



The Advocate

March 2018

Wonder what your Officers are doing?
 Here's a summary –
 Matthew S. Mings, Contract Administrator

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Events, Meetings, and Workshops

April 6	1:30 p.m.	Chapter meeting Location: 157 Bernhard
April 10	2:30 p.m.	Sabbatical Proposal Workshop Location: 212 Bernhard
April 11	10:30 a.m.	Sabbatical Proposal Workshop Location: 212 Bernhard
April 27	5:00 p.m.	Fourth Friday Happy Hour Arcadia Brewing Company

Did you know . . . when using sick leave, medical documentation may be required. You do not need to provide your private medical information, but simply a signed letter from your physician on official letterhead, stating that you are under that person's care and will not be able to work for a specific period of time.

Fall 2017 summary of services

- Assisted 3 faculty regarding parental leaves.
- Assisted 2 faculty in arranging for active duty military leaves.
- Consulted with 1 member who wanted to reverse a board approved retirement
- Consulted with 2 faculty regarding departmental transfers
- Worked on 2 disciplinary cases
- Helped faculty write 3 workload appeals.
- Assisted 3 faculty with arranging for significant medical leaves
- Worked with 6 departments to review DPS submissions. Met with 1 department starting to work on major DPS revisions. Met with 1 department rep, where major DPS changes are being contemplated.
- Consulted with 7 faculty at the pre-submission stage for tenure and promotion reviews. Helped troubleshoot 2 situations where the submissions weren't technically made on time, and both these reviews were allowed to move forward.
- Consulted with 9 faculty regarding pending retirements, including use of "reduced load" when heading into retirement.

GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENT POLICY STATEMENT (DPS) REVISIONS

Matthew S. Mingus, Contract Administrator

A new contract is always a good time for departments to revisit the DPS.

While there were no changes to Article 23 in the 2017-2020 WMU-AAUP Agreement, there have been significant changes in the way the administration regards the DPS. The main change is a more-strict perspective on what is allowed in a DPS, and thus a sense that an academic unit may have many important procedures not relevant to the relationship between the administration and the WMU-AAUP.

We suggest these non-contractual practices be referred to as “Departmental Procedures” and be clearly separated from the Departmental Policy Statement. Departmental Procedures do not need to be reviewed by the WMU-AAUP or the administration and are often “faculty reviewed and approved”. Examples include, but are not limited to, student admissions criteria and processes for making decisions on scholarships and/or assistantships. The benefit of this approach is that departmental procedures may be collectively agreed upon at faculty meetings, including with the full participation of administrators, and may be changed more quickly in response to specific circumstances. In contrast, we suggest a full review of a department DPS every five (5) years.

Article 23 is quite brief and states what “must be” and what “may be” included in the DPS. The DPS governs the means by which faculty make recommendations to the administration (chair/dean/provost) on a variety of issues. Per Article 23, each department must have an approved DPS on file with both Academic Labor Relations and the WMU Chapter of the AAUP. Some departments do not have an approved DPS, and thus the faculty have relinquished their rights to provide such recommendations to the chair/director.

To avoid problems that some departments have encountered, we strongly believe it is best practice to provide the proposed DPS to all faculty members at least one (1) week before it will be discussed and voted upon and to have this listed clearly on the agenda for your upcoming meeting. This is because the possible impacts of important details are not always easy to digest during a meeting. Remember, the chair/director can be consulted at this stage but should not be party to the meeting or vote on the DPS. A “faculty approved” DPS then goes to the chair/director for review.

When crafting the DPS, it can be helpful to see what has been approved in other departments on campus. A quick resource is to use the link Workshops found at the top of the webpage at www.wmuaaup.org. The new document titled “Department Policy Statement Process, Checklist, and Language” under the ‘Workshops’ button provides a summary checklist of required components. It is just 4 pages long including the text of Article 23, so please check it out!

As always, we are here to help you.