

# Your Union

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

## Special Edition: Negotiations Update

### MSU TO FIXED-TERM FACULTY: “ASSUME YOU ARE FIRED”

The UNTF bargaining team continues to meet with MSU’s Office of Employee Relations for contract negotiations. On March 21, we received MSU’s counterproposals – and the working conditions they present for fixed-term faculty are grim. Here’s what the university would look like for the 540+ faculty in UNTF if MSU has its way:

#### **NOTICE OF REAPPOINTMENT:**

Our current contract requires a department to notify employees whether or not their contract will be renewed one month before their appointment ends (Article 15). MSU’s team proposed to eliminate this notice entirely. We were told that every fixed-term faculty member should assume that they are going to be let go at the end of every appointment unless they are told otherwise.

#### **PAY:**

In addition to annual pay raises, UNTF proposed an increase to the minimum salary rates. (Our records show that a majority of those getting paid at the minimum salary level are women.) MSU’s vision of the university would offer increases to the minimum salary rate and merit raises of only 0.5% this year, 1% in 2015, 1% in 2016 and 1.25% in 2017.

As a result of UNTF’s identification of problems with the distribution of merit raises over the past two years, we have worked with MSU to develop procedures to ensure that future raises are distributed fully and fairly. MSU rejected our proposal to make sure these procedures are written in the contract for transparency to employees and to department chairs.

#### **BENEFITS:**

Currently all full-time faculty and staff at MSU receive the same health care options, with the exception of some fixed-term faculty whose health care is restricted because they only have one-semester appointments. UNTF proposed faster access to health care for full-time, semester-to-semester employees. You guessed it – MSU rejected this proposal. Instead, they would like UNTF to

link our health insurance, prescription, and dental benefits to tenure-track faculty. This would allow MSU to make changes to these plans without bargaining with UNTF.

MSU would also like to remove reference to employee-paid voluntary benefits in the contract. Though they said they have no plans to discontinue these plans for fixed-term faculty right now, removing them from the contract means that they would no longer be required to offer these benefits to UNTF members in the future.

#### **GRIEVANCES:**

When there is a department-wide problem or an issue that affects a number of employees, UNTF can file a group grievance on behalf of all affected persons. MSU would like to change this process so that at least two individuals would have to sign their names to the grievance. Why is this an issue? Individuals who fear retribution may not want to be identified in this process – allowing UNTF to file a group grievance protects their anonymity.

#### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and ACADEMIC FREEDOM:**

- UNTF proposed increased protections of academic freedom, since our members are outside of the tenure system and therefore more vulnerable. **REJECTED**
- We proposed that office and mailbox space should be FERPA-compliant to allow for privacy. **REJECTED**
- We proposed that Designation B decisions should not be based only on teaching evaluations. **REJECTED**
- We proposed that fall- or spring-only employees who return year after year should have access to merit raises and Designation B. **REJECTED**

## Member Meeting: Monday, April 14 at 5pm

*Please join us for a discussion about contract negotiations: questions, updates, next steps. This is also an opportunity to nominate yourself or another for an executive board position!*

**Monday, April 14, 2014**

**111 Bessey**

**5:00-6:30pm**

**RSVP appreciated: [office@untf.org](mailto:office@untf.org)**

**Full members only.** If you have questions about your membership status, please email us or call us at (517) 203 0880.

**Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty  
2990 E. Lake Lansing Rd.  
Suite 201-E  
East Lansing MI 48823**

## Now accepting UNTF officer nominations

### ***We are UNTF!***

The UNTF Elections Committee is currently accepting nominations for executive board positions. UNTF is a member-run organization: we make our own decisions about what is important to us. To nominate yourself or another, or if you have questions about the board or any of the positions, email [elections@untf.org](mailto:elections@untf.org). **The deadline to submit nominations is Wednesday, April 16, 2014.**

Positions available:

President  
Vice-President  
Grievance Committee Chair

Treasurer  
Secretary  
Communications Chair

Finance Committee Chair  
Organizing Chair  
Solidarity/Political Action Chair