

I'd like to introduce myself to you. My name is Laura Elizabeth Martin; I am a teacher in the UW-IELP (International English Language Programs) and I graduated from the UW MA-TESOL (Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) just over two years ago.

Since I came into the UW Master's program as an experienced teacher, I was selected to be a TA from year one of my program. I very much enjoyed teaching at UW. After completing my degree, I was hired as a full time instructor, and I continued to teach in the IELP for the next two years. What surprised me about being hired at UW was that all the new teachers are paid at the exact same rate, no matter what experience they bring with them. When I had been a teacher in a very similar program at Seattle Central Community College, I had been placed into a step system which assessed my level of experience and gave me a rate of pay commensurate with that experience. It's really surprising to me that UW doesn't do that.

One other odd thing about working at UW is that there is no chance for an increase in pay due to merit or seniority in the program. So, again, all teachers are treated alike and all are stuck on the same level of pay, since there have been no salary increases for any teachers for at least 5 years now. At least at Seattle Central Community College, the rate of pay kept up with the annual inflation rate. I love working for the University of WA and it would be a shame to have to leave here, after learning so much about the school and the campus in the last 4 years. However, I am considering a return to Seattle Central Community College because they pay more there and they give their teachers not only annual raises, but higher rates of compensation based on experience level. Sadly, many people assume that UW pay is better than pay at the Community Colleges but this is just not true. I'd just like to add that I am speaking from experience when I say that UW instructors feel undervalued and underpaid.

Thank you for letting me share my story,

Laura E. Martin