



# COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

## Salary Negotiation Guide



Many people accept salary offers that too low simply because they do not know how to negotiate. Sherry Chastain, author of **Winning the Salary Game**, states:

*"Almost every salary is negotiable, from a few dollars to many thousands. While you may not be negotiating with employers, they are always negotiating with you – for the lowest sum they can get away with. If you aren't negotiating, you make their goal that much easier to obtain."*

Many people fear the awkwardness of salary negotiation. Others are concerned that by negotiating they will be viewed as greedy or pushy and may jeopardize their chances for employment. **These fears are only justified if: a) you fail to prepare adequately for salary discussions; b) you fail to discern between the times when salary negotiation is appropriate and times when it isn't; c) you aren't tactful.**

### What Does Adequate Preparation Involve?

- Know the salary rate for your position. How much are people being paid with a similar background and doing work you plan to do? Resources include:
  - Cornell Career Services Website:
    - Post Graduate Survey
    - Vault Guides
  - Cornell Career Services (103/203 Barnes Hall):
  - Human Ecology Career Development Center (162 MVR):
- When judging current salaries based on the previous years figures, remember to add an appropriate percentage (3% to 4%)
- Take into account the cost of living for the area where the job would require you to live.
  - CNN Money's Cost of Living Calculator:  
<http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html?step=form&x=41&y=8>
- Based on the information that you gather, determine a figure you would settle for and a higher figure which would be an acceptable starting point for negotiations.

### When Is It Appropriate to Negotiate?

- Never begin salary negotiations during the interview process, wait until the company places a job offer on the table.
- Keep in mind that salaries for entry level positions may be less negotiable.
- If you have received a more substantial offer from another employer, negotiating may be appropriate if the two positions are comparable.
- If you have tangible evidence that the salary is too low, you may be in a strong position to negotiate.

### How Do You Bargain Tactfully?

- Using tact includes expressing what you need to convey yet doing so in a manner that avoids offending someone. It's important to balance both confidence and politeness.
- Make sure that you do not appear overly concerned about salary. Your interviewer may question your interest in the non-reward aspects of the position.
- Don't appear apologetic if you ask for higher pay. Realize that if you were to join their organization, both you and the employer would be benefiting from your working there.
- As stated by Somer H. White, president of a consulting firm: "We persuade not by telling but by asking." Your inquiry may lead your interviewer to rethink certain aspects of this particularemployment opportunity, and subsequently, see the justification for raising your pay.

### Starting The Conversation (Example Conversations)

"I'm really excited about this fantastic opportunity. However, after having done some research and number crunching, including the cost of living in \_\_\_\_\_ city as well as what people in similar positions with similar responsibilities are being paid, I was hoping for a salary around \$\_\_\_\_\_."

"Thank you for giving me this exciting opportunity to work with your organization. However, in doing my own research for the cost of living in \_\_\_\_\_ city as well as the salaries of those doing comparable work with similar responsibilities, I feel that a more appropriate salary would be around \$\_\_\_\_\_."