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DECEMBER 12, 2017

# POEM ABOUT YOUR UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S COMPLETELY REASONABLE FOUR MILLION- DOLLAR COMPENSATION PACKAGE

by SUSAN HARLAN

*"Most of the money earned by America's top-paid private-college presidents in 2015 came from sources outside their regular paycheck....The top earner in 2015 was Nathan O. Hatch, president of Wake Forest University, who made just over \$4 million, according to [The Chronicle's analysis.](#)" — [The Chronicle of Higher Ed, 12/10/17](#)*

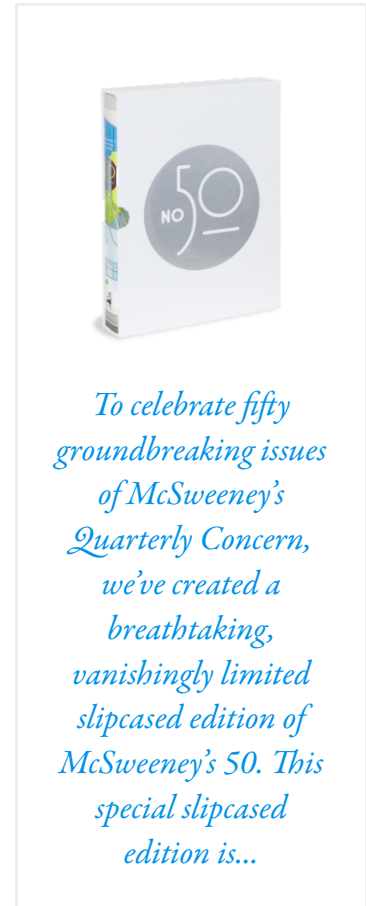
- - -

Dear University Community,

It has come to our attention  
Up here in our very tall turret  
That a scurrilous rag known as  
*The Chronicle of Higher Education*  
Has published its annual database  
Of executive compensation packages  
Of college presidents in the U.S.

Their analysis shows that in 2015,  
Our glorious and anointed-with-holy-oil  
President received just over \$4 million  
And ranked first in total compensation  
In the whole entire and complete country,  
From sea to shining sea.

Because university trustees are known  
To be thoughtful and generous people,  
We would like to offer some  
Additional context  
To everyone in our campus community,  
Particularly those professors



Who might make less money  
Than the president.

We assure you that every dime  
Of this \$4,004,617  
Can be accounted for,  
Justified,  
And rationalized  
As you might rationalize  
Sending a longing-filled text to an ex  
When you are drunk at 3 a.m.

It is extremely important to note that  
That the president's actual base pay  
Was a meager \$839,944,  
While \$92,000 was bonus pay,  
And \$3,009,376 was what we like to call  
"Other pay," or "Not real money pay,"  
Which includes fast cars,  
Swanky pads, jet-setting, opera tickets,  
And club dues for the clubs where  
Upper-level university administrators  
Unwind after a long day of  
Trying to figure out how to get professors

To give away their labor.  
 Also worth mentioning is the president's  
 Reasonable champagne budget,  
 Which we double only around the holidays.  
 We understand that this breakdown  
 Might be confusing to those of you  
 Who do not have a champagne budget,  
 So we provide this information  
 By way of clarification.

Also by way of clarification,  
 We would like to note that the vesting  
 Of the president's deferred compensation  
 Prompted a one-year bump among peers  
 Because IRS reporting rules require  
 That the entire vested benefit,  
 Which includes accruals reported  
 In the tax filings from 2006-2014,  
 Plus the final accrual and any investment  
 Net earnings, be reported

◀ In the year of vesting.  
 So gross inequality in the  
 Corporate American university  
 Is not a thing.



*Eight classic issues of  
 the Quarterly, plus the  
 Comics section of the  
 Panorama (Issue 33),  
 all for one very low  
 price. This bundle  
 includes: Issue 51 Issue  
 42 Issue 40 Issue 38  
 Issue...*

As you no doubt now see,  
Numbers are not numbers,  
But things that can be interpreted  
And reinterpreted,  
But not like you interpret things  
In English departments  
Because that shit is useless.

We would also remind you that  
The president has done  
A lot of Really Leader-y Things  
All by himself,  
And these Really Leader-y Things  
Cost \$4,004,617.  
Indeed, not unlike his crown  
Bejeweled with the Heart of the Ocean  
From *Titanic*, his compensation  
Over the course of his tenure  
Reflects his exceptional leadership.  
Even when he has found this crown  
Rather heavy  
(Needless to say, he keeps it  
In constant rotation  
With St Edward's Crown),

He has seen the university through  
A transformational period  
That includes achieving the largest  
Fundraising effort in our history.  
He has also set the standard for personal  
And career development,  
Built a boatload of brick buildings,  
Swerved to avoid a (very cute) badger once,  
And ensured an academic and residential environment  
That educates the whole person  
And not just part of them  
Like their torso  
Or foot.

These innovative accomplishments  
Are absolutely worth \$4 million,  
In the same way that what you do in those  
Classroom places – and he remembered to  
Talk you professors up  
For the fundraising campaign! –  
Is worth somewhere between \$5 and \$75,000  
With occasional presents of fish and game,  
And so forth,  
Whenever they are in season.

We would also remind you  
That you are #luckytohaveajob  
And request that you please  
Consult the contract you signed  
With your congealing blood,  
Which stipulates that so long as you  
Are comfortable,  
You are to remain a docile  
And non-critical member  
Of this community,  
Which is really very much  
Like a family  
If you are in a Harold Pinter play.

This is not the first communication  
We trustees have made  
On the subject of the president's compensation,  
And we would be #grateful  
If you would accept what we are saying  
And get on with your small  
And ordinary lives.  
We are on a team-building African safari  
And would like to get back to shooting zebras.



*Issue 51 features  
eighteen brand-new  
stories so compelling  
that you'll read  
through the night and  
far into the next day,  
until your boss calls  
and warns you that  
you're on thin ice,  
buddy, and...*

Thank you, and bless our beloved university!

Sincerely,

The Board of Trustees

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