

# UNTF

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

## **General Membership Meeting and Executive Board Nominations**

Members of the UNTF held their spring 2016 meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Presentations were made on the UNTF Travel Fund, the number of fixed term teaching faculty awarded Designation B, the status of reappointments and non-renewal letters and the UNTF membership by demographics and colleges. Nominations were accepted for the UNTF Executive Board. Whitney Dziurka was introduced as the new UNTF organizer. President Penny Gardner announced she would not be running for reelection. A report on the financial condition of UNTF was given by Richard Manderfield the Financial Committee Chair.



### **The nominees for the Executive Board are:**

1. **President:** Deb Carmichael
2. **Secretary:** David Medei
3. **Treasurer:** Ashley Hewlett
4. **Chair of Finance Committee:** Rich Manderfield
5. **Chair of Communications Committee:** Carmen DeLorenzo
6. **Chair of Organizing Committee:** Kate Birdsall

Since none of the positions are contested, there is no requirement for an election. The new board will assume office on May 11th. There are 3 unfilled positions on the Executive Board. The Board has the authority to fill those positions. If you are interested in serving on the Board please contact the UNTF office.



***Volunteer Opportunities Available!***

**Contact us anytime!**  
2990 E. Lake Lansing Rd., Ste. 201-E  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
(517) 203-0880  
[office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org)  
[www.untf.org](http://www.untf.org)  
[www.facebook.com/UNTF1855](http://www.facebook.com/UNTF1855)

## Waiting for Arbitrator Decision but We Have Already Achieved Progress

One of the major goals of UNTF has been to increase job security for fixed term faculty and academic staff. We negotiated language that requires the University to give new appointments at least one month prior to the old appointment expiring. When most departments ignored this requirement, we negotiated a penalty of 2 weeks pay if the timelines are not met. When a number of departments failed to follow the agreement and failed to pay the penalty in 2015, the UNTF filed a grievance. In February a hearing was held in front of a neutral arbitrator and we are waiting for a decision. We hope to receive a decision by the end of this semester. But regardless of his ruling, we have already achieved progress in job security.

At the arbitration hearing MSU agreed to pay the penalty to 4 faculty members. It had refused to pay them for the 8 months prior to the hearing. The arbitrator will decide if any other UNTF members are owed the 2 week's pay penalty.

This semester departments are being much better about issuing timely appointments. A number of AY fixed term faculty have already gotten their appointments for the next academic year. Fixed term faculty who are not being reappointed have been given notice of non-renewal. This gives them time to find alternative work and makes them eligible for unemployment. The Departments now know that this language will be enforced and they are following the timelines.

The current contract language does require some unnecessary non-renewal notices. For example departments are giving notices to faculty who are reappointed to non-teaching positions. The UNTF and MSU HR developed improved language that eliminated these types of notices and that will make it easier for departments. Unfortunately before the new language could be signed, a change in personnel was made at MSU HR and they now decline to implement the new language.

### AFT and Union Plus Scholarships

There are several college scholarships available to UNTF members and their families.

The American Federation of Teachers Michigan offers one for graduating high school seniors of a UNTF member whose goal is to become a teacher. The award is for \$1000 and is awarded to 2 graduating seniors. The deadline for applying is June 3, 2016. Applications are available at the UNTF office.

Union Plus offers more than 100 scholarships from \$500 to \$4000 to undergraduate and graduate students. Applications are available starting in mid-June and are due by the following January. Applications and details are available at [unionplus.org/college-education-financing](http://unionplus.org/college-education-financing).



### Faculty and Staff Portal Update

This month UNTF Organizer, Whitney Dziurka, was invited to a meeting with MSU Human Resources, as well as a group of representatives with all campus unions, to demonstrate and discuss a newly designed portal for all MSU faculty and staff. MSU Human Resources has revamped the Enterprise Business Systems (EBS) portal, and will be phasing it in this summer (2016). The newly designed entry point to your EBS applications and systems has been built based on user feedback and peer group testing. The new portal delivers updated technology and improved navigation, as well as an organized tile-scheme.

If you have any questions or concerns about the new portal system, please feel free to contact us at UNTF ([office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org)), or MSU HR Solutions, ([SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu)). The roll-out will slowly be phased in, and more details are available on the MSU H R webpage: [hr.msu.edu/go2gateway/](http://hr.msu.edu/go2gateway/)



Dear UNTF Member,

It is glorious weather outside, and it is the last weeks of the semester of a good year. Staff and Board member have been meeting regularly with the HR department, and making great strides in getting information on all who are in our Bargaining Unit. As you can imagine it fluctuates from semester to semester and it of course makes sense that HR and your Union are on the same page. We hired a new organizer who is diligently meeting with those in our bargaining unit to let them know how it is we are serving them. Look for her to be calling on you. You can help with this by also speaking to your colleagues about the UNTF.



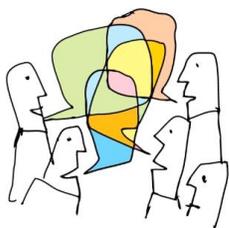
And some other news, I'll be no longer teaching after this semester and also will no longer be your Union President. I will miss this opportunity to be among you all, and I of course will miss teaching. It is time! Might I say, I am honored to have been your President these last 6 years.

Deborah Carmichael, our current Vice-President will be your new President. She is a thinker, takes action when required, teaches in WRAC, is the Managing Editor of the Journal of Popular Culture, and an author: so strong, so accomplished. Please welcome Deb. I am so happy to be leaving this work in her so very capable hands.

So have a wonderful rest of the Semester, and whatever follows for you after that.

In solidarity,  
Penny Gardner, PhD  
President of UNTF

## Organizer Update



Over the past few weeks I have had the opportunity to visit several departments and have conversations with both members of the UNTF, and those we would like to join the UNTF. One of the best parts of my job is having short meetings with our bargaining unit, and hearing stories about teaching experiences, families, hobbies, and academic interests. These visits help to inform us what is happening in departments, and allows us to develop personal relationships with one another.

With the union, MSU non-tenured faculty have the opportunity to sit at the table and collectively bargain for an agreement with administration. This agreement creates the conditions for your individual appointment letters, which has raised wages, reduced exploitation of faculty, created longer contracts, provided faculty with healthcare and sick leave, an expectation for timely notification of appointments or non-renewals. These are some of the benefits of having a union represent your teaching work, and the UNTF continues to fight to ensure these rights remain for our non-tenured faculty.

Without membership, we could not continue this work, or keep bettering our contract. *I cannot stress enough that we must do this work together.* Your membership is your voice, as well as your proclamation you care about your colleagues. There is no better reason to pay dues than to support your work and the work of your peers, so please encourage one another to become members of the union that represents you and bargains on your behalf to increase your compensation. We, at the UNTF, work very hard to ensure you have reasonable contracts, and without the membership dues and participation, the union would not exist.

In my experience as an organizer in Michigan, I have had the opportunity to meet faculty at many colleges, some represented by a union, and some not. The one truth I have learned is that without union representation, faculty compensation remains immobile and benefits do not exist. I have witnessed professors working fulltime, year round, for as little as \$18,000 annually at large colleges, not receiving benefits like healthcare or sick leave, and being arbitrarily hired and fired without notice. This may seem shocking, but we as employees have little protection from workplace abuse and exploitation without the collective power of our unions. Supporting your union of peers not only benefits you, but your colleagues as well. Always remember: we are stronger together at the table than we are on our own, and if you do not pay dues, then someone else is paying for you!

Whitney Dziurka, UNTF Organizer

# Reappointment Offers and Non-Renewal Letters

In 2010 the UNTF bargained a policy for all Fixed-Term Faculty and Academic Staff to be given either an appointment offer or a non-renewal letter at least 1 month before the current appointment ends. We did this to provide better notification of employment to our members, so we can all plan our lives or know when we need to find work elsewhere. The decision whether to offer reappointment or to tell the employee there will be no reappointment is up to the individual department, but this policy guarantees you notification of the decision. Previously, notification of employment was not ensured to Fixed-Term Faculty and Academic Staff at MSU. After many departments missed their deadlines, we bargained a 2 weeks pay penalty in 2014. Since many fixed-term appointments end on May 15<sup>th</sup>, a lot of UNTF members have been getting their offers or notices and we have spotted some trends.

Many reappointment letters are now including deadlines to be accepted. Departments are now requiring offers to be accepted by a stated date, or within a certain amount of days. This has not been a wide spread pattern in the past and is not something we negotiated. Please let us know if this creates any problems for you.

Non-renewal letters suggest that the Union is somehow responsible for non-renewals. You may have read language like, "The Department is required to provide you with the following information", or "This notice is provided in accordance with provisions of the MSU/UNTF contract" in your non-renewal letter. Appointment offers have not included the same language, but offers of reappointment are also mandatory under the UNTF contract.

We, as a Union, work hard to ensure the reappointment or non-renewal procedures are as clear and smooth as possible for our members. If you have any questions about language in your appointment offer or about the requirements for reappointments or non-renewals in the UNTF contract, please contact us. We love hearing from our members and could not exist without you.

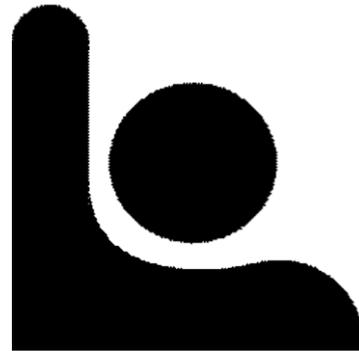
## Volunteer with UNTF

UNTF is a limited-staff organization, supported by peer volunteers. This means activists, stewards and leaders volunteer their time to help resolve grievances, grow the organization, talk to elected officials and participate in union-building initiatives.

Any member or retiree who wants to get involved is encouraged to sign up to volunteer. You can either fill out this form and mail it to us, or email us at [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org) for information on volunteer opportunities. Check one or more opportunities and let us know how much time you have available (1 to 10 hours a month)!

### Yes, I want to volunteer with my union. I can...

- Attend a General Membership Meeting
- Attend a rally
- Call or write legislators or local newspapers
- Encourage colleagues to participate
- Become a Department Representative
- Participate in a committee
- Help out in another way: \_\_\_\_\_



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_