

Your Union

Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty
at Michigan State University
Local 1855 AFT, AFL-CIO

2015 Merit Raises Distributed

The UNTF/MSU contract for fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff required MSU to establish a merit pool equal to 2.25% of each Union members teaching salary and to distribute that pool to Union members. Prior to the formation of UNTF, fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff were lumped in a merit pool with tenure stream and other staff. Departments could and often did direct the entire pool to tenure stream faculty. The creation of this separate merit pool has meant that almost all fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff have gotten increases each year. While the pool is distributed on a merit system developed by each department the actual impact is that most fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff got 2.25%. This year:

- 4% were given no increase
- 58% were given 2.25%
- 82% were given an increase between 2% and 3%

In order to be eligible for the raise, you must have had an appointment (Union or non-Union) on January 1, 2015 and have a Union appointment on October 1, 2015. Some fall only employees were eligible this year under a recent agreement between MSU and UNTF.



Happy Holidays from UNTF

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Changes Coming for Reappointment Deadlines

UNTF and MSU are close to an agreement on changes to the deadlines for reappointing fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff. One of the reasons UNTF was formed was to fight for more job security for fixed term employees. Prior to UNTF departments could and often did wait until the last minute or beyond to tell fixed term faculty and academic staff if they would be working the next semester. The UNTF/MSU contract establishes timelines for departments to offer reappointment. Currently the timeline is 1 month prior to the end of each employee's appointment end date. This means there can be dozens of deadlines for a department to follow. UNTF and MSU have been meeting and discussing a new system. When adopted there would be 2 deadlines per year.

- **April 15th**

Fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff who do not have an appointment for fall would need to be reappointed by April 15th. This means AY employees (their appointment typically ends Aug 15th) would need to get their new appointment by April 15th. Currently it is not due until Aug 15th.

Fall only employees would also need to get their appointment by April 15th.

- **December 1st**

Fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff who do not have an appointment for spring would need to be reappointed by December 1st.

Spring only employees would also need to get their appointment by December 1st.

If a department does not plan to reappoint an employee, it is supposed to give that employee written notice by these deadlines and state the basis for the non-renewal.

If a department does not issue reappointment or non-renewal by the deadline, UNTF is supposed to notify MSU. The department is then given a 3 day grace period to issue the reappointment or non-renewal. If the department misses that deadline, it owes the employee 2 weeks pay.

Progress has been made and more reappointments are made earlier each year. The hope is that the new system will continue this improvement and give AY employees earlier notice.



President's Column

Dear UNTF Members,

We all have heard it before: We are stronger together than we are separately. Being a Union member seems a risk to some. We, as members of the UNTF of course know otherwise. Being a collective is how each of us practices and lives with on a daily basis in many areas of our lives. As scholars, we work with other scholars, either in person, or from their scholarship. As family members, we are a unit. . In these and a myriad of other instances we are stronger as a unit than as a single person.

Can you guess where I am going with this? "Of course" you might be saying, "You are the president of a Union; of course you are going to speak of the strength of collectivity". And here I go. Many of us came together for all of our benefit. When I say all, I mean for you as well. We, together, campaigned and won our right to organize and negotiate with the University for all Fixed Term teaching Faculty and Academic staff at MSU.

With the help of the American Federation for Teachers, we negotiated a contract and won major benefits for all of us in that contract. One was a defined fund given annually to departments for each of us to receive a merit raise.

Secondly we negotiated a path to a semblance of job security. Each of us with a specific amount of seniority could apply for Designation B; when granted we were given at least a three year contract. In our second contract, we negotiated for that three year contract to be a rolling contract, granting a continuous three year contract to those who had Designation B status.

I have been president of the UNTF since its founding 5 years ago. We have an absolutely amazing Executive Board, for which we are eternally grateful. We have a stellar staff that other Locals would die for. Please consider joining in our leadership, insuring our continued success at the bargaining table as well as a growing membership base. And as a final note: I am ending my teaching career the end of spring semester, 2016. Please consider joining the board to insure leadership into the next century.

I end my letter to you how I began it. We are stronger together than we are separately. Please join us in informing your colleagues about the importance of our standing together as our Union of Non- Tenure Track faculty and to insure we become stronger and stronger that we all can benefit in such dynamic ways.

In solidarity,
Penny Gardner, Ph.D.

UNTF Membership Meeting February 2nd

Our spring General Membership Meeting is open to all full members in good standing. It is **Tuesday February 2nd at Beggar's Banquet** on Abbot Road across from campus. Appetizers will be served at 5:30 and the business meeting will start at 6:00 pm. Hope to see you there!

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Long Term Appointments Available with Designation B

The next deadline for applying for Designation B is January 2016. UNTF members who have taught 10 or more semesters in the last 6 years are eligible for this status. Anyone granted designation B is given a minimum of 3 years rolling appointment.

Applications showing teaching excellence are given to the department head and are reviewed by the college and the Provost's office. Each department has criteria for the applications. The UNTF web site links to most of these.

There are currently 51 UNTF members who enjoy this status. Each year another year is added to their appointment ensuring that the appointment is for no less than 3 years. Some individuals who initially applied for Designation B were denied; however, after their second submission, they were granted this status.

The applications are extensive and members are encouraged to prepare now to meet the January deadline.