

It may be the end of the academic year, but we've still got a lot going on, including some good news about our health care coverage, a call to stand in solidarity with TAU as their contract negotiations take a challenging turn, and much more.

No-copay no-deductible physical therapy at Sindecuse continues: Correcting information that faculty and staff enrolled in the PPO health plan received previously, BCBSM recently clarified that copays, deductibles, and coinsurance DO NOT APPLY to physical therapy at the WMU Sports Medicine clinic at Sindecuse. This means that bargaining-unit faculty enrolled in the PPO may continue to use the physical therapy services at Sindecuse with no copay, no deductible, and no coinsurance, as in previous contracts. If you've been deferring PT care because of concerns about cost, there is no need to wait any longer. Call the WMU Sports Medicine Clinic today at 387-3248 to make your PT appointment. Please note that this applies only to those enrolled in the PPO. The HMO does not include coverage for services at Sindecuse.

Support for TAU at April 18 BoT meeting: The WMU Teaching Assistants Union has been negotiating with the administration for several months, and things are becoming strained at the bargaining table. Citing frustration with low salary offers and the 8 percent enrollment fee they have to pay, TAU members will voice their concerns in public comments tomorrow at the meeting of the WMU Board of Trustees and are asking WMU-AAUP faculty to join them in a show of solidarity.

We understand the value of TAU's labor because we see them in action every day and understand the impact of their work. So let's back them up at the meeting tomorrow as they make their case to the Board of Trustees for the fair contract they deserve. Please help by showing up, speaking up, and writing letters of support. The WMU-AAUP Executive Committee voted unanimously last Friday to issue its own letter of support, which we will soon publish to the faculty.

TAU never failed to show up to support us during our negotiations last year, always in large numbers (and with awesome signs). It would mean the world to them if we could return the favor. Let's not disappoint them. #StrengthInSolidarity #TheyAreWorthIt #WeHaveTheirBacks

The BoT meeting is Wednesday, April 18, in 157 Bernhard, at 11 a.m. (Come at 10:45 if you'd like to walk into the meeting together with TAU.)

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey and WMU faculty benefits data: After years of publishing the administration's controversial claim that faculty benefits at WMU are worth a dollar value equal to 53 percent of our salaries, the national AAUP has for the first time declined to include benefits information for WMU in the latest edition of the AAUP Annual Faculty Compensation Survey, published on April 11.

Citing questions that have long been raised by WMU-AAUP faculty, the compensation survey team, led by the national AAUP's new senior researcher and survey director, Joe Roy, decided not to continue to publish the questionable numbers. "Given that they can't generate the data in line with our instructions and that [what they are submitting] is very far off actual benefits," Joe wrote to the WMU-AAUP on March 27, "I am going to exclude the benefits data from our published data (so that WMU still will appear with salaries, but no compensation component)."

The digital edition of the new AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey is available here (member login required; email ceveritt@aaup.org to request your login info). This year, it includes a special report on gender (in)equity in faculty salaries.

Article 38 and uncompensated summer work: It's that time of year again, when faculty on academic-year appointments may be called upon to perform work during the summer for which they are not being paid. Article 38 of the Agreement stipulates that "Bargaining unit faculty on academic year appointments shall not be required to work . . . during periods between semesters and sessions when classes are not scheduled to meet" (38.§4.1). It expressly defines "outside the calendar" as "before the Fall semester begins, between the Fall and Spring semesters, and after the Spring semester ends" (38.§2). The work of faculty on AY appointments can and should be performed during the academic year when contractual faculty workloads are honored. Work that may be critical to the institution but cannot be done during the academic year must be compensated when AY faculty perform it outside the calendar, apart from limited exceptions referenced in 38.§2 (and discussed further here).

Summer teaching stipends: AY faculty members who accept summer teaching assignments are compensated for teaching only and should not be expected, required, or pressured to perform additional service beyond the teaching of their summer courses and the responsibilities associated with this work (class prep, grading, meeting with students enrolled in your class, etc.).

As we get closer to the end of the academic year, we encourage AY faculty to consider setting an email autoreply message, read more about faculty rights under Article 38 on the chapter blog, and contact us at 345-0151 or staff@wmuaaup.net if you have reason for concern about uncompensated summer work.

Upcoming Fourth Friday Happy Hours (all 5-6 p.m. at Arcadia Brewing Co., 701 E. Michigan Ave.):

School's out! Friday, April 27

Friday, June 22

Friday, July 27

No Fourth Friday Happy Hours are scheduled for May (the Friday before Memorial Day weekend) or August (in observance of the break between Summer 2 and Fall).