

Academic Freedom for a Free Society
Akron-AAUP Monthly Newsletter
for August 2010

Health Care Negotiations

The Akron-AAUP has been involved in serious healthcare negotiations with the university administration since early Summer. The administration wants to pursue self-insurance as a means of saving money. This represents a substantial overhaul of our current model of health care at the University of Akron. Akron-AAUP has no philosophical objections to self-insurance but we wish to inform you, and the university administration, that **we simply will not agree to any changes unless and until we receive all information needed to consider the merits and potential deficits** of such a proposal and to represent faculty interests effectively. Despite the administration's contention that the healthcare issue must be resolved by the end of September the university has not responded to our multiple requests for such information in a timely way. Therefore, the chapter filed, on July 12th, an unfair labor practice (ULP) lawsuit against the university with the State Employment Relations Board (SERB).

The chapter continues to use the services of The Segal Company, a healthcare and human resources consulting firm, for their expertise in critically analyzing the university's position and constructing our proposals.

The university has also attempted, in our view, to force a resolution to healthcare negotiations before fully addressing compensation, in effect bifurcating the re-opened negotiations and limiting our ability to fully negotiate both issues together, as we had previously agreed to do. This issue, too, was part of our unfair labor practice charge. We continue to negotiate healthcare and compensation and to fight for our contractually guaranteed rights to do so based upon nothing less than all relevant information.

The university administration has called for mediation on the healthcare issue. This places healthcare negotiations on a very fast track before the parties go to the fact-finding process.

Negotiations are moving quickly; we encourage you to stay tuned and be sure to read negotiation updates as they arrive in your email.

An update for Summit College faculty who select the 30 hour option regarding pay.

The Akron AAUP negotiating team has come to agreement with the administration that 2010 Market Adjustment and the 2010 Special Equity Adjustment calculations will be based on your 24 hour salary. The additional six hour stipend that is specified in our collective bargaining agreement will not be included in the above calculations. The ultimate financial outcome of this agreement will be more favorable to Summit College faculty who select the 30 hour option. It will not affect other faculty.

The trade off for this agreement is that the additional 6 hour stipend will come in separate monthly checks. Thus you will be receiving one monthly check based on your 24 hour load, and an additional monthly check issued for the 6 hours of overload. The Payroll Office requested this change as it will simplify their bookkeeping.

This change will NOT affect your retirement contributions or benefits in any way. There may be a slight increase in your monthly tax withholding, but your April 15th tax liability will NOT be affected.

12-month Faculty Salary Increase

There will be a brief delay in the implementation of the 2010-2011 salary increase for 12-month faculty. Normally they would expect to see their new salary in July. However, due to delays in submitting merit scores in various departments around campus, the overall salary implementation will have to wait until faculty return in August and finish submitting scores. Once done, then both 9-month and 12-month faculty will receive their 2010-2011 salary increases. For those 12-month faculty experiencing a delay, they will receive their back pay for missed months once the new salaries are implemented. For those departments that have yet to complete their merit scores, the sooner that chore is completed the sooner we all receive our salary increases.

Unfair Labor Practice Charge Regarding the English Language Institute

The Akron-AAUP has filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge against the university administration regarding the conversion of a bargaining unit faculty position from an Instructor to a Contract Professional. We regard this as an attempt to erode the bargaining unit.

For 30 years, the full-time positions in the English Language Institute (ELI) have been classified as Instructors. The full-time faculty in the ELI voted in the mid-90s collective bargaining election, and again in the 2003 election. They have been faculty since the inception of the ELI, and have been in the bargaining unit from the beginning. Thus, the unilateral transfer of this position to a Contract Professional line - and therefore out of the bargaining unit - brought about the Unfair Labor Practice charge. The State Employment Relations Board will be involved in resolving this charge which relates to the contract and to the definition of our collective bargaining unit.

"Many hands make light work." A Call For Volunteers and Participation.

As we approach the beginning of a new academic year we find much that needs to be done to continue to strengthen and grow one of the most effective academic collective bargaining chapters in the country. Your Akron-AAUP can use your skills and your academic interests in many ways.

- Consider joining us on the Communications Committee and help us give voice to faculty concerns, a voice that is listened to nationally and is respected across the country as new collective bargaining efforts continue to arise.
- The Akron-AAUP Web Team is always looking for technical, and creative, suggestions and assistance.
- Consider standing for election by your departmental peers to the position of Department Liaison, a crucially important, but not time-consuming, link in the all-important chain of communications between and among your colleagues.
- Do you have a particular political interest? The Akron-AAUP constitution provides for a number of standing committees that need to be populated and activated. Don't find a particular committee addressing your issue? Consider proposing an ad hoc committee: women's issues, diversity, academic freedom, etc.
- Consider your skills and professional contacts as useful tools in establishing positive relationships with lawmakers, elected officials and community leaders. Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, the erosion of tenure, the continuing political attacks on academic freedom, and, of course, the extraordinarily disproportionate funding of the administration at the expense of faculty interests and student welfare affects us all.

In the event that negotiations on healthcare and compensation continue to sour we will need your extraordinary skills and creativity in conceiving actions and shaping a very public response.

A strong faculty does much to fulfill the University's stated mission of teaching and research and ensures a high-quality education for our students. An over-funded administration ensures nothing but continuing debt and ever-increasing financial burdens imposed on those who can least afford to carry them: our students.

No matter the nature of your skills and interests, no matter how much or little time you can spare, your contributions are important in keeping your faculty union strong and always resolute in defense of fundamental faculty and student rights.

Contact us: communications@akronaaup.org

Visit the Chapter Website Often - <http://www.akronaaup.org>

**Akron-AAUP
Communications Committee**