

WSU Strike: Frequently Asked Questions

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Why are we considering a strike?

On October 29 2018, the Fact Finder submitted his report to AAUP-WSU and to the administration/Board of Trustees. It was rejected by the membership with a vote of 467 to 12. After the vote the Negotiating Team communicated to the administration that they were available for negotiations, but the administration chose not to bargain. Then on January 4th 2019 the administration/Board of Trustees imposed their last, best, and final offer. This imposed contract is overwhelmingly negative for the community we serve, for our students, and for Bargaining Unit Faculty. We are seeking a strike authorization from the membership to reject this imposed contract and to strike in order to defend the academic mission of the University. We are fighting for the soul of the University.

When would a strike occur?

The earliest possible strike date is January 22, 2019. However, the date will be finalized subsequent to the results of the strike authorization vote.

Who can go on strike?

Anyone who is in the bargaining unit – whether a union member or not — is authorized to go on strike. If a strike does occur, you don't have to be a member or have voted in the strike vote to participate. Striking is a right of every union-represented employee regardless of membership status.

Do I have to participate in the strike?

A strike will be most successful if everyone participates. When we decide to strike, we should be prepared to completely withdraw our labor from the University. This is the only way that we will win, which is why we need everyone working together. But, of course, any Bargaining Unit Faculty Member may cross their colleagues' picket line, if they choose.

What work should we be avoiding during a strike?

All work that you do as a bargaining-unit faculty member (BUFM): teaching, research, coaching, library service, tutoring, instrumental and voice lessons, choral directing, conducting reading clinics, advising individual students and student organizations, university service/committee work, supervision of student teaching, etc. You are withholding your labor during the strike, which means all of your WSU labor. Please note that “virtual teaching” — communicating with students online or through email, grading or sending assignments, releasing content or instructions through PILOT, etc. — also must be suspended.

Anything owned or operated by the university should not be used during a strike. Therefore, you should not enter any WSU property, call to check your phone messages, or log into systems such as Wings,

WingsExpress, wright.edu email, PILOT, the Wright State Library online catalog, etc. Any laptops, phones, software or hardware that were purchased by WSU should not be used.

What does a strike look like for faculty?

Faculty members who choose to honor the strike, should not perform any university-related labor. This includes teaching classes, holding office hours, answering student questions via email, participation in committee work, and all other work-related activities. AAUP-WSU's strike committee will release detailed information on picketing locations, as well as other information on strike logistics as the date of the strike draws near.

Picketing will be peaceful, and is a good opportunity to show our resolve to the WSU administration, as well as stand in solidarity with our students, fellow faculty members, and supporters from the university community. Strike activities include, but are not limited to:

- legal picketing,
- peacefully distributing literature to students and the public, speaking out to the public as to the purpose of the strike,
- serving on the contact team for the local, state and national media

In order for our strike to be successful, we need high participation from all bargaining unit faculty members.

Is a strike legal in higher education in Ohio?

Yes. In 1984, Chapter 4117 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) established the collective bargaining law for public employees in Ohio, including the right to strike if a Fact Finder's report is rejected. Before that time, public employees in Ohio were forbidden to go on strike. Striking is protected activity under Ohio Law. It is an unfair labor practice to discriminate or retaliate against a bargaining unit member for engaging in protected activity.

If I choose to participate in the strike, what will I be asked to do?

In addition to withholding labor, each faculty member will be asked to participate on the picket line during the strike. Since you won't be working your normal 40+ hour work week, you will be asked to dedicate nine hours each week to the picket lines. If you are unable to walk the picket line for whatever reason, there will be a multitude of other ways that you can help support the strike. Contact AAUP-WSU and we will plug you in.

How will AAUP-WSU communicate with me leading up to and during a strike?

We absolutely cannot use wright.edu email addresses during a strike. Therefore, it is imperative that we have your private non-WSU email address and non-WSU phone number on file. We will use these email addresses and phone numbers to communicate with faculty leading up to and during a strike. **Please send this information to us ASAP, if you haven't already done so.** Also, please get in the habit of checking your non-WSU email address at least twice a day for union-related messaging.

Can I just stay home from work during the strike?

There is no such thing as being partially on strike. When you are not on the picket line for your nine hours per week, you should not complete any university-related work. Support of a strike means we do not report for work or perform work duties for the duration of the strike, but it also means that we must have a visible presence on the picket lines. That is why we are asking everyone to commit to nine hours per week on the picket lines.

How can we prepare our students ahead of a strike in case one is called?

Say nothing in class until a strike date is set. Once a date is set you should notify your students that you will not be able to contact them at all during the strike. You may remind students that they have a copy of the syllabus. Do not create an alternative learning assignment. Ultimately it is the administration's responsibility to make alternate arrangements and communicate that information to the students.

Can I call in sick instead of striking?

No. Do not call in sick as an alternative to striking. You could be disciplined for doing so.

What about grants and research?

During a strike, the university is obligated to cover all grant-funded duties. If you are able to temporarily suspend activities conducted on campus without harming your research agenda, we ask you to do so. In advance of the strike, ensure that sensitive research equipment, procedures, and lab animals can be monitored by someone else. We realize that many of our faculty colleagues are engaged in government-funded research or other projects with contractual obligations that make it difficult or impossible for you to make alternate arrangements. During a strike, faculty must not engage in labor related to these research projects, even if that work occurs off campus. Conferences and work-related travel would also fall under this category. **If you are scheduled to attend a work-related conference during the strike, please contact an AAUP-WSU representative immediately.**

How do I protect online material while on strike?

Please see the document, "Protecting Your Online Materials While on Strike" available on our website. If you have any further questions, please contact AAUP-WSU (aapwsu@gmail.com)

Can the Administration lock us out of our classes/lab?

A lockout happens when an employer bans *all* the members of a bargaining unit from the workplace and refuses to pay them, in order to secure their agreement to certain terms and conditions of employment. We think a lockout of Faculty is unlikely, but as a precaution, be sure to remove anything you might need from your office before a strike begins.

Can the University hire replacement workers, such as teaching assistants or part time faculty during the strike?

The University may ask other workers, such as teaching assistants, part-time faculty, or faculty from other universities to teach courses in the event of a strike. However, [Sinclair Community College spokeswoman said Sinclair won't assist staffing classes](#) and we have received communications from some adjuncts that they will not cross our picket line nor teach our classes in the event of a strike.

Can I be disciplined for participating in a strike?

No. Faculty members at public universities in Ohio have a right to strike. It is illegal to retaliate against or punish employees for participating in union activity that is authorized under Ohio law.

Will the university know who participated in the strike?

No individual can be isolated for their involvement in a strike — a majority of the membership will be taking collective action and standing in solidarity together. **You are under no obligation to inform management in advance as to whether you will be taking part in a strike or other action.** Recording or threatening to record the names of employees who engage in protected activity is against the law.

What do I do if a Chair or Dean asks me if I'm striking?

Don't answer. Instead, you should show them a copy of the strike notice and tell them that you are not required to answer. If they persist, you should immediately inform a union representative or email us.

How long will the strike last?

Since the passage of Ohio's Collective Bargaining law, there has only been one faculty strike in Ohio. That strike lasted one week, however, there is no way to know how long our strike will last. When a strike is called, we should be prepared to strike for as long as it takes to reach a settlement.

Will my pay be docked for going on strike?

The Administration has the legal right to withhold pay and benefits for days missed during a strike.

What about our medical benefits?

AAUP-WSU has researched a number of options available to faculty who require medical care while on strike. Please see the website for the document "[Health Insurance during a Faculty Strike](#)".

Will the union offer financial assistance during the strike?

AAUP-WSU has set aside a strike fund to offer interest-free loans to union members whose COBRA costs are burdensome on a means-tested basis. Please email us if you wish to take part in this program (aaupwsu@gmail.com).

Will the national AAUP help us with a strike?

Yes. In fact, staff and leaders from AAUP have been assisting our chapter with strategy, tactics, and execution since summer 2018, and will continue to do so leading up to and during a strike. Beyond that, our faculty colleagues from around the state, as well as the Ohio State Conference have pledged their support. Finally, we anticipate that our friends in the community, particularly from other unions, will support us.