

Your Union

Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty

Michigan State University
AFT 1855



Save the Dates

July 17 **Pre-Negotiations Meeting**
Wednesday, July 17
UNTF Office
1:00-3:00pm

Learn about the contract negotiations, help with research and prep!

Sept. 4 **Designation B training**
Wednesday, Sept. 4
UNTF office
6:00pm

Optional training to help guide those eligible for Designation B through the application process.

Designation B Update

MSU responses and Union solutions

Job security is a top concern for most fixed-term faculty at MSU. Much time and effort was put into creating a system in the UNTF contract to require MSU to provide long term appointments. Under our Union contract, if an employee gains Designation B status, their next appointment must be for a minimum of three (3) years.

The first chance for employees to apply for designation B was spring semester 2013. Thirty three (33) employees applied and twenty-two (22) gained Designation B! This is a success and we hope to continue to build these numbers in the semesters to come, and thus gain more job security for our membership as a whole.

As stated in the last UNTF newsletter, some complications with this first round of Designation B applications were:

- a. Departments not giving members access to the criteria being used
- b. Clerical errors resulting in applications not being processed
- c. Departments not recommending seemingly qualified faculty and/or using arbitrary criteria

To find out how UNTF is dealing with these issues, turn to Page Two!



Have you liked us on Facebook yet? Check out our page at "UNTF, AFT Local 1855" for the latest updates about your union!

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Welcome grad students!

Did you know that during every summer session, MSU departments hire a number of graduate students as instructors, making them members of UNTF?

If you are a graduate student and have questions about how your benefits status changes over the summer, and how the UNTF contract differs from the Graduate Employees Union (GEU) contract, please call our office!

Remember: strong unions benefit *all* workers, not just those in the union. Unified fixed-term faculty help pave the way for unified TAs and vice versa – sign up for full membership today!

a. We have requested information on the criteria used to approve/deny a faculty member's application. In departments where it appears only SIRS scores were used to evaluate one's eligibility we are making the argument that more criteria should be taken into consideration. We have had several meetings with HR and the Provost's office to try to rectify this situation.

b. We filed a grievance on behalf of three (3) members whose applications were not being processed. We were able to overturn that decision for two (2) of the members, and found that the one (1) was not currently in the UNTF bargaining unit and thus not eligible for Designation B.

c. One department did not recommend any of their faculty members who applied for designation B status. Due to the fact that they seem qualified, we have arranged meetings with management to discuss this.

We want to ensure that UNTF members understand this process and have the tools they need to apply successfully. We will be holding **Designation B Training on Wednesday, September 4 at 6pm in the UNTF office** for all members who are eligible. We will review the paper work, the major review, the deadlines and the criteria that have been used in the past. If you are unable to make it, we will happily meet with you individually. We look forward to seeing you there, and will contact you prior to the meeting if our records show that you may be eligible to apply for Designation B in September. If you have questions about whether you are eligible and/or when you may be able to apply, let us know!

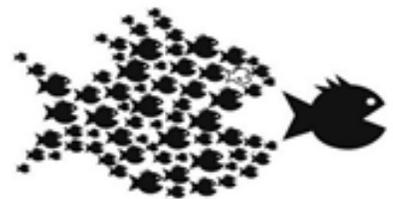
Volunteer Opportunities!

We need YOU! Our union is only as strong as its volunteers. Check out these exciting opportunities to make your voice heard and keep our union strong during this summer and beyond. Nominate yourself or a colleague!

Executive board: Develop leadership skills and communicate with fellow members.

Departmental stewards: Being a department steward simply means listening to your colleagues' concerns and questions, and helping them to find the answers they need. More importantly, becoming a steward means identifying as a union presence in your department and keeping members informed about union business. This one is especially important as we move into a bargaining year!

Negotiations and Bargaining research: 2013-2014 will begin the negotiations process for our second contract with MSU, and we need members who are willing to help us conduct research in order to prepare. If you have some extra time over the summer, or if you would like to be involved in this extremely important process, let us know as soon as possible.



The Affordable Care Act and Fixed-Term Health Care

Recently MSU approached UNTF about negotiating changes to the health care plans. The UNTF sent out a notice to all members currently receiving health care through the University seeking members interested in serving on this committee. Currently **Rich Manderfield** is representing the membership assisted by UNTF staff. **If you would like to participate in this process, it's not too late – contact the office for more information!**

A number of provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) start to take effect in 2014 and MSU is interested in making changes in order to avoid the University having to pay penalties for not offering health care to full time employees.

The University currently offers health care to employees if they meet two (2) criteria:

- a) they must be actively employed at least fifty percent (50%) AND
- b) their current appointment(s) must span at least nine (9) months.

The ACA uses different criteria. The ACA says that if a large employer does not offer health care to full time employees - **those working thirty (30) hours or more** – it may have to pay an annual penalty. The University is proposing to offer UNTF employees who don't meet the MSU criteria, but who *do* meet the ACA criteria, single-person coverage in a catastrophic health care plan. This catastrophic health care plan would have huge deductibles and huge co-pays but it would provide some coverage in the event of major medical expenses. Offering it would also prevent MSU from having to pay the penalties in the ACA.

While the ACA criteria for health care creates a problem for MSU, the MSU criteria for benefits creates a problem for some UNTF members. The requirement that the current appointment(s) must span at least nine (9) months has left some fixed term faculty with no insurance. Some departments make semester to semester appointments. Some are slow to announce their spring appointments. This can leave even long serving fixed term employees with less than nine-month appointments. The UNTF tried to find a solution to this last fall but MSU was unwilling to make a change.

The UNTF representatives have conveyed to MSU that UNTF is willing to add the catastrophic health care plan if MSU will start providing regular benefits to long serving fixed term employees with a less than nine (9) months appointment.

We are waiting for a response from MSU.

Changing Faces

- Congratulations to member and Vice President **Barry DeCoster**, who has left MSU for a tenure track position. Barry has served as an officer at UNTF since 2012 and we'll miss his hard work and dedication. Best of luck, Barry!
- Lead organizer and UNTF staff **Angela Mishler** is moving to Washington, D.C., where she will get married and pursue her dream of acting. Angela is sad to leave UNTF but looking forward to what the future brings!
- **Elizabeth Pellerito** joins us from the Department of English at MSU, where she completed her Ph.D. in 2012 and worked as a Visiting Assistant Professor during 2012-2013. Elizabeth is excited to join the staff and encourages you to email her at elizabeth@untf.org if you have questions or concerns during your summer appointment.

How did you do on your quiz in the April newsletter?

1. True or False: A UNTF fixed term faculty member cannot get an appointment longer than 1 year?

It is **FALSE** that a fixed term faculty member cannot get an appointment longer than a year.

2. True or False: No one under the UNTF contract has been given a multi-year contract since the union formed?

It is **FALSE** that no UNTF member has received a multi-year contract since the union formed. 22 members received three-year appointments under Designation B last semester! And at least 39 have received longer appointments without having to use the Designation B process.

3. Multiple choice: Name a way your department can give you long term job security

- a) Convert you from fixed term to continuous employment
- b) Give you Designation B outside of the application process
- c) Give you a 3 year appointment or longer
- d) Recommend you be given Designation B when you apply
- e) All of the above

MSU can give you long term job security by **(e) All of the above**: Convert you to continuous appointment; give you Designation B inside or outside of the application process; AND simply give you a 3 year appointment or longer.

4. Who runs the UNTF: 1) internal staff members, 2) the AFT, or 3) your non-tenure track peers at MSU?

Who runs the UNTF? **You do!** UNTF is run by non-tenure track peers. There's room for YOU on our board!

5. What is the longest form of job security you can obtain, while still remaining fixed term?

The longest form of job security you can obtain while still remaining fixed term is 5 years.

Pre-negotiations meeting

Help us prepare to bargain our 2014 contract!

Wednesday, July 17 at 1:00pm

UNTF office (Lake Lansing and Hagadorn)

Our current contract expires May 15, 2014.

We need help with research, member surveys, strategies, and more. Give as much or as little time as you are able, and learn about the bargaining process before we begin negotiations!

Snacks provided.

RSVP at office@untf.org.