

# Your Union

## Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty

at Michigan State University

Local 1855 AFT, AFL-CIO

RIGHT: UNTF President Penny Gardner addresses the Board of Trustees to kick off Campus Equity Week (October 25, 2013).



### Save the Date

**Feb. 4**      **General Membership Meeting**  
Tuesday, February 4, 2014  
5:00pm  
Watch your inbox for more details!

BELOW: UNTF was pleased to welcome activists from all around Michigan to our offices when we hosted the largest gathering of higher education locals in AFT-Michigan history! We were joined by AFT-Michigan President David Hecker along with members and staff from locals at the University of Michigan, Eastern, Western, Central, Wayne State, Kalamazoo Valley CC, Henry Ford CC, Lansing CC, and Macomb CC.  
November 23, 2013

## UNTF Announces Travel Funding Pilot Program

The UNTF Executive Board is excited to announce a pilot program for Spring 2014: the UNTF Professional Development Travel Fund.

Sharing research and pedagogical strategies is an important component of our careers as fixed-term faculty. We have heard from members that funding to attend conferences is in short supply for nontenure-track faculty in many departments.

This spring, nontenure-track faculty who are full members of UNTF can apply for a \$200 grant for travel costs related to a presentation at a conference or workshop in the applicant's field. Our board is still finalizing the details and application form. Watch your email early in the new year for more information!

### Department and College Stewards Needed!

Many departments and colleges remain unrepresented in UNTF. Stewards help keep their colleagues informed about what's happening in the union and in negotiations. To volunteer, call (517) 203 0880 or email [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org).  
Your union needs you!



(517) 203-0880  
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# 2013 Merit Pay Report

The contract between UNTF and MSU required the University to give out raises each October in the last four (4) years. An average raise of two percent (2%) was distributed to UNTF members this year. We have been monitoring the administration of this raise and, while there are a number of glitches, most UNTF members got their increase.

The raise is merit-based, which means that departments could give some members more than 2% and some members less than 2% based on individual achievements, as long as each college had an *average* increase of 2%. First, the university developed a list of eligible employees. The equivalent of two percent (2%) of each eligible employee's *teaching* salary was put into a pool.

## Merit Raises for Late Appointments

Some departments have a major problem with late appointments. Sometimes the department decides at the last minute to give a fixed term appointment for the semester. Sometimes the department doesn't forward the paperwork to Human Resources in a timely manner. This means that the faculty member may not be paid on time, and may not have access to University e mail and the registrar's system. Late appointments hurt the students and the employee. UNTF has identified the departments with the largest number of late appointments and has urged Human Resources to work with them to improve their hiring process.

Raises have also been jeopardized by late appointments. In 2012 UNTF discovered that the University was not putting money into the merit pool for the salary of late appointments. This meant a smaller pool for all employees. In addition we found that some departments were not considering late appointments as eligible for the raise. UNTF met a number of times with the administration to improve the process for 2013. This year there were thirty four (34) UNTF members whose appointment had not been fully processed at the time that the merit pool was established. We have confirmed that seventeen (17) have since been given an increase. We are working to ensure that the remaining seventeen (17) faculty members do not miss their raise because of a late appointment.

Each College then distributed that pool to fixed term faculty. Each academic unit should have guidelines on the distribution of the pool. After meetings in which UNTF expressed our concerns about accountability in the existing raise model, MSU Human Resources introduced new measures this year to ensure that every eligible employee was considered for a raise and that the maximum amount of raise moneys would be distributed within each unit.

## Eligible Employees

A UNTF member is eligible for consideration for the raise if he/she held an appointment on January 1<sup>st</sup> and on October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

## Fixed Term Teaching Only

The merit pool has to be distributed to fixed term teaching faculty. Prior to the formation of UNTF, fixed-term teaching faculty were lumped into a pool with tenure-track and non-teaching faculty. Under the old system, a College or a department could choose to distribute *all* of the increases to tenured faculty, leaving long-term adjunct faculty with no increase year after year. Under the UNTF contract, the money has to go to members of UNTF.

Please note that the increase is only for the teaching portion of your appointment. About half of UNTF members have an appointment with some non-teaching duties. Any raise for the non-teaching portion of your salary is supposed to come from the non-Union merit pay pool. The non-Union pool is funded at one and one half percent (1 ½%) this year.

## Merit Raises for One-Semester Faculty

The University appears to have no mechanism for giving increases to faculty who only work spring semester or fall semester. In order to be eligible for the UNTF 2% raises or the 1 ½ % non-Union raises, a faculty member must work both January 1 and October 1. This is a significant gap in the system. A faculty member could teach spring semester for decades and still not get an increase! This issue will be discussed in the upcoming negotiations and UNTF is interested in hearing from members who may be in this situation.

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## Range of Increases

Most eligible UNTF members got a raise at or close to two percent (2%). There were only fourteen (14) members who were eligible for a raise and did not get any increase. The highest increase was 6.9%, awarded to a member in the College of Natural Science. A number of departments gave every eligible employee a two percent (2%) raise. They include Accounting and Information Systems; Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering; , Food Science and Human Nutrition; James Madison; Journalism; Marketing; Osteopathic Medicine; Packaging; Planning, Design and Construction; Political Science; Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics and Integrative Studies in General Science.

If you have questions about your increase, please let us know via (517) 203-0880 or [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org).

## Merit Raises in Social Work

In 2012 there were seventeen (17) eligible UNTF members who did not get any raise; thirteen (13) of them were from the department of Social Work. When UNTF investigated, we discovered that for historical reasons that department had considered many of their employees not eligible for raises. It got better this year: only four (4) UNTF employees in that department were shut out of the process. After meeting with UNTF, Human Resources directed the department to go back and consider these four employees for the 2013 raise. We are still arguing that these employees should receive their 2012 raise also.

## UNTF Files Designation B Criteria Grievance

In September, the College of Communications Arts published its criteria for members to receive Designation B. Nontenure-track faculty in CAS were informed that in order to achieve Designation B (a three-year appointment), they should demonstrate “a combination of” five criteria. The following criteria were sent to every fixed-term employee in CAS:

- SIRS scores: An aggregate average score of 1.7 or lower for all courses (minimum of five) across most recent two consecutive semesters.
- National awards – Receive national teaching award either individually or on a class basis (not internal to MSU).
- Innovative methods – Demonstrate innovation in the classroom (e.g., raising significant funds for class activities, garnering corporate sponsorships for a class, or holding classroom experiences that receive external publicity).
- Interdisciplinary coursework – Develop for-credit coursework with one or more MSU colleges external to CAS involving new and innovative course subjects not currently available at MSU.

- Student award recipients (national) – Coordinate large scale [sic] submission of student work that results in national awards for two or more consecutive years.

UNTF has filed a grievance against CAS on the grounds that these criteria are unrealistic and meant to prevent the college from granting Designation B to any employee. The College rejected all applicants in Spring 2013, before it had published any criteria. We met with Associate Provost Terry Curry and CAS Dean Pam Whitten, who claimed that she developed these criteria in conjunction with the chairs of the five departments in CAS.

The Provost has rejected our grievance, but the fight is not over yet. We have filed a request to take this matter to arbitration by a third party. In addition, our negotiations steering committee is currently developing a proposal for contract language that would prevent departments from refusing to grant Designation B; we will present this proposal to the university during bargaining next semester.

**Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty**  
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**Suite 201-E**  
**East Lansing MI 48823**

## Union Coffee Hour



UNTF recently hosted a coffee hour for members in the English Language Center, Romance and Classical Studies, and Linguistics and Languages. Members took a break from their busy schedules to grab a snack and UNTF t-shirt and talk with union reps about their questions and concerns as we move toward negotiations.

Would you like us to host a coffee hour in your department? Email us at [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org) or call (517) 203-0880!