

Summer Teaching

Allen Zagarell, WMU-AAUP President

Once again the issue of summer teaching has become an area of concern because of repeated attempts by some administrators to undercut your summer teaching rights under our contract.

As a full-time, board-appointed faculty member, the contract guarantees you a two course preference for Summer I and II . If there are only a limited number of courses offered, the assignment of courses should be based on your departmental policy statement.

You are entitled to receive compensation equal to 11% of your salary for each course in Summer I and for each course Summer II. If you agreed to teach two courses in Summer I and two courses in Summer II, you would be entitled to receive a total of 44% of your salary.

Every year a number of administrators try to violate these rights, claiming that the university cannot afford summer teaching as provided for in their contract with us. The two most common tactics are (1) to offer summer teaching only to faculty with lower salaries or to offer senior, higher paid faculty courses only if there are higher enrollments, and (2) to offer summer teaching at the lower overload rate rather the full 11% per course.

First, the assertion that the university lacks adequate funds to offer summer teaching on the terms and conditions they agreed to in their contract with us is simply false. Notwithstanding the state budget cuts, any lack of funds at the Provost, College or Departmental level is a choice by the administration to spend the university's money on things that have nothing to do with our teaching and research missions.

Second, both those tactics are clear violations of the contract. We have discussed this numerous times with the provost and he has assured us that course offerings are *not* offered based on an individual's salary. Each individual course is *not* required to make a "profit" although the group of courses are expected to at least end up even. There is no necessity for higher paid faculty to drop out of contention for these courses or to agree to teach the courses for less than the summer teaching rate agreed to by the administration in the contract. Indeed, letting the administration get away with assigning courses based on salary or at overload rates would encourage still more limited funding and over time the loss of preference for everyone.

We need your help in reigning in these rogue administrators. Let us know as soon as possible and about any attempt by the administration to work out deals that seem to contradict the contract. None of us should accept the false claims that any of us are too expensive to teach during summer. We ask that all members of our union remain vigilant to assure our contract is protected and adhered to.

February
2011

