

Report from the Personnel Subcommittee

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To increase transparency about the allocation of resources, LASA's Personnel Subcommittee conducted a comparative analysis of expenditures on staff salaries and benefits. The study draws on data from association websites, as well as the most recent Form 990 tax reports for LASA, the American Political Science Association (APSA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), and the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The findings reveal that LASA has a small staff compared to peer organizations and that salaries paid to LASA staff are, on average, lower than those paid by other associations.

LASA is a large organization, with 11,217 members as of 2021. As Table 1 shows, APSA is of similar size, with 11,000 members, and the ASA and AAA are slightly smaller. LASA employs far fewer staff members than APSA, the ASA, and the AAA. As a result, the staff-to-member ratio at LASA is 1,020, compared to 275 at APSA, 363 at ASA, and 348 at AAA. This means that, on average, the LASA staff faces a heavier work load than staff at comparable academic organizations.

Table 1: Staff-to-Member Ratio at LASA and Similarly Sized Academic Organizations

	APSA	ASA	AAA	LASA
Members	11,000	9,438	9,400	11,217
Staff	40	26	27	11
Staff / Member ratio	275	363	348	1,020

Source: Data from association websites.

The salaries and benefits of LASA's staff are, on average, 24 percent lower than similarly sized academic organizations, even after controlling for cost of living in Pittsburgh. Table 2 reports the average salaries of the executive director, deputy executive director, director of finance and administration, and other directors at APSA, the ASA, and the AAA. All three organizations are housed in Washington, DC, where the cost of living is higher than in Pittsburgh. The subcommittee, therefore, adjusted those salaries for cost of living; Table 2 also reports what the equivalent salary would be in Pittsburgh. The subcommittee then compared that number to actual salaries of LASA staff. To maintain confidentiality, we do not report those numbers in this report, but the analysis reveals that LASA staff salaries are, on average, 24 percent lower than APSA, the ASA, and the AAA.

Table 2: LASA Staff Salaries Compared to Those at Other Associations

	Washington, DC	Cost of Living Adj. to Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA
	Average (APSA, AAA, ASA)	CNN Money	LASA Salaries
Positions			
Executive Director	\$ 247,001.33	\$ 161,041.00	
Deputy Executive Director (pending hire)	\$ 181,157.33	\$ 115,950.00	
Director of Finance and Administration	\$ 166,733.00	\$ 109,058.00	
Other Directors	\$ 131,104.33	\$ 83,741.00	
		Average	-24%

Source: IRS Form 990s.

Salaries and benefits constitute a slightly larger share of LASA’s overall budget than at similarly sized academic organizations, but that is explained by the fact that the LASA budget is small in comparison. In fiscal year 2020–2021, LASA spent 39 percent of its budget on salaries and 13 percent on benefits. However, as Table 3 shows, APSA’s annual expenditure in 2020–2021 was nearly \$7.4 million, while the ASA spent \$6.7 million and the AAA, \$5.2 million. LASA, in contrast, spent \$1.9 million during that same fiscal year. Given the small size of LASA’s budget, a larger share of overall spending is required to cover the cost of salaries and benefits.

Table 3: Overall Expenditure and Salary and Benefits as a Share of the Total Budget

EXPENDITURES	APSA	ASA	AAA	LASA
	\$ 7,385,296.00	\$ 6,724,789.00	\$ 5,198,947.00	\$ 1,941,121.00
Salaries	36%	31%	41%	39%
Benefits	6%	6%	8%	13%

Source: IRS Form 990s, calculations by committee.

The results of the Personnel Subcommittee’s report reveal that LASA staff carry a heavier workload than the staff of peer organizations because of the high staff-to-member ratio. Moreover, the LASA staff is, on average, paid less for that work. However, given LASA’s small budget, those expenses account for a slightly larger share of overall spending. //