

VIEWPOINT

During the past few years, people in education have fallen shockingly below the rest of the population in trying to keep up with the cost of living. During the past six years, from January 1977 through December 1982, the Consumer Price Index rose 59%. During that time, for instance, the salaries of faculty members in universities under the Tennessee State Board of Regents rose only 35%--a loss of 24% buying power over 6 years--a yearly average of 4%. Salaries in our community colleges rose 43%--a loss of 16%. Too many times we have been fed cliches such as "Be glad you have a job!" "Be more dedicated!" "The rest of the economy is just as bad off." People, these are facts. During that same six year period, salaries in wholesale and retail trade went up 48.3%--a loss of 10.7%. Salaries in construction were up 50%--a loss of 9%, or only 1.5% per year. Transportation and public utilities salaries went up 56.6%; salaries in finance, insurance, and real estate were at 57.9%; and salaries in manufacturing were up 58%. These areas virtually held their own with the Consumer Price Index. Salaries in mining, by the way, were up 68.3%--a gain of almost 10%.

We must desert our ivory towers and get our hands dirty through hard work to bring about reform. We must stop using our own cliches--such as "I don't want to do this," "I don't

think a teacher should have to do this." The truth is that we must do this, or be content forever to accept the crumbs that fall from the master's tables.

Active, concerned faculty members across the state are getting involved this fall to present our case more strongly to the public and to the legislature. Your faculty senate is probably spearheading the drive at your school. Get involved! Let's make our case known and emphatically so!