

The funding model for non-faculty positions is different from faculty positions within Purdue. Tenure track faculty positions are much more likely to be funded from Purdue’s general fund than administrative positions. Thirty-one percent of administrative funding comes from auxiliary, sponsored program and state or federal appropriate funds, compared to 11% of tenure track faculty. Two of the larger administrative staffing units, housing and food services (169 staff) and intercollegiate athletics (131 staff), are entirely funded on auxiliary funds.

The data indicate that while Purdue’s staffing patterns over the last 13 years have been similar to public research institutions throughout the country, there has been a sustained growth in the internally defined administrative staff grouping at Purdue. Much of that growth has been related to increased research funding at the University, increases in auxiliary units, and a shifting of jobs from clerical and professional groupings to administrative groupings with increased job responsibilities. However, there has been growth in administrative positions in all staffing areas across campus. Purdue has begun efforts in the last two years to reduce administrative costs (recurring budget reduction to administrative units in 2013-14), and will continue to need to examine costs as it moves forward.


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