

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

## **3<sup>rd</sup> class Faculty - Why no AY?**

It is well documented that the United States has moved to a system of 2 classes of teachers in higher education; tenured faculty and fixed term faculty and academic staff. The tenured faculty enjoy job security and fair compensation. The fixed term faculty and academic staff have no job security (unless UNTF designation B) and in many cases low compensation. But MSU actually has a third lower class of faculty and academic staff – faculty and academic staff denied AY status.

At MSU faculty and academic staff who are hired to teach fall and spring semester but not necessarily the summer are given the designation of AY. This stands for Academic Year and reflects the period of time the employee is hired to perform duties. Tenured and fixed term faculty and academic staff or given this designation. AY faculty and academic staff work 9 months but are given benefits for 12 months (as are all K-12 teachers).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> tier of faculty and academic staff at MSU are hired to teach fall and spring semester but not classified as AY by their department. This is an old practice at some departments. In the fall, the employee is given a fall appointment and a spring appointment instead of a 9 month appointment. The only reason to do this is to avoid paying benefits in the summer. Currently about 70 faculty and academic staff at MSU are given this 3<sup>rd</sup> class status. They will lose their health care May 15<sup>th</sup>. Some of them have taught every fall and spring for years and they are still in this 3<sup>rd</sup> class status. Every May 15<sup>th</sup> MSU “fires” them. In the fall they are “rehired” and get a new hire date.

The nefarious nature of this system is illustrated by the fact that MSU does not even have an official designation to give their 3<sup>rd</sup> class faculty and academic staff. Tenured and fixed term faculty and academic staff who are hired to work 12 months are called AN. Since MSU doesn't have a designation for faculty and academic staff hired to work 9 months but being treated like they are only working 1 semester, MSU codes them as AN also. Some departments have tried to fill this bureaucratic void by coming up with their own terminology. They are called “per course” or “per diem” faculty and academic staff.

There are faculty and academic staff who only work 1 semester. We are not including these employees in this discussion. MSU has the flexibility to hire faculty and academic staff for a semester here and there. We are talking about employees who consistently work every semester and are denied status and benefits for no reason except for the department to save dollars.

The UNTF has been advocating for this 3<sup>rd</sup> class to be eliminated (2 classes is already too many). The University has promised to examine it. We will let you know any developments. If you are one of these individuals we would be happy to discuss it. We also urge you to bring this up with your department when given your next appointment offers.

### ***In This Issue:***

#### ***Page 1***

*3<sup>rd</sup> Class Faculty*

#### ***Page 2***

*Thoughts on Collectivity*

#### ***Page 3***

*New Face- Evan Stivers  
Parking Permits for AY  
Merit Raises*

#### ***Page 4***

*Academic Freedom  
Designation B Training*

# Thoughts on Collectivity

I have been contemplating the past and present state of collectivity, and of its decline as a national value. I use the term collective, or collectivity to represent many of us coming together to create a common good. Collectivity provides opportunity to transform what is, to what could be. Unions of course are the result of the power of workers joining together to fight for and achieve from their employer long over-due rights and benefits.

Our collective power, as the UNION OF NONTENURE FACULTY, provides us with the opportunity to achieve certain rights and benefits, denied to many while privileging the few. As our membership increases, so does the power for all of us to achieve the rights and benefits earned through our service to MSU.

I came to the UNTF as a long-time feminist. It is in my feminist activism, leadership, and study that I understand and experience our collectivism as power. We are powerful by coming together for the common good. As our power and experience as feminists grew, we began to achieve progress toward national resolution of our issues, as women.

Over the year's collectivism has taken a hit by the embracing of our society of individualism. Individualism is about you being denied your rights that I can have more than my share. You being left behind is my strategy for me getting ahead. I got mine, that's all that matters.

The concept of Unions is quite the opposite of individualism. It is about the understanding of, and serving a collective of workers. Collective action as power is the business of your UNION OF NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY. Are you a member? And all of us are grateful. Are you a service payer? Thanks, except won't you please consider becoming a full member? Are you neither? I urge you to dig further into my argument for the power of collective. The broader is the collective, the more we can achieve for the many.

Unions, Laws, political movements-for and against equality, religions, team work, the U.S. Constitution, are all supported, maintained and accomplished, or defeated by the collective value of the many.

In solidarity,

Penny Gardner, PhD  
First & Past President of the UNTF



## UNTF Has a New Face

Evan Stivers has been hired as a temporary organizer. He is making his way around campus to reach out to the many new hires.



Evan is an MSU graduate he has worked with the ACLU of Michigan. He has a passion for social justice and served as an Intercultural Aide and a Multi-Racial Unity Living Experience Student Leader.

## Parking Permits for AY Employees

For Academic Year Employees (AY employees), MSU now offers 2 options for a parking permit.

- An Academic Year (AY) Permit which will expire May 15, 2017. This permit can be payroll deducted \$42.50/month, September through April. (If you need to be on campus periodically in the summer, and you choose this permit, then you will need to purchase additional parking privileges for the period of time needed.)
- Or AY employees may choose a full 12 month permit, which is valid July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. Since this permit is valid for 12 months, but MSU can only process payroll deductions for 8 months of the year for AY employees, it is payroll deducted \$63.75/month, September through April.

## Merit Raise Distributed

The MSU/UNTF contract guaranteed a raise pool of 2% this year for fixed term teaching faculty and academic staff. That pool has been distributed. In addition, minimum salary levels were increased 2% effective October 1.

530 employees were eligible for the UNTF merit raise this year.

**Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for a raise at the UNTF rate, an individual must have been employed by MSU *in any capacity* (not necessarily a UNTF-eligible appointment) on January 1, 2016 and must have a UNTF appointment of any percentage on October 1, 2016 or be a fall only employee who worked last fall and this fall.

**The Pool:** For each eligible employee in UNTF in a particular college, the university puts 2% of their UNTF salary into a pool to be distributed among employees in that college. Two percent (2%) of each eligible employee's full time salary was about \$360,000. All money in the pool **MUST** be distributed to UNTF employees. While it is possible that a given employee may receive a 0% merit increase, they must at least be *considered* for a raise if they are eligible for one. If they do not get a raise or get less than 2%, the remaining money must be given to other UNTF employees.

**Performance Evaluations:** Our contract ties merit increases to performance evaluations. This helps to limit the power of a chair to give raises only to his or her "favorites" and should increase transparency of the process. Article 18 of our contract also stipulates that employees should be evaluated once per year according to commonly accepted and publicly available standards and criteria. The contract also encourages departments to use multiple sources of information to evaluate employees – in other words, it discourages chairs or committees basing evaluations only on SIRS scores.

**Split appointments:** Those with split appointments are eligible for two separate raises prorated according to their appointments, one at the UNTF rate and one at the non-union rate.

The process used by MSU is complicated. If you have questions about your raise, be sure and contact the UNTF office.

There are a few departments that do not appear to have distributed all of their pool. (They decided not to give 1 or more eligible employees a raise but did not give that money to other UNTF employees.) We are working with MSU to determine if this is correct and how it should be remedied.

# Academic Freedom – Includes Fixed Term

MSU has a policy on Academic Freedom. It states in part:

“Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.”

It applies to tenure and fixed term teachers alike. The MSU/UNTF contract states:

All employees shall enjoy the rights of academic freedom as stated in the University policy on Academic Freedom in effect as of the effective date of this agreement (and any properly adopted revisions).

While fixed term faculty and academic staff are, in many ways, treated differently than tenured faculty, Academic Freedom is meant to be enjoyed by all.

## Training on Designation B Application Process

UNTF's contract with MSU features Designation B, the process whereby long-term employees can apply for three-year rolling appointments. Employees are eligible at the start of the tenth semester of teaching (not including summers) within the past six years. So far 51 Union members have been awarded this status. If you have questions about when you will be eligible, please email us at [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org) and we will be happy to help you figure it out.

The next opportunity to apply is January of 2017. All members are invited to join us **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm at the UNTF office** for training on how to navigate this process. We will go over the application procedures for Designation B, and we'll have members who have successfully completed the process available to share their experiences and give tips.

Members who plan to apply in fall of 2017 or later are also encouraged to attend - in fact, many of our past participants found it useful to have an extra semester to plan their portfolios and gather materials.

Please RSVP for this event or by email ([office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org)) or phone (517-203-0880). We look forward to seeing you there! The next deadline for Designation B applications is January 31, 2017.