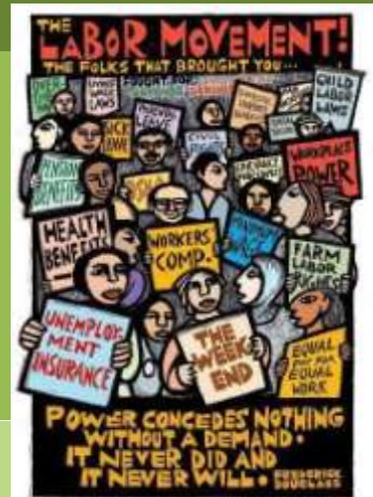


Your Union

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

RIGHT: Image by Ricardo Levins Morales



Welcome to new and returning faculty

Dear Colleagues,

Another school year is upon us. As you prepare your syllabi, meet new students, and begin grading papers and projects, we invite you to take a closer look at some of what’s happening in and around the university. Take a break from your academic work to meet your new colleagues as well, as we welcome about one hundred new fixed-term faculty to MSU’s campus this fall. You’ll see in this issue of our newsletter some of the exciting and dynamic ways that UNTF members contribute to the intellectual life of MSU. From extensive involvement in Project 60/50 to activism in the movement for clean energy, fixed-term faculty at MSU are leading the charge in creating an inclusive, just community.

As we fully enter the era of Right to Work (Right to Freeload) union membership becomes more important than ever. For those new to the area, RTW is the union-busting law passed in Michigan’s lame-duck session in 2012 that gives union members who receive all the rights and benefits of our contract the option to stop paying any representation fees at all. These laws are designed to weaken unions by cutting off their income, which pays for dedicated staff experts and affiliation with our parent union, the American Federation of Teachers. With UNTF bargaining unit members receiving a 2.75% merit pool and all other faculty on campus receiving only 2%, the benefits of bargaining collectively are clear. The good news for UNTF is that our membership rates have so far remained steady, with only a few members formally requesting to stop paying their fair share. However, we need YOU to help – and you can do so simply by talking to colleagues about the union and asking if they’ve signed their union card yet.

In solidarity,
Your 2014-2015 Executive Board

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Professional Development Travel Fund, Fall 2014

You asked, and we listened.

One common complaint for fixed-term faculty is that we simply don't have access to the resources offered to tenure-stream faculty or even to graduate students. Travel funding is a key example: while some departments have generous funding programs for fixed-term faculty who wish to present research or attend conferences in their field, many simply allocate the "leftovers" to its nontenure-track faculty.

In any field, staying on top of new developments in the field is important, but it can often be crucial in the ever-evolving world of academia. **UNTF believes that each department should philosophically and financially support the needs of nontenure-track faculty just as they do for those on the tenure stream.** However, we also know that travel is expensive, especially on a fixed-term salary.

Therefore, we are pleased to announce the renewal of our Professional Development Travel Fund for Fall 2014. This fund is available **only** to full members of UNTF who will present at or attend a conference or training in their field requiring an overnight stay.

Additional details will be available via email, including the application for funds. Each grant will be for \$200 and will be made via reimbursement upon provision of a conference program and registration. **All submissions should be emailed to office@untf.org by October 1.**

Should the amount of funds available be insufficient to cover the number of applications received, grant recipients will be chosen by random lottery.

New faculty breakdown

UNTF welcomes new fixed-term faculty to MSU!

- So far, MSU has notified UNTF of about 100 new faculty hires in our bargaining unit.
- This represents a turnover of about 20% from Spring 2014.
- New hires come from every college at MSU, but the colleges with the largest numbers of new fixed-term teaching faculty include Arts and Letters (18 new UNTF members), Communication Arts (12), and Social Science (12).
- Three new hires were appointed at the rank of Full Professor and 4 at the rank of Associate Professor. Six of the seven hired at top ranks were male.
- The large majority of new hires were hired as Instructors or Assistant Professors. Women outnumbered men at the lower rank of Instructor, but not at the Assistant Professor level. We also welcome several new specialists, assistant instructors, lecturers, specialists, and one artist-in-residence.
- About 40% of our new hires have a one-semester appointment. On the other hand, six new hires received a three-year appointment (2 in Arts and Letters, 2 in the College of Human Medicine, 1 in Comm Arts and 1 in Education).

Labor Rights are Civil Rights: UNTF and Project 60/50

MSU's Project 60/50 is a yearlong series of events that celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which dismantled the fiction of "separate but equal" segregation in public schools, and the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act. In addition to classes, workshops, film screenings, and programs designed to facilitate campus- and community-wide conversations about race, this fall's "One Book, One Community" program featured three voices on race, each of whom came to East Lansing to speak with students, faculty and community members.

The month of September witnesses campus events featuring Congressman John Lewis, civil rights legend and co-author of the graphic novel *March: Book One*; filmmaker Ryan Coogler, director of *Fruitvale Station*; and Michele Norris, NPR contributor and author of her memoir *The Grace of Silence*. In addition, the College of Arts and Letters will host journalist Soledad O'Brien and Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns*, on October 2 at the Wharton Center for its Signature Lecture Series.

Workers' rights have long been inseparable from civil rights, whether it be the sanitation workers on strike with Martin Luther King, Jr. at the moment of his assassination in 1968 or the workers striking for a high minimum wage in cities across the nation in September. Unions help protect against discrimination leveled at women, people of color, and other disadvantaged groups.

Project 60/50 would be impossible without the efforts of fixed-term faculty at MSU, who are working at every level to facilitate conversations and events as part of this important series. As you walk around campus and see posters lining the halls of the Comm Arts building, or hear students discussing *March: Book One*, be proud of your colleagues whose pedagogical efforts make this program as rich and compelling as possible for our

students. We've highlighted a few contributions by UNTF members below – see page 5 for a schedule of events and support your colleagues' contributions!

Dan Smith, the resident dramaturg in the Department of Theatre, collaborated with faculty members Rob Roznowski and Christina Traister in the **60/50 Theatre Project**. The project is a theatrical examination of MSU's involvement in human and civil rights. Tickets are available via the Wharton Center Box Office.

Donna Kaplowitz (RCAH) has developed an entire course for her program asking students to engage in the work of civil rights and social justice. The course, called "Social Identity, Intercultural Dialogue and Social Justice," is a Freshman Seminar for incoming students in the Residential College for Arts and Humanities. Kaplowitz will ask her students to think about racial and ethnic privilege and the role different social identities play in oppressive systems at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Students will also learn how to be effective allies to other social identity groups while they challenge their own assumptions and preconceived ideas.

Stacy Hickox (Human Resources and Labor Relations) has been instrumental in putting together a day-long conference on October 24 called "Spartans Working for Diversity." The conference will include sessions on diversity and inclusion in a wide variety of capacities, including LGBT issues, appearance discrimination, affinity groups, social media, and the political influence of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The conference is free and open to anyone who RSVPs on the MSU LERA website.

Congratulations to these UNTF members on their hard work and dedication to inclusion and equality in MSU and beyond!

Member Voices: What Can We Do to Fight Global Warming?

Ed. Note: This month we are introducing a member's perspective on union issues. These columns are meant to stoke dialogue within the union on important topics and represent individual opinions, not necessarily UNTF official stances. If you would like to contribute a piece to our next newsletter, please email us at office@untf.org.

A study released predicts the world is on track to be 4 degrees Celsius warmer by 2100 because of missed climate targets.¹ What would happen if there were a four-degree rise? That would be the “tipping point.” Sea levels would rise 1.2 meters. Coastal cities would flood. The oceans would acidify. Intense heat would create deserts. Corn and wheat yields would decrease by 35%. Hurricanes’ destructive power would increase 25%. Huge amounts of greenhouse gases could be released from the permafrost.² What has to be done now: 80 percent of fossil fuels in the ground must stay there, never to be extracted.³

People and organizations are divesting from coal, oil and natural gas. As of today, there are 126 commitments from colleges, universities, cities, counties, religious institutions, foundations and other institutions around the world.⁴ And divesting is not hurting returns. Bloomberg reports that ex-fossil fuel portfolios have had the same level of performance as portfolios that include oil, coal and gas producers and companies with high carbon reserves.⁵

Fortunately, UNTF funds are in cash and CDs already, but the union could officially make the commitment not to buy fossil fuel stocks in the future, possibly making it one of the first fossil fuel-free unions on record in the country. More significantly, we could also ask MSU HR to expand the choices available to many of us so that our 403(b)'s can reflect ecological values. For example, if TIAA-CREF has the Social Choice fund, why is it not an easy option in MSU faculty retirement plans? Let's think about future generations and see if we can do the right thing.

¹ *The Guardian*, September 8, 2014.

² <http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/how-many-gigatons-of-co2/>

³ McKibben, Bill. (2014). *Oil and honey: The education of an unlikely activist*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

⁴ <http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>

⁵ <http://gofossilfree.org/bloomberg-new-energy-finance-assesses-divestment-and-finds-net-gain/>

Peter Sakura is an Instructor in the English Language Center. He currently serves on the UNTF Executive Board as Chair of the Organizing Committee and will present a talk on fossil fuel divestment for the Value Creation Society, a student group at the University of Michigan, this October.



Upcoming events

60/50 Theatre Project, by Rob Roznowski with Dan Smith.

Th Sept. 18. 7:30pm / F Sept. 19. 8:00pm / Sat Sept 20. 8:00pm / Sun Sept. 21. 2:00pm / W Sept. 24. 7:30 pm / Th Sept. 25. 7:30pm / F Sept. 26. 8:00 pm / Sat Sept. 27. 8:00 pm / Sun. Sept. 28. 2:00pm. Tickets through Wharton Center.

Isabel Wilkerson and Soledad O'Brien. College of Arts and Letters Signature Lecture Series.

Th Oct 2. 7:30pm, Wharton Center.

UNTF Fall General Membership Meeting. *Note new date*****

T Oct 7, 5:30-7:00pm. Beggar's Banquet

Spartans Working for Diversity. Day-long conference for diversity in HR and Labor Relations.

F Oct 24. 8:30am. Hannah Center, East Lansing

"Negotiation for Women." Email wrc@msu.edu to RSVP. Free.

W Dec. 17. 8:30-10:00am OR 3:30-5:00pm, N476 N. Business College Complex.

Faculty or academic staff employed at MSU at least 50% time and who have an appointment of 9 months or longer is eligible. About half of fixed-term teaching faculty are benefits eligible (including access to health care). In our most recent contract, UNTF members' health care was linked to the non-Union faculty and academic staff. MSU must provide UNTF members the same benefits it provides tenure-track faculty. Recently, MSU notified us of several changes to the faculty plan currently under consideration.

Compound Prescriptions

The cost of prescriptions is a major portion of health care. MSU is looking at requiring prior authorization for compound prescriptions costing \$300 or more. While most prescriptions are sent to pharmacies by the manufacturer, a compound prescription has to be made by the pharmacist. This new requirement would take effect in 2015.

Specialty Medications

MSU is looking at requiring employees to use step therapy for new specialty medication prescriptions. Step therapy requires that other medications be tried first before taking the specialty medication. This requirement would take effect in 2015 for new specialty medication prescriptions.

Back Surgery

MSU is discussing requiring a second opinion prior to back surgery.

On-Site Health Center

For many years MSU has been talking about establishing an on-site health center. Those discussions have gotten more serious and the concept is being presented to the Faculty Senate this month. Such a center would offer wellness services and treatment options on or near campus. This center would be available to MSU faculty and academic staff and all retirees.

The discussion is that the Center would be funded in part by a monthly increase in premium co-pays. The exact amount is still being discussed but it would be in the area of \$25 - \$50 per month. Employees who completed a Health Risk Assessment and addressed identified health issues would have the additional premium co-pays rebated.

2015 Rates

We have obtained the health insurances rates for 2015. They show a modest increase over 2014 (1 - 3%). UNTF members in the base plan (BCN) will pay \$1.26 more per month for single coverage and \$3.09 more per month for family coverage.

UNTF is meeting with MSU to discuss these changes and welcomes comments from members.

Watch your email: MSU Board of Trustees Election Questionnaire

As we all know, election season is right around the corner. Members of UNTF identify with a wide range of political beliefs and practices, and we value the diversity of our members' contributions to the political scene. Our parent union, AFT-Michigan, makes candidate endorsements based on candidates' stances on organized labor, civil rights, and of course education at both the K-12 level and higher ed.

Our members are highly educated and intelligent people who will make their own personal decisions about what candidates to support. However, our Executive Board believes it is particularly important to educate our members about one race that hits particularly close to home: the MSU Board of Trustees. The BOT is publically elected by all voters in Michigan. Rather than endorsing one candidate in particular, we decided to compose a questionnaire and ask candidates for this important position to respond directly. Our questions are about the role of the Board in relationship to the faculty, students, legislature, and administration, and they ask candidates to comment in particular on faculty hiring trends in higher education.

We will reproduce responses from candidates in a UNTF Voters' Guide, which will be available on our website and via email. As we near the first week of November, keep an eye out so you can become more informed about the candidates for this important position!

Call for Local Representatives!

Our bargaining team worked hard to win a great contract last spring – but that contract is only worth the paper it's printed on unless we make sure it is enforced correctly and consistently. How can we do that? One of the best ways is by having individuals from each department who are willing to serve as Local Representatives.

To be a Local Rep, you **don't** need to be an expert on unions or the law. You just have to be willing to talk to your colleagues about what's happening in your department and in UNTF, and make yourself open to talk to about issues at work. If you think someone might have a grievance, you point them toward the union office and function as a liaison between UNTF and your department.

Having Local Representatives in all departments is the best way to ensure we have a strong and healthy union. The time commitment is small but the results are enormous! To become a Local Rep, call the office at (517) 203-0880 or email us at office@untf.org.

Sexual misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy at MSU

In order to maintain compliance with Title IX regulations and the Violence Against Women Act, MSU has expanded its sexual harassment policy to include sexual misconduct and relationship violence, including dating violence and stalking. The new policy is thirty pages long and contains information about victim assistance, where and how to file complaints, and reporting responsibilities for MSU faculty and staff.

Note that this policy is still in **draft form**, and the MSU Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives is actively seeking feedback from members of the MSU community before the policy is finalized. We encourage UNTF members to look over the policy and submit their feedback to the OI3 office. Materials relating to the policy and to providing feedback can be found at the OI3 website at inclusion.msu.edu.



Help EMU Lecturers Get Paid On Time!

Eastern Michigan University has imposed a new payment schedule on its part-time faculty, with the result that lecturers do not receive their first paycheck of the academic year until September 30. In previous years, lecturers had received 25% of their semester's pay by the end of September – this year, they will only have received 14%.

Eastern Michigan University Federation of Teachers (EMUFT), the lecturers' union led by President Sonya Alvarado, is calling on the university to revert back to the previous pay schedule so that faculty can properly budget for themselves and their families.

We invite you to sign EMUFT's petition to EMU President Susan Martin. With over 700 signatures already, the pressure is on. Find links to the petition at www.facebook.com/EMUFederationOfTeachers.

Changes to Dental Plan

Beginning in January, UNTF employees currently enrolled in the Aetna Dental Plan, along with other faculty and academic staff at MSU, will pay a monthly contribution to their premium. For 2015, a single user will pay \$2.62 per month; for an employee and spouse, the contribution will be \$4.98; and the family rate will be \$8.26 per month. This applies **only** to the Aetna plan; the Delta plan premiums remain fully covered by MSU.

Employees currently enrolled in the Aetna plan who wish to **keep** their coverage **must re-enroll in the plan during this fall's open enrollment period**. If you do not enroll for the Aetna plan, **you will revert to no coverage**. UNTF plans to contact individuals currently enrolled in the Aetna plan individually.

Open enrollment for all benefits for the 2015 calendar year is October 1 through 31, 2014.

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

Join us for a General Membership Meeting!

Fall 2014 General Membership Meeting

Where: Beggar's Banquet, 218 Abbot (across Grand River Ave. from campus)

When: 5:30 hors d'oeuvres, 6:00 business meeting

TUESDAY, October 7, 2014 **NOTE NEW DATE**

**We'll provide appetizers and soft drinks, but a cash bar will be available at
Beggars.**

**Join your colleagues for updates on the 2014 merit raise procedure, potential
changes to faculty health care, and more. Meet your executive board and get a
chance to know colleagues from around the university!**