

THE RIGHT FLIER

Welcome to our newsletter! It is our goal that our membership finds this newsletter format informative and that it is a good resource for the most current events with respect to our contract negotiations and other pertinent issues.

In this issue, we share information on why our union matters; discuss our strike platform; and, share our calendar of events. We are in crunch time now with several events about to happen in rapid succession:

- 1) start of our academic year
- 2) the factfinder's report,
- 3) our short window to vote on the factfinder's report,
- 4) preparing to strike around October 1, if necessary.

Knowledge is power. If you have been waiting for everything to magically work out, it is time for you to use your voice! Attending the events under "Key Dates" is a fun way to meet your colleagues from other departments, feel what solidarity can do for our faculty, and make your presence known on campus. **Our challenge to YOU – bring two faculty members to these events!** WE are the union. When WE use OUR voice, WE win and OUR STUDENTS WIN.

#faculty4students

KEY DATES

- Aug 27 – first day of classes
- Aug 29 – PAC Fundraiser, Wandering Griffin @ 5pm
- Aug 31 – Fall Festival – AAUP-WSU Table
- Sept 10 – Faculty Senate @ 2:30pm: Show of Strength
- Sept 11 – Fact Finder's Report
- Sept 12 – Executive Committee Response to FF Report
- Sept 12/13 – Chapter Meetings
- Sept 12-18 – Vote to accept or reject report
- Oct 1 – Most likely strike date



#UnionStrong!

Number of Bargaining Unit Faculty Members as of August 2018: 563 (86% of whom are RCMs)

Some Benefits of Union Strength:

- * COLLECTIVE bargaining for us rather than unilateral policy implementation by central administration/board
- * We Stick Together, We Succeed, Students Succeed – a university cannot succeed without a strong faculty

This newsletter was paid for with your dues.

August 24, 2018

Why Our Union Matters

Our AAUP-WSU chapter was authorized as our exclusive bargaining agent in 1998. In the 20 years since AAUP-WSU has represented us, it might be easy to forget why union representation matters. Thus, we share some key reasons below:

- 1) AAUP-WSU is our exclusive bargaining agent for wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. This is an extremely efficient and effective model. Rather than you having to negotiate individually with your chair, with your dean, and in turn, with someone in central administration, AAUP-WSU is your voice of reason – AAUP-WSU bargains for all of us.
- 2) Fairness – our contract has established procedures for a variety of issues, which were negotiated with the administration over the past 20 years. These include, but are certainly not limited to: clear criteria for our promotion and tenure; a formalized grievance process; compensation and the timing of raises; health insurance plans and premiums; summer teaching assignments; and, a host of other issues that are covered, **IN WRITING.**
- 3) At WSU, our contract remained in force after expiration due to our union negotiating for an automatic extension. This has protected everything we have fought for while we go through the fact-finding process. While the administration has unilaterally imposed increased health care costs on non-union staff, we were protected. Staff members lost the PPO 90/10 plan option, had their deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums increased on the PPO 80/20 plan, older adult child coverage was eliminated, and the administration reduced their contribution toward the health savings account.
- 4) We already know how the central administration treats our non-union colleagues who have no collective voice. The administration has fired over 70 employees as a result of its self-made budget crisis. Their bumping rights were eliminated and severance pay was cut in half. Finally, the central administration unilaterally imposed a horrific health plan on the non-unionized staff.

What Our Union Has Meant to Us

Recently, we have heard stories of what AAUP-WSU has meant to many of our members.

Before the union, there was a time when no woman attained the rank of full professor in the College of Business. After AAUP-WSU was certified as our bargaining agent, P&T criteria were codified and women started making full professor.

Before the union, merit raises were at the discretion of deans and chairs, and not linked to specific performance measurements. Once AAUP-WSU was certified as our bargaining agent, criteria for annual evaluations were created, annual evaluations were made grievable, and merit raises were concretely tied to annual evaluations.

Before the union, faculty members routinely encountered arbitrary outcomes with no explanation as they pursued promotion and tenure. Once AAUP-WSU was certified as our bargaining agent, P&T criteria that must be applied to every candidate were put in writing, an appeals process was added to the P&T process, and P&T outcomes were made grievable.

What has your AAUP-WSU chapter meant to you? Share your stories and we will print them in a future issue!

Share your story by e-mailing: aaupwsu@gmail.com

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AAUP-WSU Strike Platform

August, 2018

AAUP-WSU, which represents all full-time teaching faculty in the university's seven undergraduate colleges, has been attempting to negotiate a fair contract since January 2017. Indeed, on a timetable agreed to by both sides, we had exchanged all non-economic articles (the bulk of the contract) by late March 2017. But when Dr. McCray was appointed Interim President, the administration postponed negotiations until President Schrader took office in July and then delayed them indefinitely until the administration/Board could address its largely self-created financial crisis. For the first time ever, the administration hired an outside labor attorney to conduct the negotiations, and two things quickly became clear: the administration wanted us to allow regressive bargaining, or to restart the negotiations from scratch, and their idea of compromise was that they might not get absolutely everything that they wanted. AAUP-WSU finally forced the administration back to the table by filing for fact-finding. With fact-finding looming, tentative agreement was reached on about two-thirds of the contract articles in a series of marathon negotiating sessions in December 2017 and January 2018. What is important to note is that every change in those articles represents a concession made by AAUP-WSU.

Our position all along has been that since the base salaries and benefits of the faculty whom we represent account for just 17% of the university budget—or 17 cents of every dollar of tuition and state subsidy—overspending on the faculty who generate almost all of the university's revenue very clearly did not cause the financial crisis, and cutting that part of the budget will not address the crisis in any meaningful way. Therefore, the extreme proposals of the administration on the dozen or so unresolved elements of the contract seem simply to use a largely self-created financial crisis as an opportunity to gut key provisions in our contract. Although the university's financial issues can be addressed in the near term, the administration's proposals will adversely affect the long-term earnings of our members and further erode their working conditions and employment security. Just to be clear, in several instances, the administration is asking for rollbacks of contract provisions that now provide protections which are routine for university faculty throughout Ohio, indeed nationwide, even where faculty are not unionized.

Most Wright State faculty spend their whole careers at this university. They have a vested interest in advancing not only their own careers but in sustaining and boosting the reputation of the university. Likewise, although administrations and Boards of Trustees come and go, students who receive their degrees at Wright State will be alumni/ae for the rest of their lives. Given our students' investment in those degrees, we need to protect and, where possible, to enhance the university's academic programs and reputation in order to safeguard the value of the degrees that they have earned—and that many of them will be paying for well into their working lives. But, since early in 2016, we have had a net loss of 92 full-time teaching positions. As a result, students are facing both restrictions on course offerings in their majors and fewer sections of high-demand core courses. Such changes impair student recruitment, retention, and degree completion, and they diminish the value of the degrees earned.

The administration's draconian proposals on salary and benefits will make it harder to attract faculty. The changes in health coverage imposed on other university employees have made those benefits the most costly at any public university in Ohio. The lack of any wage increases for the foreseeable future will place Wright State faculty at every rank at or near the bottom among Ohio's public universities within the next two years. These financial considerations, in combination with proposals to undermine radically job security of even tenured faculty, will make it much harder for the university to attract talented faculty and to maintain the morale and the commitment of current faculty.

August 24, 2018

The faculty represented by AAUP-WSU have been making compromises to avoid a strike, but the administration's refusal to compromise on a fairly large number of extreme proposals may give us no alternative but to strike. Given the degraded conditions under which we have been working for several years, we have earned and demand—

That the Schrader administration and the Board acknowledge our legal right to bargain over healthcare benefits and provide insurance that does not burden the sick and the lowest paid employees, largely to make up for revenue losses elsewhere;

That the Schrader administration and the Board accept the current retrenchment language, which is standard at unionized and non-unionized universities nationwide, and not reduce tenure to an empty promise;

That the Schrader administration and the Board maintain our workload agreement, which has not only been fair but has also led to a marked increase in research and scholarship, enhancing the university's reputation;

That the Schrader administration and the Board maintain the educational quality of courses offered in the summer and not attempt to turn the summer into even more of a revenue generator than it already is—or would be if it were not mismanaged;

That the Schrader administration and the Board maintain a merit pay formula, which insures that faculty productivity is measured and rewarded by some objective measures rather than by administrative whim;

That the Schrader administration and the Board recognize that continuing contracts for NTE faculty have a very positive impact on the education provided by the university and that entrenching the contingency of faculty has exactly the opposite effect;

Finally, that the Schrader administration and the Board recognize that it cannot continue to spend millions on initiatives that have uniformly failed to generate the promised additional revenue streams, that it cannot continue cutting the budgets of the colleges without eroding the quality of education being provided to our students, and it cannot compound these skewed priorities by proposing furloughs, which are simply pay cuts for faculty, on top of its proposals for stagnant salaries and massive increases in benefit costs.

August 24, 2018

CBA Update

As of this writing, the Board of Trustees and senior administrators have not made any meaningful movement toward resolving our contractual issues. Currently, the administration's proposal would:

- freeze our wages for at least 3 years
- change the retrenchment language to allow central administration to immediately start the retrenchment process and thereby initiate the dismissal of BUFMs
- change the merit pay system from one that ties merit raises to performance to one in which chairs and deans could give merit raises in an arbitrary manner
- negate our ability to negotiate for our healthcare benefits and permit the administration to make changes for the worse at any time. We have seen EXACTLY what happens to WSU's non-unionized employees, who cannot act with a single voice: they have had tremendous increases to their healthcare costs
- nullify BUFMs' right to teach in summer (ahead of non-BUFMs) and allow the admin to assign teaching to anyone, even adjuncts
- make it much harder and take much longer for NTE BUFMs to obtain continuing appointments
- allow the administration to furlough faculty if the WSU Senate Bill 6 score dips below 2.40 for two years in a row – we are there right now
- nullify our workload agreement, thus giving the administration *carte blanche* to raise teaching loads at any time

As you know, AAUP-WSU leadership has strongly opposed these proposals. Our members have likewise signaled their opposition by speaking before the Board of Trustees and showing up *en masse* at university forums, Board meetings, and the like. In this way we have made it clear that the administration's proposals are unacceptable and would damage not only our ability to recruit and retain excellent faculty, but to provide a world-class education for our students.

Currently, we are in fact-finding. The fact finder will produce a report with recommendations for the new CBA on September 11.

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If we find the report unacceptable, we can vote to reject it, and the AAUP-WSU executive committee will then vote whether or not to initiate a strike. Or, we might find the report acceptable, but the Board could vote to reject it, at which point they could implement their “best and final offer,” our contract would change to those conditions, and we could go on strike. As communicated previously, going on strike is considered a final option.

We have also offered to continue negotiations with the administration prior to the submission of the fact-finder’s report. It is our hope that the Board and senior administrators will return to the table and bargain in good faith, resulting in a fair contract.

This fight isn’t just about today – it is about the future of WSU. It is about the professional treatment of faculty. It is about using our right to strike as leverage at the negotiating table. It is about keeping strong faculty influence over decisions that impact our students, the quality of their education, and the reputation of OUR university.