

# Rick Scott posts university salaries online

By [Zac Anderson](#), Herald-Tribune  
Monday, October 17, 2011

Gov. Rick Scott wants Floridians to know more about university salaries as he pushes for major higher education reforms.

Scott has posted a [database online with salary information for more than 52,000 employees](#) at Florida's 11 public universities.



Florida Gov. Rick Scott meets with the Sarasota Herald-Tribune editorial board on Oct. 10 in Sarasota. (Staff photo / Mike Lang)

The governor's office said Monday that making the data more accessible is about transparency for taxpayers.

"These are tax dollars and Floridians have a right to know where those tax dollars are being spent," said Scott spokeswoman Jackie Schutz, who declined to elaborate more broadly on Scott's larger university reform agenda.

But some faculty members saw the posting of information that already was public — though not as easy to find — as part of an effort to inflame public sentiment against university spending.

"This is hanging people out to roast," said Tom Auxter, president of the 5,000-member union that represents university faculty. "The governor is just trying to target faculty and make them uncomfortable."

Auxter said the data is misleading because it does not give people an understanding of faculty responsibilities. Many professors take on administrative duties and have other responsibilities that could lead to larger salaries, said Auxter, a philosophy professor at the University of Florida.

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**BILL FINN** MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2011 AT 5:03 PM

So why doesn't Scott also post the salaries of all government officials as well? Why

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An explanation posted with the data notes that some employees are paid from multiple pots of money. For employees like athletic coaches with complex financial arrangements, the data may not reflect their full compensation.

While the salary information already is public and available to anyone who looks hard enough, political observers said Scott's effort to centralize the data and make it more accessible is pure politics.

"It seems like a political move designed to draw attention to it," Christopher Mann, a political science professor at the said University of Miami, a private school not part of the state university system.

The governor is proposing a series of university accountability measures designed to cut costs and increase productivity. Scott has been touting a plan that calls for tougher faculty evaluations with more student input. He also is raising questions about tenure, the faculty promotion system that provides job security, and wants to shift resources to degree programs with the best job prospects.

Last week, Scott generate a furor when he suggested to the Herald-Tribune editorial board that Florida's economy would be better served if state universities spent less time teaching social sciences like anthropology and psychology, and focused more on courses like math and technology.

Before the recent post of faculty salaries, Scott has published a variety of state financial data online. Salaries for a range of state employees are included on his "Florida Has a right to Know" website but the university data is highlighted in a separate spreadsheet.

Scott drew attention to employee pension data during his campaign to reform the state pension system, publishing a list of workers with annual pensions of \$100,000 or more.

The Legislature passed a bill this spring forcing state employees to contribute 3 percent of their salaries to pension costs.

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But unlike public pensions, which many private sector workers view as overly generous, Mann, the Miami political science professor, said there is more sympathy for public universities.

“There’s a very real risk that he goes to far,” Mann said. “There are a lot of very loyal graduates of Florida’s public universities and they don’t take it lightly when anyone attacks their alma mater.”

Auxter, the union president, said the more faculty feel under the attack, the harder it will be for Florida universities to recruit qualified professors to train the state’s work force.

“This whole thing is going to do more than backfire on the governor, it’s going to backfire on the state economy,” Auxter said.

The data shows the University of Florida leading the pack in compensation with 70 of the 100 highest paid employees.

Of the 10 top university earners, seven work at UF and three work at the University of South Florida. All are doctors affiliated with the medical schools.

The highest paid employee at Sarasota’s New College, which routinely ranks as one of the most affordable elite public universities, is President Gordon “Mike” Michalson at No. 799.

The average salary for all university workers statewide is \$50,926.

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**BILL FINN** MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2011 AT 5:03 PM

So why doesn't Scott also post the salaries of all government officials as well? Why ONLY the teachers? I could maybe understand and it would seem more fair if ALL government workers drawing at the public till were listed, not just single out the one group.



**TODD HUNGER** MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2011 AT 5:21 PM

Dear Bill, every state salary is available on the internet and as a general proposition I fully support that info being available to the public SINCE "WE" taxpayers are the one's