

Compensation for public university presidents continues to climb, with five executives earning more than \$1 million in the 2014-15 academic year, according to the **Chronicle** of Higher Education.

Pay for public university presidents or chancellors rose 4.3 percent in fiscal 2015, with the median now up to \$431,000, based on the group's annual survey.

The numbers count total compensation — base salary, bonuses, severance packages and any deferred compensation paid during the fiscal year, which for most schools ended June 30, 2015. The figures don't include retirement pay or deferred compensation that will be paid out in future years.

Ohio State University President Michael Drake and Penn State University President Eric Barron have the highest base salaries, at \$800,000 each.

Atop the "total compensation" list at \$1.3 million is Renu Khator, who holds a dual appointment as chancellor of the University of Houston system and president of the University of Houston. She received a base salary of \$700,000 plus a \$200,000 bonus and \$400,000 in deferred compensation.

Four other chancellors or presidents were paid more than \$1 million — including three who were not employed for a full year at one university but received severance packages, signing bonuses or moving costs in addition to their salaries.

"One thing we saw is that it can pay to come or go as a college leader," said **Dan Bauman**, data reporter with **The Chronicle** of Higher Education.

— Texas A&M President Michael K. Young received \$1.33 million, including a base salary of \$333,333 and an \$800,000 signing bonus.

— Chancellor William McRaven of the University of Texas system was paid \$1.09 million, with a salary of \$790,909 and a \$300,000 bonus.

— Michael Gottfredson, who stepped down as president of the University of Oregon in August 2014, received nearly \$1.22 million, including a \$950,000 severance package. It's the third-largest severance package awarded, topped only by the \$1.5 million paid to former Ohio State President Gordon Gee and the \$1.23 million to former Penn State President Graham Spanier, Bauman said.

He noted that the two Texas administrators are set to earn base salaries above \$1 million next year, hitting a "new high-water mark."

"We've never seen base compensation be that high," he said.

Former University of Illinois President Robert Easter, who retired in 2015, came in at No. 16 with \$763,915. Easter received a salary of \$416,715 and two performance bonuses during that fiscal year — \$180,000 in November 2014 for goals he met during the 2013-14 academic year, and \$167,200 for his work in 2014-15.

Current President Tim Killeen shows up near the bottom of the list, at \$75,000, as he did not become president until mid-May, toward the end of fiscal 2015.

Killeen earns a \$600,000 annual salary, with the possibility of up to \$100,000 in performance bonuses. At his request, trustees last fall removed from his contract a \$225,000 retention bonus payable after five years on the job.

His \$600,000 salary would tie him for 47th on the group's list with the leaders of the University of Alabama-Huntsville, Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge and the Texas Tech system. If he received his full \$100,000

bonus, his \$700,000 compensation would place him 24th.

The survey also includes former UI Chancellor Phyllis Wise, who was paid \$549,069 annually before resigning in August amid questions about her use of personal email accounts for university business. She eventually agreed to forgo a \$400,000 retention bonus.

Current interim UI Chancellor Barbara Wilson earns \$397,500 a year.

The group's analysis reflects the pay of 259 chief executives at 236 public colleges and systems, including all public doctoral universities and all state college and university systems or governing boards with at least three campuses and 50,000 students.

Bauman said total compensation rose by 7 percent between fiscal 2013 and 2014. He cautioned that the totals are based on executives who served a full year on the job, and that pool changes slightly each year as presidents come and go.

"It's an apples-to-apples comparison, but they're different types of apples," he said.

The group has conducted the survey since 2009.

B1G checks

Total compensation for Big Ten public university presidents/chancellors in 2014-15:

- Lou Anna Simon, Michigan State president: \$850,000
- Michael Drake, Ohio State president: \$800,000
- Eric Barron, Penn State president: \$800,000
- March Schlissel, Michigan president: \$772,500
- Michael McRobbie, Indiana president: \$680,332
- Eric Kaler, Minnesota president: \$625,250
- (Tim Killeen, University of Illinois president: \$600,000*)
- Phyllis Wise, UI Urbana-Champaign chancellor: \$549,069
- William Brit Kirwan, University of Maryland system chancellor: \$573,398
- Mitchell Daniels, Purdue president: \$530,704
- Wallace Loh, Maryland-College Park president: \$526,590
- Sally Mason, Iowa president: \$525,828
- Raymond Cross, University of Wisconsin system president: \$525,000
- Rebecca Blank, Wisconsin-Madison chancellor: \$499,950
- Harvey Perlman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln chancellor: \$447,918

*Killeen earned only \$75,000 during the 2014-15 academic year, as he took over in May 2015. His base salary is \$600,000.

Source: **Chronicle** of Higher Education

Copyright, 2016, The Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette.