ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION JOURNAL

www.natajournals.org
ISSN: 1947-380X
DOI: 10.4085/1947-380X-23-003

SURVEY

Negotiation Practices of Athletic Training Educators

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Context: Low salary is often cited as one of the primary motivations for professional attrition in athletic training. The employer usually determines the salary range; however, negotiation can also influence the final salary and benefits of a given position. It is unclear to what extent, if any, athletic training educators negotiate salary or other terms of employment during the hiring process.

Objective: To explore the negotiation practices of athletic training educators during the hiring process.

Design: Cross-sectional.

Setting: Web-based survey.

Patients or Other Participants: A total of 174 athletic training educators who have held at least one full-time employed position.

Main Outcome Measures: Demographic factors as well as the current salary range served as independent variables, and participants' responses to questions about salary and terms of employment negotiation questions were the dependent variables. All variables were characterized using summary statistics, and multiple chi-square analyses ($P < .05$) were conducted to determine significant relationships between independent variables on negotiation practices.

Results: Most athletic training educators attempted to negotiate their salary (64.4%) and terms of employment (54%) during the hiring process. The most commonly negotiated terms of employment were moving expenses (58.5%), research-related start-up costs (45.7%), and continuing education funding/reimbursement (42.6%). The influence of demographic factors on the decision to negotiate salary or terms of employment and the relative success of that negotiation varied, with significant findings for previous employment, gender, race, relationship status, number of dependents, age, salary range, and highest degree earned.

Conclusions: Lack of negotiation disproportionately occurred in those athletic training educators with less work experience, and women inexplicably had less success in negotiation attempts. Widespread training in negotiation strategies is warranted across the athletic training profession, including its educators, and our findings suggest that such training would specifically benefit early-career and women athletic training educators.

Key Words: salary, wages, terms of employment, benefits, employee

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Full Citation:
Cavallario JM, Campbell BL, Jones BC, Welch Bacon CE. Negotiation practices of athletic training educators. *Athl Train Educ J*. 2023;18(4):310–322.

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KEY POINTS

- Unlike previously published findings within the clinical population, most athletic training educators attempted to negotiate salary and some employment terms. The most common reason for not negotiating salary or terms of employment was that the respondent felt that the offer was fair and that negotiation was not necessary.
- Compared with all other levels of work history, those with only one previous full-time position were least likely to have attempted a negotiation of salary, and those in lower age ranges were similarly less likely to try or have success in negotiating terms of employment. Based on our findings regarding age and the number of previous positions, it appears that those entering the profession are less likely to negotiate during the hiring process, highlighting the need for an increased emphasis on negotiation strategies in professional education programs, before students enter the workforce, and in continuing education offerings for early-career professionals.
- Gender did not influence attempts to negotiate among educators, but men reported significantly more success in negotiating salary and employment terms. More research is needed that is specific to the employer's role in negotiating; however, our findings suggest that women would also benefit from targeted development in negotiation strategies.

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2021 National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) salary survey, athletic training educators employed in higher education within the faculty/academic/research setting are among the highest-paid athletic trainers (ATs) on average.[1] Such positions earned an average of $84 378, compared to an average salary of $58 028 at the secondary school setting or just over $52 000 averaged at National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II or III institutions.[1] This theoretically puts athletic training educators much closer to the range of what the Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports as the median annual salary for all physical therapists in 2019, which was $89 440,[2] and slightly ahead of the median salary for occupational therapists, at $72 373.[3] However, compared to peer health care professions educational faculty, ATs once again fall short of achieving salary equity. For example, the average contract for an athletic training educator is 10 months,[4] and an associate professor of physical therapy in a 10- to 11-month contract at a public institution earns an average salary of $105 191.[5] Although not broken down by the length of the contract, physician assistant program faculty earn a mean salary of $99 771 annually.[6] While athletic training educators are among the highest paid within the profession, peer health care professions educators continue to outearn athletic training in comparison.[1,2,4,6]

Salary is just one part of the total employment package, and it is essential to note that salary is also impacted by other benefits, some of which are highly specific to academia. For example, contract length, tenure or tenure eligibility, type of academic line, and workload are all terms of employment that not only impact work satisfaction but also can significantly influence salary in higher education. Physical therapy's accrediting body reports the mean, median, and range of faculty salaries by role (program director, director of clinical education, or other core faculty), by rank (lecturer, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or other), and by contract length (9, 10 to 11, or 12 months) and also delineates these by public and private institution types.[5] However, neither the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) analytics reports nor the NATA salary survey breaks down variables to the level of sophistication necessary for practical use during the hiring process.[1,4] Due to the dearth of available resources regarding salary and salary-influencing variables for the various ranks and roles that exist within academia, we do not have the necessary data to leverage in negotiation practices within this setting.

Recent changes to professional athletic training program accreditation standards require that athletic training programs be administratively housed with similar health care professions programs that participate in specialty accreditation,[7] thereby moving athletic training educators into academic units where they are paid less than their peers. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*,[8] negotiations of salary and terms of employment are somewhat expected within higher education during the hiring process, although university deans also believe that they must consider the equity of existing faculty members before agreeing to negotiated salary amounts. We currently lack an understanding of the present-day practices of athletic training educators concerning negotiation during the hiring process. More information is needed before athletic training educators have the necessary data to negotiate for salaries comparable to those of their peer professions' faculty members. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the negotiation practices of athletic training educators during the hiring process.

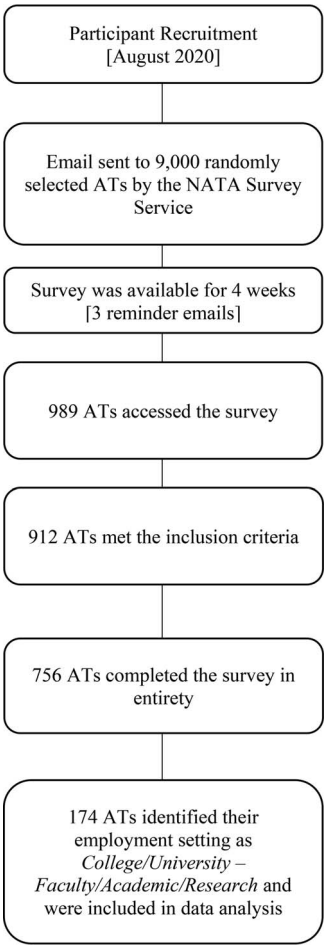
METHODS

We employed a cross-sectional web-based survey design to achieve our research aim. The Old Dominion University College of Health Sciences Human Subjects Review Committee determined this project to be exempt research.

Instrumentation

We developed a survey instrument to meet the research aim and conducted an item-level content validity index (I-CVI) analysis using a panel of 3 experts who were in a position to hire ATs at their place of employment.[9] After the implementation of the reviewers' suggestions, our final survey instrument had an I-CVI score of 0.98, which signified consistent agreement across our expert panel for a valid survey instrument.[9,10] The final survey instrument addressed the following demographic variables: years of experience, number of full-time employment positions held, age, gender, ethnicity, race,

Figure 1. Flowchart of the study procedures.



relationship status, number of dependents, state of employment, route to certification, current salary range, and highest degree attained. We also asked participants to identify whether they had negotiated their terms of employment or salary during the hiring process and to categorically respond to their success in those attempts. In the case of participants who did not attempt to negotiate, they were directed to identify a reason why they chose not to do so.

Procedures

The survey was hosted on the Qualtrics (Provo, UT) platform and was distributed in August 2020 by the NATA Survey Service to 9000 randomly selected ATs. Reminder emails were sent every week for 4 full weeks of data collection (Figure 1).

Participants

Inclusion criteria included (1) being a Board of Certification-credentialed or Texas-licensed AT and (2) having previously experienced a minimum of 1 complete hiring process to obtain full-time employment. Participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria were not permitted to complete the remainder of the survey. A total of 989 ATs accessed the survey, and 912 met the inclusion criteria (10% valid access rate). A total of 756 ATs completed the survey in its entirety (83% valid completion rate); of those, 174 ATs identified their employment setting as *college/university—faculty/academic/research*.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using SPSS statistical software (version 27.0.0; IBM, Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics were used to characterize data responses. Multiple chi-square analyses accounting for expected frequencies, adjusted Bonferroni *P* values, and standardized residuals were used to examine the relationships between demographic variables and categorical negotiation practice responses. Any variables that resulted in expected counts below 5 were omitted from the analysis, and significance was set a priori at a *P* value of $<.050$.[11] As a result of the unequal demographic category groupings for the chi-square analyses, we omitted or regrouped variables to best represent the data. For gender, we could analyze only binary man and woman responses. For marital status, only single and married ATs were analyzed because other categories were too sparse to establish statistical significance. Regardless of regrouping for comparative analyses, all demographic responses are still presented descriptively in the tables. To ensure the quality of reporting for this study, we used the Strengthening in the Reporting of Observational Studies of Epidemiology (STROBE) assessment tool.[12]

RESULTS

Descriptive Findings

Demographic information for all participants is available in Table 1. The majority of athletic training educators (n = 112, 64.4%) attempted to negotiate their salary. Those that tried to negotiate their salary met varying levels of success, with one-third of participants (n = 37, 33%) having their counteroffer met, slightly more participants (n = 43, 38.4%) accepting a compromise between the original offer and their counteroffer, and slightly fewer participants (n = 32, 28.6%) indicating that their employer did not raise the salary despite their attempts to negotiate. Of the 62 respondents who did not negotiate their salary, nearly one-half (n = 29, 46.8%) did not do so because they *felt the offer provided was fair* and they did not need to negotiate. The next most common reason for not negotiating salary was *my employer made it clear that the offer was not negotiable* (n = 17, 27.4%). A complete breakdown of salary negotiation responses by demographic variable is presented in Table 2.

There was a relatively even split for participants regarding their attempts to negotiate terms of employment, with the majority (n = 94, 54%) choosing to try to negotiate at least 1 term of employment. The terms of employment that were most negotiated were moving expenses (n = 55, 58.5%), research-related start-up costs (n = 43, 45.7%), and continuing education funding/reimbursement (n = 40, 42.6%). An employer-provided cell phone (n = 3), medical insurance coverage/cost (n = 2), and vacation/personal leave allowance (n = 2) all had a successful negotiation percentage of 100%. A breakdown of the terms of employment that were negotiated as well as the relative success of that negotiation is presented in Figure 2.

Of those who did not attempt to negotiate any terms of employment (n = 80, 46%), the majority of those (n = 48, 60%) indicated that *I thought the terms of employment were fair and I did not need to negotiate*, distantly followed by *my employer made it clear that the terms of employment were not negotiable* (n = 12, 15%). A complete breakdown of reasons

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Variable	No. (%)	Mean ± SD
Age, years	169 (97.1)	43.1 ± 9.9
21–30	15 (8.6)	
31–40	62 (35.6)	
41 or older	92 (52.9)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Gender		
Woman	87 (50.0)	
Man	78 (44.8)	
Prefer not to respond	3 (1.7)	
Did not answer	6 (3.4)	
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	5 (2.9)	
Not Hispanic/Latino	156 (89.7)	
Prefer not to respond	13 (7.5)	
Race		
White	157 (90.2)	
Prefer not to respond	12 (7.1)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Years of experience		20.2 ± 9.6
0–9	19 (10.9)	
10–19	67 (38.5)	
20–29	50 (28.7)	
30–39	28 (16.1)	
40 or more	5 (2.9)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Relationship status		
Single	37 (21.9)	
Married	118 (69.8)	
Prefer not to respond	19 (10.9)	
No. of dependents		
None	83 (47.7)	
1	23 (13.2)	
2	42 (24.1)	
3	17 (9.8)	
4	2 (1.1)	
5	2 (1.1)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Route to credentialing		
Internship (before 2003)	53 (30.5)	
NATA-approved curriculum (before 2003)	50 (28.7)	
CAATE-accredited athletic training program (post-2003)	66 (37.9)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Highest degree attained		
Master's degree	33 (18.9)	
Clinical doctorate	17 (9.8)	
Academic doctorate	119 (68.4)	
Did not answer		
No. of part-time or per diem positions held		
None	109 (62.6)	
1	39 (22.4)	
2	15 (8.6)	
3	2 (1.1)	
More than 4	4 (2.3)	
Did not answer	5 (2.9)	
Salary range		
Less than $30 000	3 (1.8)	
$30 000–$40 000	2 (1.1)	
$40 001–$50 000	9 (5.2)	
$50 001–$60 000	27 (15.5)	
$60 001–$70 000	36 (20.7)	

Table 1. Continued

Variable	No. (%)	Mean ± SD
$70 001–$80 000	35 (20.1)	
$80 001–$90 000	19 (10.9)	
$90 001–$100 000	11 (6.3)	
$100 001–$110 000	11 (6.3)	
$120 001–$130 000	5 (2.9)	
More than $130 001	6 (3.4)	
Did not answer	6 (3.4)	

for not negotiating terms of employment by demographic variable is presented in Table 3.

Chi-Square Analyses

Previous Full-Time Employment. A significant interaction was present [$\chi^2(4) = 12.88$, $P = .012$] for the number of previous full-time positions; those who had 1 previous full-time job were less likely to negotiate salary than those who have had 2, 3, 4, 5, or more full-time positions. There was no significant difference ($P = .517$) in the number of full-time positions previously held and the likelihood of attempting to negotiate terms of employment. Categorical response distributions for previous full-time employment were too small to analyze regarding success with salary negotiation, reasons for not negotiating salary, which terms of employment were negotiated, or success with negotiating terms of employment.

Gender. For gender analyses, those who answered *prefer not to respond* were removed from the comparison, leaving only binary man or woman categories. There was no difference between genders for those who attempted to negotiate salary ($P = .875$); however, there was a relationship between gender and success in negotiating salary [$\chi^2(2) = 7.26$, $P = .026$], with men being more apt to indicate that their employer countered their negotiation and that they met in the middle. Women were more likely to indicate that their employer did not raise their salary from the original offer despite their attempts to negotiate.

There were no significant differences between genders in the decision to negotiate any terms of employment ($P = .442$) or for those who were unsuccessful in negotiating any terms of employment ($P = .901$). For terms of employment that were negotiated, there was a significant relationship between gender and negotiating continuing education funding [$\chi^2(1) = 4.24$, $P = .039$], with men being more likely to attempt to negotiate and successfully negotiate continuing education funding [$\chi^2(1) = 4.06$, $P = .044$]. Men were also more likely to attempt to negotiate NATA membership dues [$\chi^2(1) = 4.72$, $P = .030$] but were not significantly more successful in this negotiation than women ($P = .137$).

There were no differences in attempts to negotiate professional development funding ($P = .123$), employment start date ($P = .854$), job title ($P = .098$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .552$), moving expenses ($P = .752$), academic course assignments ($P = .090$), tenure status ($P = .128$), faculty rank ($P = .619$), or time counted toward tenure ($P = .159$). There were also no significant differences in success in negotiating professional development funding ($P = .449$), employment start date ($P = .487$), job title ($P = .231$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .711$), moving expenses ($P = .340$), academic course assignments ($P = .439$), tenure status ($P = .859$), faculty rank ($P = .162$), or time counted toward tenure ($P = .631$).

Categorical response distributions for gender were too small to analyze regarding reasons for not negotiating salary, reasons for not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating contract length, employer retirement contributions, medical insurance coverage/cost, dental/vision insurance coverage/cost, vacation or personal leave allowance, tuition assistance, expectations of weekly/monthly hours, start-up costs for clinical equipment, flexibility in bringing children to work, or an employer-provided cell phone.

Race. There was a significant interaction for race [$\chi^2(1) = 6.89$, $P = .009$], with Caucasian respondents attempting to negotiate salary more often than those who preferred not to respond about race identification. Categorical response distributions for race were too small to analyze regarding reasons for not negotiating salary, success in negotiating salary, reasons for not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating terms of employment.

Relationship Status. For relationship status analyses, those who answered *prefer not to respond* were removed from the comparison, leaving only binary married or single categories. There were no significant differences in attempts to negotiate salary ($P = .573$), the success of salary negotiations ($P = .384$), or attempts to negotiate any term of employment ($P = .984$) by relationship status.

There was a significant difference in attempts to negotiate tenure status relative to relationship status [$\chi^2(1) = 4.75$, $P = .029$]; married participants were more apt to negotiate this term of employment than single participants. However, the relative success of those negotiations was not significantly different ($P = .075$). There were no significant differences in relationship status relative to attempts to negotiate continuing education funding ($P = .329$), professional development funding ($P = .877$), NATA membership dues ($P = .758$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .737$), moving expenses ($P = .125$), faculty rank ($P = .523$), and time counted toward tenure ($P = .987$). There were also no significant differences in the success that participants had in negotiating continuing education funding ($P = .183$), professional development funding ($P = .665$), NATA membership dues ($P = .638$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .771$), moving

Table 2. Salary Negotiation and Success by Participant Demographic

Variable	No. (% of Participants) Who Attempted to Negotiate Salary	No. (% of Total in the Group That Attempted to Negotiate)		
		Attempt Was Successful	Employer and Participant Met in the Middle	Attempt Was Unsuccessful
Age, years				
21–30	7 (4.1)	3 (42.9)	2 (28.6)	2 (28.6)
31–40	43 (25.4)	12 (27.9)	19 (44.2)	12 (27.9)
41 or older	62 (36.7)	22 (35.5)	22 (35.5)	18 (29.0)
Gender				
Woman	59 (34.9)	19 (32.2)	17 (28.8)	23 (39.0)
Man	52 (30.8)	18 (34.6)	25 (48.1)	9 (17.3)
Prefer not to respond	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Ethnicity				
Hispanic/Latino	4 (2.4)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)
Not Hispanic/Latino	105 (62.1)	36 (34.3)	41 (39.0)	28 (26.7)
Prefer not to respond	3 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)
Race				
White or Caucasian	107 (63.3)	35 (32.7)	42 (39.3)	30 (28.0)
Prefer not to respond	5 (3.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (20.0)	2 (40.0)
Years of experience				
0–9	9 (5.3)	3 (33.3)	4 (44.4)	2 (22.2)
10–19	46 (27.2)	13 (28.3)	19 (41.3)	14 (30.4)
20–29	36 (21.3)	13 (36.1)	12 (33.3)	11 (30.6)
30–39	20 (11.8)	8 (40.0)	7 (35.0)	5 (25.0)
40 or more	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Relationship status				
Single	26 (15.4)	6 (23.1)	10 (38.5)	10 (38.5)
Married	77 (45.6)	27 (35.1)	30 (39.0)	20 (26.0)
Prefer not to respond	9 (5.3)	4 (44.4)	3 (33.3)	2 (22.2)
No. of dependents				
None	53 (31.3)	17 (32.1)	21 (39.6)	15 (28.3)
1	14 (8.3)	3 (21.4)	6 (42.9)	5 (35.7)
2	30 (17.8)	14 (46.7)	12 (40.0)	4 (13.3)
3	12 (7.1)	3 (25.)	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)
4	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
5	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)
Route to credentialing				
Internship (before 2003)	32 (18.9)	10 (31.3)	12 (37.5)	10 (31.3)
NATA-approved curriculum (before 2003)	37 (21.9)	19 (51.4)	10 (27.0)	8 (21.6)
CAATE-accredited athletic training program (post-2003)	43 (25.4)	8 (18.6)	21 (48.8)	14 (32.6)
Highest degree attained				
Master's degree	16 (9.5)	6 (37.5)	7(43.8)	3 (18.8)
Clinical doctorate	12 (7.1)	4 (33.3)	4 (33.3)	4 (33.3)
Academic doctorate	84 (49.7)	27 (32.1)	32 (38.1)	25 (29.8)
No. of part-time or per diem positions held				
None	72 (42.6)	26 (36.1)	28 (38.9)	18 (25.0)
1	26 (15.4)	9 (34.6)	9 (34.6)	8 (30.8)
2	11 (6.5)	1 (9.1)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)
3	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)
4 or more	2 (1.2)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
Salary range				
$30 000–$40 000	2 (1.2)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
$40 001–$50 000	6 (3.6)	1 (16.7)	2 (33.3)	3 (50.0)
$50 001–$60 000	10 (5.9)	1 (10.0)	2 (20.0)	7 (70.0)
$60 001–$70 000	27 (16.0)	10 (37.0)	11 (40.7)	6 (22.2)
$70 001–$80 000	24 (14.2)	7 (29.2)	10 (41.7)	7 (29.2)
$80 001–$90 000	13 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	4 (30.8)	6 (46.2)
$90 001–$100 000	9 (5.3)	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	0 (0.0)

Table 2. Continued

Variable	No. (% of Participants) Who Attempted to Negotiate Salary	No. (% of Total in the Group That Attempted to Negotiate)		
		Attempt Was Successful	Employer and Participant Met in the Middle	Attempt Was Unsuccessful
$100 001–$110 000	8 (4.7)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	0 (0.0)
$110 001–$120 000	4 (2.4)	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)	1 (25.0)
$120 001–$130 000	4 (2.4)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
$130 001–$140 000	2 (1.2)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$140 001–$150 000	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
More than $150 000	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)

expenses ($P = .207$), faculty rank ($P = .767$), and time counted toward tenure ($P = .446$).

Categorical response distributions for relationship status were too small to analyze the reasons for not negotiating salary or terms of employment and for attempts and successes in negotiating contract length, employer retirement contributions, medical insurance coverage/cost, dental/vision insurance coverage/cost, vacation or personal leave allowance, tuition assistance, expectations of weekly/monthly hours, start-up costs for clinical equipment, academic course assignments, flexibility to bring children to work, an employer-provided cell phone, or other terms of employment.

Number of Dependents. For analyses of the number of dependents, the categories were reduced to the binary options of having dependents or having no dependents. There were no significant differences between those who had dependents and those who did not relative to the decision to negotiate salary ($P = .514$) or the level of success achieved for those who did negotiate their salary ($P = .965$).

There was a significant relationship between the number of dependents and attempts to negotiate continuing education funding [$\chi^2(1) = 3.87$, $P = .049$]; those with no dependents were more apt to try to negotiate this term than those with dependents. This same relationship also persisted in the success of negotiating continuing education funding [$\chi^2(1) = 4.98$, $P = .026$]. There was a significant relationship between dependent status and success in negotiating tenure status; those without dependents had more success in negotiating this term than those with dependents [$\chi^2(1) = 4.06$, $P = .044$]. There were no significant differences in negotiating professional development funding ($P = .058$), NATA membership dues ($P = .575$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .170$), moving expenses ($P = .746$), academic course assignments ($P = .575$), tenure status ($P = .062$), faculty rank ($P = .933$), and time counted toward tenure ($P = .341$), nor were there significant differences in success in negotiating professional development funding ($P = .260$), NATA membership dues ($P = .478$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .212$), moving expenses ($P = .888$), academic course assignments ($P = .945$), faculty rank ($P = .207$), or time counted toward tenure ($P = .416$).

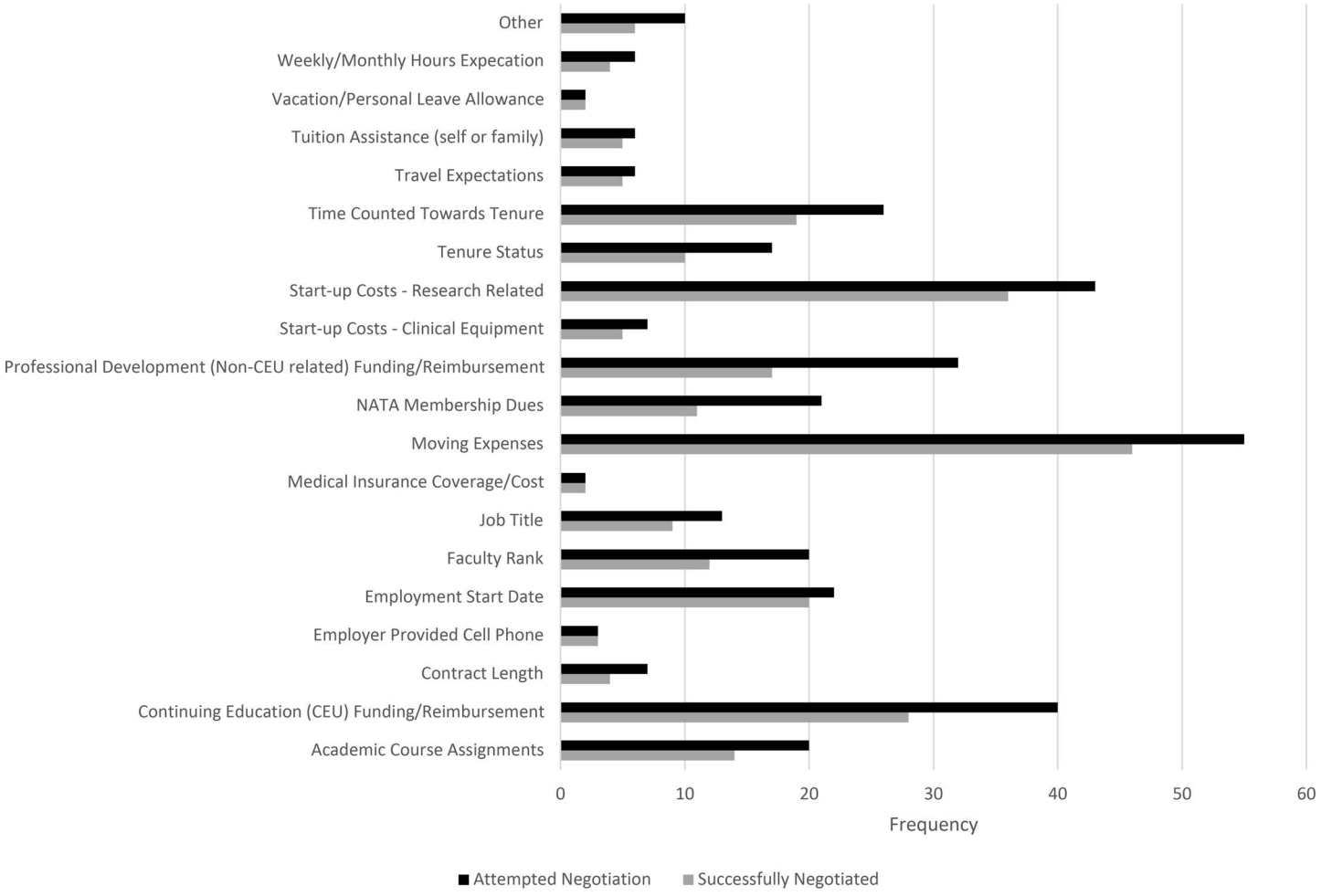
Categorical response distributions for dependents were too small to analyze the reasons for not negotiating salary, the reasons for not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating contract length, employer retirement contributions, medical insurance coverage/cost, dental/vision insurance coverage/cost, vacation or personal leave allowance, tuition assistance, expectations of weekly/monthly hours, start-up costs for clinical equipment, flexibility in bringing children to work, an employer-provided cell phone, or other terms of employment.

Current Salary Range. For chi-square analyses, we collapsed salary ranges to less than $50 000, $50 001 to $80 000, $80 001 to $110 000, and $110 001 or higher. There was no significant difference between salary ranges for the decision to negotiate salary ($P = .178$). However, there was a significant difference in salary ranges related to the decision to negotiate terms of employment [$\chi^2(3) = 19.86$, $P < .001$]; those making $110 001 or higher were less likely than those in any other salary range to attempt to negotiate any terms of employment. Categorical response distributions for the current salary range were too small to analyze the reasons for not negotiating salary, not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating terms of employment.

Highest Degree Earned. For chi-square analyses, the highest-degree-earned categories were collapsed into master's and doctoral degree earners (including DAT, PhD, or EdD). There were no significant differences in attempts to negotiate continuing education funding ($P = .112$) or in success in negotiating continuing education funding ($P = .098$). However, there were differences in negotiating professional development funding [$\chi^2(1) = 4.13$, $P = .042$]; doctoral degree earners were more likely to have negotiated this term of employment than their master's degree counterparts. Doctoral degree earners were also significantly more likely to negotiate start-up funds for research-related expenses [$\chi^2(1) = 10.86$, $P < .001$], moving expenses [$\chi^2(1) = 7.79$, $P = .005$], academic course assignments [$\chi^2(1) = 5.51$, $P = .019$], and time counted toward tenure [$\chi^2(1) = 4.81$, $P = .028$]. Doctoral degree earners were also more likely to have success in negotiating start-up funds for research expenses [$\chi^2(1) = 8.16$, $P = .004$] and moving expenses [$\chi^2(1) = 4.72$, $P = .030$].

Categorical response distributions for the highest degree earned were too small to analyze regarding reasons for not negotiating salary, reasons not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating contract length, employer retirement contributions, medical insurance coverage/cost, dental/vision insurance coverage/cost, vacation

Figure 2. Terms of employment negotiated and relative success in negotiation.



or personal leave allowance, tuition assistance, expectations of weekly/monthly hours, NATA membership dues, start-up costs for clinical equipment, flexibility in bringing children to work, tenure status, faculty rank, employer-provided cell phone, or other terms of employment.

Age. To create equal categorical groupings for chi-square analyses, we collapsed age into 4 categories based on quartile distributions of percentages of respondents: aged 35 years and under (24.3% of respondents), aged 36 to 41 (26% of respondents), aged 42 to 50 (25.4% of respondents), and aged 51 and over (24.3% of respondents).

Those in the aged 51 and over group were more apt to have negotiated both tenure status [$\chi^2(3) = 17.31$, $P < .001$] and faculty rank [$\chi^2(3) = 17.65$, $P < .001$] than any of the other age groups. Participants in the 51 and over age group were also more likely to have success in negotiating both tenure status [$\chi^2(3) = 9.34$, $P = .025$] and faculty rank [$\chi^2(3) = 14.26$, $P = .003$] than the 35 and under age group and the 36 to 41 age group.

There were no significant differences among age categories regarding negotiating continuing education funding ($P = .856$), professional development funding ($P = .686$), research-related start-up costs ($P = .603$), moving expenses ($P = .778$), or time counted toward tenure ($P = .378$), nor were there differences in success in negotiating continuing education funding ($P = .456$) or professional development funding ($P = .868$), start-up funds for research expenses ($P = .147$), moving expenses ($P = .885$), or time counted toward tenure ($P = .200$).

Categorical response distributions for age were too small to analyze regarding reasons for not negotiating salary, reasons not negotiating terms of employment, or attempts and successes in negotiating contract length, employer retirement contributions, medical insurance coverage/cost, dental/vision insurance coverage/cost, vacation or personal leave allowance, tuition assistance, expectations of weekly/monthly hours, NATA membership dues, start-up costs for clinical equipment, academic course assignments, flexibility in bringing children to work, or an employer-provided cell phone.

DISCUSSION

Our results show the current negotiation practices of athletic training educators during the hiring process. Unlike previous findings regarding clinically practicing ATs, most athletic training educators attempted to negotiate salary and terms of employment.[10] This contrast is particularly poignant given that the salaries of ATs in higher education are among the higher end of salaries within the profession.[1]

Table 3. Reasons for Not Negotiating Salary by Demographic Variable

Variable	No. (% of Total No. of Participants) Who Did Not Attempt to Negotiate Salary	No. (% of Total in the Group That Attempted to Negotiate)					
		Uncomfortable With the Negotiation Process	Did Not Know How to Negotiate	Felt That the Offer Was Fair	Not Sure if the Offer Was Negotiable	Employer Made It Clear That the Offer Was Not Negotiable	Other
Age, years							
21–30	8 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	5 (62.5)	1 (12.5)	1 (12.5)	0 (0.0)
31–40	19 (11.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (42.1)	1 (5.3)	9 (47.5)	1 (5.3)
41 or older	30 (17.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	15 (50.0)	3 (10.0)	6 (20.0)	4 (13.3)
Gender							
Woman	28 (16.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.1)	12 (42.9)	4 (14.3)	9 (10.3)	1 (3.6)
Man	26 (15.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (57.7)	1 (3.8)	6 (23.1)	4 (15.4)
Did not answer	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Prefer not to respond	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
Ethnicity							
Hispanic/Latino	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Not Hispanic/Latino	51 (30.2)	0 (0.0)	3 (5.9)	27 (52.9)	3 (5.9)	13 (25.5)	5 (9.8)
Prefer not to respond	5 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	0 (0.0)
Race							
White or Caucasian	50 (29.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	25 (50.0)	5 (10.0)	14 (28.0)	4 (8.0)
Prefer not to respond	7 (4.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (14.3)	3 (42.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)
Years of experience							
0–9	10 (5.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	6 (60.0)	1 (10.0)	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)
10–19	21 (12.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)	9 (42.9)	2 (9.5)	9 (42.9)	0 (0.0)
20–29	14 (8.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (28.6)	3 (21.4)
30–39	8 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	4 (50.0)	1 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (25.0)
40 or more	4 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (50.0)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)	0 (0.0)
Relationship status							
Single	11 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	3 (27.3)	5 (45.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
Married	41 (24.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (51.2)	5 (12.2)	13 (31.7)	2 (4.9)
Prefer not to respond	5 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (20.0)
No. of dependents							
None	30 (17.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	13 (43.3)	3 (10.0)	7 (23.3)	5 (16.7)
1	9 (5.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (11.1)	4 (44.4)	1 (11.1)	3 (33.3)	0 (0.0)
2	12 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (66.6)	1 (8.3)	3 (25.0)	0 (0.0)
3	5 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (60.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	0 (0.0)
4	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Route to credentialing							
Internship (before 2003)	21 (12.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)	13 (61.9)	1 (4.8)	3 (14.3)	3 (14.3)
NATA-approved curriculum (before 2003)	13 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)
CAATE-accredited athletic training program (post-2003)	23 (13.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.3)	11 (47.8)	2 (8.7)	9 (39.1)	0 (0.0)
Highest degree attained							
Master's degree	17 (10.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (11.8)	9 (52.9)	1 (5.9)	4 (23.5)	1 (5.9)

Table 3. Continued

Variable	No. (% of Total No. of Participants) Who Did Not Attempt to Negotiate Salary	No. (% of Total in the Group That Attempted to Negotiate)					
		Uncomfortable With the Negotiation Process	Did Not Know How to Negotiate	Felt That the Offer Was Fair	Not Sure if the Offer Was Negotiable	Employer Made It Clear That the Offer Was Not Negotiable	Other
Clinical doctorate	5 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	0 (0.0)
Academic doctorate	35 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	17 (48.6)	4 (11.4)	10 (28.6)	3 (8.6)
No. of part-time or per diem positions held							
None	37 (21.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.4)	17 (45.9)	3 (8.1)	10 (27.0)	5 (13.5)
1	13 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.7)	7 (53.8)	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	0 (0.0)
2	4 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
3	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
4 or more	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Salary range							
Did not answer	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)
Less than $30 000	3 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)
$40 001–$50 000	3 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)
$50 001–$60 000	17 (10.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.9)	9 (52.9)	0 (0.0)	6 (35.3)	1 (5.9)
$60 001–$70 000	9 (5.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (22.2)	1 (11.1)	5 (55.6)	1 (11.1)
$70 001–$80 000	11 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (63.6)	1 (9.1)	3 (27.3)	0 (0.0)
$80 001–$90 000	6 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)	4 (66.7)	1 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$90 001–$100 000	2 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$100 001–$110 000	3 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)
$120 001–$130 000	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$130 001–$140 000	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Highest Degree Attained, Age, and Previous Employment

Findings associated with increased hiring process experience (number of previous positions held), degree earned, and age similarly influenced negotiation behaviors. We attribute this to the fact that, in most circumstances, slightly older participants have gone on to other degree programs, have had more previous positions, and/or are likely later in their career and therefore have had more opportunities to negotiate or have a better understanding of their value. In particular, age had the most significant interactions with tenure- and rank-related terms of employment negotiation. Promotion and tenure typically are embarked upon after several years in higher education, so this finding is not surprising as age is a measure of the time that it takes to be eligible to pursue promotion and tenure, and likely, those who are interviewing for a given position who have earned tenure or a higher faculty rank previously would attempt to negotiate it during the hiring process to avoid having to try to achieve it, or demonstrate their worthiness of it, a second time. This finding was in contrast to previous work on clinicians, which found that the only age-influenced negotiation was continuing education funding.[10] However, it was unlikely that many clinicians were in roles that allowed for tenure or promotion through the same process as that for athletic training educators.

Doctoral degree earners tended to negotiate professional development, start-up funding, moving expenses, academic course assignments, and time toward tenure more frequently. However, those participants were more successful at negotiating only start-up costs and moving expenses. This finding likely can be attributed to the increased presence of formal mentorship relationships typically in place for students within doctoral education programs.[13] Of note, doctoral mentors within athletic training assist with socialization to institutional culture and guide postgraduate students and newly transitioned athletic training educators through the promotion-and-tenure process.[13] This structured mentorship relationship is the likely explanation behind the increased likelihood and success of doctorally trained athletic training educators in negotiating terms of employment.

Previous full-time employment was a striking factor contributing to our participants' willingness to negotiate salary, with the least experienced participants being the least likely to negotiate. This was consistent with findings in the clinician population of athletic training, where those with only one previous position were also the least likely to attempt to negotiate their salary.[10] These outcomes from both populations highlight the imperative need for negotiation strategies and techniques to be included in the professional preparation of all ATs to ensure that those just transitioning to the profession can secure a livable wage and perhaps improve their long-term retention. Unlike clinicians, age had a limited influence on the negotiation of terms of employment for athletic training educators.[10]

Gender, Relationship Status, and Number of Dependents

Despite efforts to find research concerning marital status and dependents, we have determined that evidence is absent regarding negotiation and these 2 variables. Recent findings regarding athletic training clinicians found that athletic trainers without dependents were more apt to attempt negotiation and succeed in that negotiation.[10] Our results for the population of athletic training educators align with this notion in that the participants in our study were more likely to negotiate continuing education funding and to have success in negotiating continuing education funding and tenure status. The findings among athletic training educators specific to marital status also mirrored some of the conclusions for clinicians in that married participants were more likely to attempt to negotiate terms of employment, which is most likely attributed to the presence of an individual with whom financial decisions are shared.[10]

Because the gender pay gap persists across nearly all career fields, including athletic training,[1] it would not have been surprising to find that gender had influenced salary negotiation attempts; however, we did not see such differences. Instead, the gender-influenced findings from our study indicated that men and women were equally likely to attempt to negotiate salary but that women were less successful in that negotiation. Women were more likely to report no change in the salary offered despite attempting to negotiate it, while men were more likely to have some level of success in pursuing a higher salary. Extensive previous research has been done across a variety of career fields with mixed findings for the influence of gender on negotiation behaviors,[10,14–18] with some studies finding that women are less apt to negotiate and others finding no differences when comparing men and women in their decisions to negotiate. One recent gamified, multistage design experiment found that differences in negotiation success can be influenced by the gender dyad of the employer and employee who are engaging in the negotiation.[19] In this study, male employees could negotiate higher wages than their female counterparts regardless of the gender of the employer.[19] In cross-gender dyad comparisons, male employee negotiations with female employers resulted in the male employees securing higher wages than the female employees were able to negotiate with male employers. Female employer negotiations with female employees resulted in the most significant wage suppression.[19] While we did not collect data on the genders of the employers with whom our participants negotiated, the women in our study did meet with less success in negotiations. Our findings, combined with those from other studies, emphasize that while all genders are likely to benefit from negotiating training and education, women would likely benefit the most from such an opportunity. Once employed, however, there are steps that administrators in academia can take to reduce gender wage gaps across employees. Researchers suggest a combination of factors to reduce gender wage gaps in academic medicine, including, first and foremost, acknowledging the existence of the gender pay gap as well as providing funding mechanisms specific to women researchers and facilitating women faculty's access to professional networks.[20] Administrators overseeing athletic training education programs could implement similar approaches to decrease the wage gap that appears to be exacerbated by employers' unwillingness to negotiate with women during the hiring process.

Educators Compared With Clinicians

We have provided comparisons among athletic training educators and athletic training clinicians relative to negotiation,

but one glaring difference between the 2 groups warrants further discussion. The findings specific to athletic training clinicians indicated that most clinicians did not negotiate salary or terms of employment, whereas the opposite was true for athletic training educators.[10] This work-setting difference is most likely attributed to the salary and benefits negotiation expectations in higher education.[8,21,22] Another vital difference to note is that within higher education, faculty members typically negotiate with another member of academia who, at one point, has also been a faculty member; therefore, both parties clearly understand the workload and market value.[21,22] Alternatively, in traditional clinical practice settings of college athletics, secondary school athletics, and professional or amateur sports, in which approximately 45% of ATs practice,[23] prospective employees may find themselves negotiating with coaches or managers, athletic directors, principals, superintendents, or owners who are not health care providers and therefore do not have a global understanding of the associated job duties or market value.[24] This may make negotiations more difficult in such settings and thus might contribute to stagnant wages and working conditions.

Limitations and Future Research

Our study design relied on self-reported responses from our participants, which assumes that participants answered all questions honestly. Also, because we asked about primary work settings and then chose to examine all athletic training educators collectively, there were no additional options to compare across the institution type, academic rank, or type of faculty line, which could provide additional information if examined in the future. Finally, due to the number of athletic training educators who responded to requests to participate and the number of categorical response options, we could not statistically compare rationales for negotiating or not negotiating salary and terms of employment outside descriptive explanations. Future research should examine if, and to what extent, professional athletic training programs are preparing ATs newly transitioning to the profession for the hiring and negotiation processes since it is evident that those who are earlier in their careers are less likely to negotiate. Additional research is also needed to understand the employers' role in determining and negotiating salaries with ATs in all work settings. Finally, the bodies that represent athletic training and athletic training education, the NATA and the CAATE, should make efforts to increase the specificity of the data that they collect relative to contract length, faculty line type, faculty rank, and other variable factors of employment that would allow their respective stakeholders to better use the provided data for comparison and negotiation purposes.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of athletic training educators do attempt to negotiate salary or terms of employment during the hiring process. Specific to salary, limited demographic variables contributed to the variance in the decision to negotiate. Still, those with less previous full-time experience were less likely to negotiate, and Caucasian athletic training educators were more likely to attempt negotiation. Also specific to salary, women were less successful at negotiating. For terms of employment, respondents who were men, were married, had no dependents, and were doctorally trained and those in higher salary ranges all reported increased likelihoods of negotiating terms of employment or success in those negotiations. While all athletic training educators would likely benefit from development workshops to promote negotiation strategies, early-career and women athletic training educators would likely benefit the most.

Additionally, all athletic training educators should reflect on their relative circumstances to determine if outside guidance would benefit their financial status and decisions. For example, since married athletic training educators were more likely to negotiate, we would encourage nonmarried ATs to seek out a trusted financial advisor, personal or professional, to discuss financial decisions and projections before embarking on negotiations. This advice would apply to all athletic training educators but may benefit those with certain nonmodifiable demographic factors more than others. Regardless of the demographic profile, athletic training educators, like athletic training clinicians, must embrace negotiation as an inevitable phase of the hiring process or settle for positions that pay less or offer fewer benefits than desired.

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