
Gender Equity Update for the Week of September 23, 2013

First, some communication news:

Since Monday, September 9, emails from the WMU-AAUP to the faculty (i.e., mass emails sent from our wmuaaup.net account) have been blocked by the WMU server from delivery to wmich.edu addresses. At press time on Friday, September 20, the problem still has not been fixed.

The first blocked email we are aware of was one we sent on Monday morning, September 9, and again on Tuesday, September 10, with the subject line "Sept 10 paychecks and gender equity adjustments." It was a reminder that **the one percent increase faculty would start seeing in our September 10 paychecks was an across-the-board increase negotiated in 2011 and not an equity adjustment.** That message was also posted to the Chapter blog (wmu-aaup.com).

The block was supposed to have been corrected by late Wednesday, September 11, or early Thursday, September 12, and we were in fact told by WMU email tech support at that time that they believed it was fixed. However, we discovered on Friday, September 13, that the block was still in place when we attempted to send out a subsequent equity update. That update was also posted on the blog, Facebook, and Twitter and is reprinted on page 2 of this Bulletin.

Because of these issues, and because we have no way to predict or prevent their possible recurrence, **we encourage you to subscribe to the Chapter blog (wmu-aaup.com), join the WMU-AAUP Facebook page, and/or follow the WMU-AAUP on Twitter so that you will receive important information without delay.**

Now, about equity:

As some of you may have seen last Friday, September 13, on the blog, Facebook, or Twitter, or as you may have heard from your Association Council representative (i.e., department rep), Chapter president Lisa Minnick got an equity update late last week. Unfortunately, the email we sent out to the faculty on Friday with that information was, as noted above, also blocked.

The gist of last Friday's update is that **no one got an equity adjustment in their September 10 paycheck because the process has been delayed on the administration's end.** The administration has not shared information with us about how long a delay we are looking at, but our impression is that, unfortunately, we are not likely to see a quick resolution.

We believe that the administration should have communicated this to the faculty (along with an explanation) in advance of the first Fall 2013 paychecks, rather than just leaving everyone wondering, not to mention leaving a lot of significantly underpaid colleagues devastated when they saw no adjustment in their September 10 paychecks and believed they'd been passed over. The good news in all this is that there is still hope for these colleagues, but we wish they could have been spared the unnecessary hurt in the meantime.

We hope the next thing we hear about equity comes directly from the administration to the faculty, and we continue to call on them to do the right thing and at the very least to own this fiasco.

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About equity (Continued from page 1)

Our colleagues are understandably frustrated with this new delay, especially after all the delays and problems we've already experienced in this process, which began with a negotiated agreement in 2008 to conduct an equity study in order to determine the scope of the problem. (Two studies have since been completed, both showing significant salary disparities.) It continued in 2011, when we negotiated an agreement that requires the administration to take action during the 2011-14 contract period on the inequities that by then had been well documented in the studies.

It's also disappointing that the administration does not seem to have made it a priority to inform the faculty — which they ought to have done before the first fall paychecks were issued — about what appears to be a significant change in its plans for correcting long-standing salary inequities experienced by many members of the faculty.

Chapter president Lisa Minnick wrote to Provost Greene on Sunday, September 8, to ask him for information about what we should expect on September 10 and to point out once again that the faculty needs (and deserves) information from the administration about how their individual cases are being decided. Now, two weeks later, we also want to know *when* those cases will be decided.

By the time you get this, we will have received our second fall paychecks, and as of this writing (on Friday, September 20), the faculty still has heard nothing from the administration. A lot of people on this campus have not been paid fairly; that has been unequivocally documented in the studies. We have a signed Letter of Agreement from the 2011 negotiations that requires the administration to take action to correct those inequities. Our colleagues have been waiting a long time for redress, and they deserve an explanation for why they must now wait even longer. We wish we had one to give you.

For more on equity, please see Yvonne Zipp's September 20 Gazette article, "WMU delays issuing gender equity adjustments." (You can find the link on our blog, Facebook, and Twitter.)

**September 13, 2013: WMU-AAUP letter to the faculty
on delay in gender equity implementation**

Dear colleagues:

As you may be aware, equity adjustments were to be implemented with the first paycheck of the 2013-14 academic year. Eligibility for these adjustments was to be determined through the analyses conducted last spring semester by faculty, chairs, and deans in each college.

On Monday, September 9, and again on Tuesday, September 10, the WMU-AAUP attempted (unsuccessfully) to send a message to the faculty to remind all of you that all bargaining-unit members would see a one percent increase in their base pay, effective with the first paycheck of the Fall 2013 semester, dated September 10, 2013. We wanted to make clear to the faculty that **this one percent increase was the across-the-board increase negotiated for all bargaining-unit members in 2011 and not an equity adjustment.** Unfortunately, though, despite multiple attempts, our emails were not getting through to the faculty. (See *the September 9 letter on the blog at wmu-aaup.com.*)

We later learned that our emails to the faculty at your which addresses were being blocked on the WMU end. We are not suggesting that anything untoward was happening. There are any number of reasons that might explain why the mailings were blocked, including the possibility that they were incorrectly identified as spam, which apparently can happen when an email is going to 870 people at once. The problem has since been corrected. (We hope.) *Editor's note, 09/20/13: It hasn't been.*

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Letter to the faculty, September 13, 2013 (Continued from page 2)

Today I am writing to say that we have since learned that **no equity adjustments were made to September 10 paychecks**. In other words, the absence of an adjustment in your September 10 check does not suggest anything about your eligibility for an equity increase. You may very well still be eligible to receive an adjustment. But at this point, no one has received one. And it seems likely that the issues causing the delay will take some time to resolve.

The Chapter has extremely limited information at this point, but we are aware that the delay is on the administration's end. The provost has said he will communicate with the faculty directly about this, and I am encouraging him to do so as soon as possible. I have reminded him of how hard everyone worked last spring to follow the process, despite our many concerns with it, and of how long everyone has been waiting.

I wish we had better information to share with you now, and I hope the administration will be forthcoming with information for all of us. I continue to call upon them to communicate clearly, frequently, and directly with the faculty on this and other important issues. And, as always, I invite you to contact me with any questions or concerns that you might have.

In solidarity,

Lisa Minnick
President, WMU-AAUP

**Remarks by WMU-AAUP Secretary Bill Warren
Board of Trustees Meeting, September 18, 2013**

On behalf of the WMU-AAUP, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address you. As you know, this is a crucial year for WMU's faculty. We are one year away from the end of our current contract, a contract that will now be impacted in one way or the other by Michigan's new "right-to-work" laws.

The faculty kicked off our yearlong contract campaign on September 3 at a Fall BBQ that attracted record attendance. Approximately 450 colleagues and their families attended. For the first time that I can remember in my 12 years as a WMU faculty member, we ran out of food—a sure sign of success.

This Friday we will welcome Angela Hewett, the AAUP's national director of organizing and service, and work with her on ways to galvanize our chapter and build solidarity as we prepare for this year's coming challenges.

Over the course of the coming academic year, we will remind the campus community about the fundamental values that the AAUP and our chapter stand for. Perhaps most crucial of these values

is shared governance. Allow me to read from an AAUP statement on the importance of faculty in assuring shared governance as a core operating principle of university operations:

Since its founding in 1915, the AAUP has been actively engaged in developing standards for sound academic practice and in working for their acceptance throughout the community of higher education. Two aspects of an institution's academic practice have been of particular concern to the Association ever since: the rights and freedoms of individual faculty members and the role of the faculty in institutional governance.

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We believe it is time to remind the entire community of WMU about the centrality of teaching and research in the array of tasks carried out by an academic institution. Teaching and research are the very purpose of an academic institution and the reason why the public values and supports what we do. This means that the faculty, who are responsible for carrying out those central tasks, have a unique status and critical function within the institution.

The AAUP has taken this view from its earliest days. Its first statement, the 1915 Declaration of Principles, declares that members of a faculty “are the appointees, but not in any proper sense the employees,” of the trustees. The faculty are partners with the trustees, and, as the Declaration states, the office of faculty member should be “one both of dignity and of independence. Indeed, it is in the public interest that this be so. Allocation of authority to the faculty in the areas of its responsibility is a necessary condition for the faculty’s possessing that dignity and exercising that independence.”

Some examples of shared governance that illustrate the importance of this principle as it applies to our role in WMU’s larger community include the following:

1. We continue to fight for equity in pay and benefits for all faculty, press for resolution of the gender equity process that has now been underway for many years, and call for an explanation for the most recent delay. Hundreds of faculty women campus-wide who are eligible for equity increases have seen no adjustments, even though the adjustments were to have been made beginning with their September 10th paychecks. They received no warning that they should not expect the promised adjustments. They just opened their checks and were disappointed once again. And they have still received no explanation. We call upon the administration once again to talk to the faculty and explain this delay. In the meantime, our women colleagues continue to fall further behind financially. **We remind the administration that inequity is cumulative, demoralizing, and illegal.**
2. We will also fight for our contractual right to shared participation in the academic program review now underway. There has been no direct communication with the faculty about this, and we remind the administration once again that our contract guarantees the faculty – and the Chapter – a central role in the process from the beginning. And we are especially concerned about the very real possibility of faculty job losses as an end result of the program review.
3. We will insist that the administration honor the faculty’s contractual right to peer review in any unresolved grievance or disciplinary procedures. All faculty, indeed, all citizens, have the right to due process to include a full and thorough investigation of any charges against them.
4. We will continue to insist on faculty participation in any searches for administrative personnel who will be involved in faculty affairs. For example, in the current search for a new Director of Academic Collective Bargaining, faculty were excluded from participation and not one of the candidates brought in as finalists has any faculty background.

The WMU-AAUP advocates shared governance with an emphasis on both words: shared in the spirit of true and meaningful cooperation and governance in recognition of our important obligations as faculty members and the dedication we invest in this university.

The WMU-AAUP: YOUR union. YOUR rights.
