



Preparations for the 2008 Negotiations

Paul T. Wilson, President

Department Meetings Update: Since October, the WMU-AAUP Officers, Executive Committee Members, and I have been visiting departments to discuss your concerns for the 2008 negotiations. We're looking forward to more visits starting the first week in January. Be sure to talk with your Association Council rep to schedule your department's meeting; we will be doing a survey, but there's no substitute for talking with you directly.

Here are some of the topics that have come up already:

Benefits: How transparent are Western's health care finances? How do Western's costs relate to the quality of the health care services we are receiving? What will the costs be in retirement? Improve mental health, vision and dental benefits. Raise the TIAA-CREF contribution. Find more efficient ways to address provider coding errors. Improve the family leave provisions in the *Agreement*. Partner benefits.

Compensation: Merit pay and gender equity pay adjustments. Faculty salaries related to salaries in the field. Salary compression. Salary equity.

Workload: The sweeping of faculty lines (especially pernicious when senior faculty retire) leads to the need to plan and re-plan programs because of faculty and resource shortfalls; departments have to keep re-inventing themselves because of lack of stability. Some departments are over-dependent on term appointments and part-time instructors. Support for instruction – we need a new Center for Teaching & Learning, or something like it. Support for faculty research involves several aspects: Increasing the amounts allocated each year for FRACASF and travel, more funding to bring visiting scholars and run conferences on campus, periodic infusion of Innovation funds. Stronger faculty voice on sabbatical leave decisions.

A defined procedure for distributing the \$80,000 allocated annually for Instructional Development Grants, including rolling over the funds if not all spent in one year.

Faculty want more information from Western to support better shared governance - more information up front, rather than when decisions are announced.

Negotiation Team: In early to mid-January, the Executive Committee will be doing interviews for the 2008 Negotiation Team. As of today, there have been 7 applicants; in 2005, there were 5. The increase is quite gratifying; thanks to all of you who have been willing to step forward. By the end of January, the Executive Committee should be ready to make its recommendation to the Association Council about both team members and Chief Negotiator.

Compensation Strategy: The multiple factors to consider in a strategy for negotiating compensation include Across-the-Board (ATB) percentage increment, cash to base, gender equity, equity within ranks, equity between colleges, and salary compression due to date of hire. Here are a few thoughts about some of the possibilities, but let me hasten to add that none of these should be taken as official policy; my intent is to jump start your thinking about how to talk with us when we come to visit and conduct surveys.

ATB percentage for all increases has been our traditional approach; however, over time, it increases the absolute dollar differences between those who are at the higher salary levels and those who are at the lower salary levels. For example:

$$3.25\% \text{ of } \$100,000 = \$3,250$$

$$3.25\% \text{ of } \$50,000 = \$1,625$$

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Because ATB percentage gives a structural advantage to those earning at the high end, it may contribute to both inequity between ranks and salary compression due to higher entering salaries.

Merit pay is allowed for in our current *Agreement*. However, there is not a specific percentage of the salary pool set aside for merit. Instead, it's in Western's hands so, as with "market" adjustments, if Western wishes to award merit pay, it may do so, while informing us of the basis of the decision. For several negotiations, we've taken the position that we will only talk about a percentage of the salary pool for merit if we are satisfied with the ATB percentage.

There has already been a salary equity project. In 1999, a joint, post-negotiation committee (WMU-AAUP and Western) used regression analysis to develop a formula for equity adjustments to base salary. The outcome from an onerous process was awards from \$6 to \$6000. But even sitting at the table with the Executive Committee as this was happening, I can't tell you that I understood how it worked. If we want to address equity issues, we might do better with a simpler model: ATB percentage plus some cash to base. Here are a couple of examples:

An ATB percentage plus cash to base by rank

An ATB percentage plus cash to base calibrated to how many standard deviations individuals' salaries are below the mean for their rank, for their College, or for Western overall.

New Executive Committee Member For The College of Fine Arts

Stanley C. Pelkey is the new Executive Committee member for the College of Fine Arts. Dr. Pelkey is an Assistant Professor in the School of Music and began teaching at Western in 2005.

Dr. Pelkey was the first musicologist nationwide to receive a prestigious Pew Younger Scholars Graduate Fellowship to support his doctoral studies. He was previously on the music faculty at Gordon College in Massachusetts, and he also has been an instructor at Eastman. At Western he teaches courses in music history, literature, research, and ethnomusicology. He recently completed a second master's degree in history from the University of Rochester.

He co-edited *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines* (University Press of Mississippi, 2005) and has authored entries for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. He has presented numerous papers at scholarly conferences, including "The Classical Samuel Wesley as Seen and

On issues like gender equity and differences between colleges, we would likely benefit from the help of consultants.

Increased Involvement of the Association Council: The document on our web site, titled *Structure Bulletin*, which explains both our structure and the membership of our constituent bodies, was prepared to provide a context for the Association Council's meeting on November 15. At that meeting, we had some very animated discussion about governance issues, including concerns about the Association Council quorum, and about the membership of the Executive Committee. There was general agreement about the need for ongoing, substantive communication, with particular emphasis on more involvement by the Association Council. The first follow-up action of the Executive Committee was to schedule its November 30 meeting in the Bernhard Center, and to invite all Association Council members to attend. Eleven Association Council representatives attended, and participated in a review of the policies under which our negotiations will be conducted. We will be extending this same invitation to future Executive Committee meetings during the Spring and Summer to facilitate a new emphasis on communication.

Remember April 17! April 17, 2008, at 4 pm in Room 157 of the Bernhard Center, is our Spring Semester Chapter Meeting. All of you are invited. This is our most important pre-negotiations meeting. A good turnout at this meeting is the first really important step we take together to ensure success at the negotiation table, so please plan to be with us. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

Heard in His Mature Piano Sonatas" at the conference Music, Cultural History and the Wesleys; "Musical Quotation, Keyboard Music, and British National Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century" at the conference Narrating the Eighteenth Century; and "Disruptive Musical Associations and Two Motion Pictures about World War II" at the Film and History conference.

Dr. Pelkey's research has garnered awards from the American Handel Society, London Handel Institute, and Presser Foundation. An organist, he has served as Director of Music for a number of churches and has been featured on recitals in New York, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Michigan.

His organ teachers include Mark Schell, Katie Pardee, Russell Saunders, Michael Farris, and Karl Schrock. He has also studied North Indian tabla with Jerry Leake and has recently begun to study the Native American flute.

Grievance Update

Lisa Whittaker, Grievance Officer

Current Issues:

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- One grievance was filed in the College of Education regarding Professional Conduct. We met with the administration in November. The grievance was denied. Our next step is mediation.
- A grievance was filed in the College of Education under Article 22. The grievance was denied. Our next step is mediation.
- An outstanding grievance in the College of Education will go to arbitration. The date is to be determined.

Discussion Items:

- I met with a faculty member regarding student feedback on a class.
- I discussed sabbatical leave outcome with one faculty member from College of Arts and Sciences.
- I discussed workplace environment with several faculty members from College of Arts and Sciences.

Letters to the Editor Policy

In order for a letter to be considered for publication, submissions must adhere to the following:

- Authors of such letters must expressly request publication in the *WMU-AAUP Advocate*.
- Author's names will be published with the letter.
- Authors are required to cite their information accurately. It is not the responsibility of the Editorial Board to check the validity of information.
- Letters should not exceed one page, typewritten, single-spaced. In the event letters exceed the one page maximum, editing is in the control of the Editorial Board.

Letters to the Editor become the property of the Chapter and will not be returned to the author(s).

The publication of such letters is entirely in the control of the Editorial Board.

The publication of a letter is not an endorsement of the Author's statements by the WMU AAUP or the Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board will not publish letters that in its judgment could be slanderous, discriminatory, or libelous remarks against an individual or a group.

Those interested in submitting letters should send a word-processed document as an e-mail attachment to staff@wmuaaup.net with the **Subject: Letter to the Editor**. Or, individuals may drop off a disk with the digital file.

WMU-AAUP Upcoming Meetings

Association Council
Thursday, January 24th
4:00pm
Room 157, Bernhard Center

Association Council
Thursday, February 21st
4:00pm
Room 157, Bernhard Center

Association Council
Thursday, March 20th
4:00pm
Room 157, Bernhard Center

NEWS FROM WARF
(Western Association of Retired Faculty)
Tom Pagel, Information Officer

TIME TO RENEW YOUR WARF MEMBERSHIP

Your membership in WARF expired on December 31st. So before you put away your checkbook from paying those holiday bills, please remember to send along your \$10 for membership dues for 2008. This is a contract negotiation year for the AAUP-WMU bargaining unit, and it is important that we retirees be vigilant and informed. A new University administration, coupled with Michigan's weak economic condition and some new federal regulations, could make things a bit uncertain in terms of our valued WMU retiree benefits. As WMU retirees, we have many shared concerns, and it is in our mutual self-interest to stay alert and involved. A watchful WARF steering committee—backed by a united, involved, and vocal retiree membership—could make a difference. Every renewal or new WARF membership adds to our collective strength.

A check for \$10 payable to WMU-AAUP can be mailed to: **WARF, WMU-AAUP Chapter, 814 Oakland Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49008**. Be sure that your **current mailing address** is attached and, if you have one, an **e-mail address** so we can send you announcements and news. (An attached "post-it" note saying "same contact info as 2007" works, too.)

AN OPEN INVITATION TO WARF MEMBERS

With the able support of the WMU-AAUP Chapter's staff, WARF forwards to its members (retired faculty) an invitation from Dr. Ahmad Issa, a Certified Financial Planner, to another two-hour workshop on financial planning and wealth management. Following the workshop, we may be able to arrange individual portfolio analyses from Dr. Issa. In Dr. Issa's words:

You probably recall taking my retirement seminar some time during your pre-retirement days. This may have been 10 to 20 seminars ago. You may not even have had one. But regardless of whether you did, your portfolio may be due (or overdue) for an important restructuring or a simple fine tuning. To help you to do that, we will offer a two-hour workshop to give you a refresher course in realigning your portfolio with a view to streamlining your holdings and reducing your risk, your cost, and your taxes. We offered two of these workshops about a year ago. They were well-attended and well-received.

Now we are ready to offer at least one more workshop, should there be enough interest. To offer a workshop, we need at least twelve retirees to sign up. (Spouses may enroll and will count as part of the twelve.) The workshop is offered at no cost to WARF members. To place your name on the list, please call the WMU-AAUP office at 345-0151. My WARF workshop will be offered in the morning (9:30 to 11:30) at Montague House, but the date will be set once we have twelve applicants.

Hope to see you there!

Dr. A. D. Issa, CFP, CPEA



WMU-AAUP Chapter
 814 Oakland Drive
 Kalamazoo MI 49008-5401

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED