

UNTF

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

Statement to the MSU Community from the Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty

In the wake of survivors' testimonies of sexual assault—tragedies that in large part unfolded on our campus—many members of the university community have expressed disbelief at the ways that student voices were silenced and ignored.

We, members of the Union of Nontenure-Track Faculty, MSU, are listening. As teaching faculty, we provide day-to-day instruction, academic guidance, and ongoing support for the entire student body. We are central to the university's educational mission. As educators, a big part of our time is spent listening to students. We listen and we care.

And what do we hear as we listen? We hear that students want transparency, a safe campus, and a responsive governance structure. Many demand concrete actions demonstrating MSU's commitment to student input and well-being. These are the things that we hear.

We stand with our students' call for honest, transparent university policies and actions that bring reform and deep healing—processes that begin with truth, followed by institutional change. We support the students and the university faculty, staff, and leaders as, together, we begin to tackle what must be done.

In This Issue

Page 2

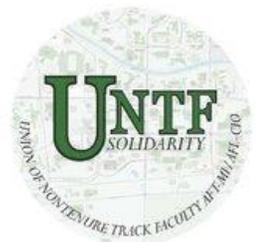
- *Intro to Jon Curtiss*
- *Negotiations Update*

Page 3

- *UNTF Goodbyes*
- *Parental Leave*

Page 4

- *Membership*



Contact us

2990 E. Lake Lansing Rd., Ste. 201-E
East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 203-0880

office@untf.org
www.untf.org
www.facebook.com/UNTF1855

Introduction to Jon Curtiss



Jon Curtiss is our field representative from AFT Michigan, the state body of our national union, the American Federation of Teachers. This year, he'll be working with our bargaining team as we negotiate a new contract. We are glad to have his assistance and expertise.

Jon came to Michigan to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan; his experience in the teaching assistants' union there led him to join the staff of AFT Michigan in 1998. He then headed the federation's organizing program for many years, helping nontenure-track faculty organize at EMU, UM, Wayne State, Central, Western, and Ferris State. He was the lead organizer here when UNTF first organized and won recognition in 2009. He has also worked with many locals in negotiating union contracts and resolving grievances with management; he has worked with the administration here at Michigan State, mostly with our sister local, the Graduate Employees Union, on and off since 2001.

Update on Contract Negotiations

The contract between UNTF and MSU expires in May 2018. The UNTF Negotiation Team, led by Jon Curtiss (UNTF Field Representative) and Rich Manderfield (Acting UNTF President) and UNTF members from several units across campus, has met for five sessions with MSU's Negotiation Team, led by Rick Fanning (Labor Relations) and Terry Curry (Academic Human Resources).

To date, negotiations have yielded "housekeeping" tentative agreements (TAs), such as fixed errata, adjusted enrollment dates, and simplified language, toward a new contract agreement between UNTF-represented non-tenure track faculty and MSU.

Proposals have been made by the UNTF toward pay parity for long-term employees as well as cost of living and merit increases for all UNTF members.

Negotiations are currently scheduled to continue through May. The agreement will be presented to the general membership for approval.

UNTF Goodbyes



UNTF says goodbye to our Office Manager, Joe Marutiak. He began working part-time for UNTF in August of 2012. Joe had just finished a lengthy career with the OPEIU and came to help the UNTF when it was still a new Union. Joe ended up staying longer than planned. He assisted us during our 2014 negotiations and has offered support and advice to many UNTF members over the years. His contributions to UNTF have been greatly appreciated and instrumental in building strong relationships with members as well as MSU administration. We wish him well as he moves towards retirement.

Parental Leave for Fixed-Term Faculty

Sometimes members assume that because they are fixed-term they do not qualify for leaves of absence, particularly parental leave. The MSU Faculty handbook says, “Faculty and academic staff who are appointed on at least a 50 percent basis for nine months or more are immediately eligible for parental leave.” The UNTF contract ensures this policy is also applied to fixed-term faculty and academic staff. Six weeks paid time off are granted under the policy and include both birth of a child and adoption of a child (younger than age six and/or not attending school full-time). Additional paid and unpaid leave may be available.

More details are provided at:

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/parental_leave.html

This website also provides some answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Parental Leave:

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/fas-policies-procedures/fas_leave_FAQ.html

There are other leaves for which fixed-term faculty are eligible. If you have questions, contact the UNTF office.

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Membership

Many faculty and academic staff receiving this newsletter are in our bargaining unit and have not been offered the opportunity to join UNTF. Our executive board members are happy to meet with you to discuss membership. Our website includes some information about the benefits and goals of our organization and can be accessed at <https://untf.org/>.

If you are not sure if you are a member, please contact the UNTF office at office@untf.org or 517-203-0880.

If you would like to join us in our mission, please email or mail the following form:

<https://untf.org/membership/membership-form/>