



The Road Scholar

WSU Union of Part-Time Faculty newsletter

UPTF Local 477
AFT / AFL-CIO

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April 2009

Fight back forces administration to move on payroll grievances

By The Union Council

Most part-timers and others who work at WSU, know that receiving timely paychecks has been a frequent complaint, long before the UPTF was established.

Last fall, when the administration asked for our patience pointing out that there was a new contract, and that updating computer programs and introducing new codes was taking lots of time, we discussed this issue with the administration and explained the circumstances to members. In the event there was a pay discrepancy, a satisfactory solution was worked out on an individual basis but the administration was informed of the union's demand that this severe institutional mismanagement be fixed immediately.

In November 2008, when we were able to reconcile the monthly dues and agency fee report we receive from the university for the months of September and October, we were dismayed to see that 106 people had missed the first pay day and 35 people had missed two. We promised members at the fall General Membership

meeting, that we wouldn't tolerate this behavior from the administration any longer. Members were encouraged to be in communication with the Union Council



cil and their stewards to inform them of any more pay discrepancies.

Thus on January 21, 2009, the first part-time faculty payday this semester, we began receiving complaints of a missed payday. In fact, some members had reported that - even before the holiday closure - that their units had informed them that they would not be getting paid on January 21.

As of Friday, January

23, over 40 members from 18 units reported in to the union office that they had not been paid that week.

Indeed, in talking to many of the people on the growing list, it was learned that this had been happening to some members virtually every semester, while others have experienced delayed first paychecks numerous times in the years that they have been teaching at WSU. When we reconciled the dues/agency reports for February and March 2009 we learned that the number of members not paid Jan. 21 was actually 76.

Many members are assigned classes early enough in the process that their names appear in the schedule of classes for the next semester. It is not a question of people who are assigned classes at the last minute, or whose paperwork is not in order. This repeated experience for many of our members is an institutional problem that is entirely unacceptable.

Upon learning of

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A Union of Professionals

'...Solidarity forever;
For the union makes us
strong!....'

— 'Solidarity Forever' by
Ralph Chaplin



Steward's Corner

By Tom Anderson
Chief Steward / Vice President

The implementation of the UPTF contract during its first year has been moving along. One of our biggest concerns is still lack of information. We need more stewards. As of this writing we now have thirteen active stewards and have embarked on a program of steward orientation and training. In those departments where we have active stewards, we have some sense of what is happening regarding people in the bargaining unit. In other units, we simply don't know what is going on, if members do not tell us. So please, think about stepping up and help us build a stronger union.

Among the issues we worked on last fall was parking for members. As many of you may know, we were unable to get a contract provision guaranteeing that PTF continue to be reimbursed for parking at WSU for the days that they teach on the main campus. However, we were assured that the university would continue this policy. It turned out that last semester there were a couple of departments that weren't paying parking and there were a few individual cases besides. We demanded this be rectified, and, insofar as we are aware, everyone eligible has received the parking stipend. If you haven't contact your department and then the union office.

We also agreed to several letters of understanding with the administration. One of those regards PTF who, in the fall semester, hadn't submitted paperwork for the performance evaluation procedure specified in the contract. The letter simply stipulates that those individuals will be evaluated when they submit the paperwork. We had a few other issues regarding Performance Evaluation. A few people didn't get evaluated, or didn't receive timely notification of a pending evaluation. We signed two letters relating to those individuals. There were also other issues raised and resolved informally. One of those, however, is still pending.

As of the grievances we actually filed, we withdrew two, reached a favorable settlement on another, and have none still pending as of this writing. The major issue this semester was payroll (see page one, three, four and five).

Thanks Amanda!

Amanda Hiber, a former UPTF member, took a full-time appointment at the University of Detroit-Mercy beginning this semester. We've been missing her contributions and fiery spirit! Amanda began her volunteer activism with the union almost from the beginning and has been instrumental in helping to create and build the UPTF. Never afraid to dig in and do the critical work that is often unseen and unheard, Amanda was out there helping fellow members sign their union cards, building and participating in the UPTF's public actions, at the bargaining table and much more. With her media/communication skills, Amanda was the cornerstone of the union's media work last year during the first contract campaign, assisted in producing union educational materials and was key in helping to start this newsletter. We congratulate Amanda on her new appointment and wish her well on her new endeavors.



Become a Steward!

- Help build the union -
- Meet fellow members -
- Learn our contract -
- Have a great time! ☺ -

Contact the office to get involved



'Payroll fight back' continued from page 1

so many members not being paid on time, we put a call out to our labor/community/student and faith-based supporters and many letters were sent to WSU President Jay Noren and the Board of Governors protesting the persistence and dimensions of this problem. Many supporters who sent letters are long-time residents of Southeastern Michigan and are alumni of WSU. We also received letters from throughout the Midwest and beyond. We have sent a message of thanks to each and every supporter (see some of the support letters we received on pages 4-5).

On January 26, 2009, we filed a grievance. The administration has denied the grievance on the basis that the Salary Clause in our contract didn't specify when members would be paid. The union has decided not to pursue the grievance to arbitration but has sent a letter to the administration demanding that it bargain over this issue.

Because of the mobilizing in relation to the payroll grievance with members protesting and filing the necessary paperwork for partial pay, our supporters sending letters, distributing

leaflets and more, the administration claims it has put institutional plans in place to fix this problem once and for all. The administration says it has or is implementing new software and are revising the current lead time to get PTF Letters of Offer processed in time for the first scheduled payroll of a given semester. These changes are to take effect for Spring/Summer 2009.

We hope the administration is true to their words. But we must remain vigilant as a union in order to ensure that we receive our hard-earned pay on time. We

know all too well many of us have suffered with late car, rent and house payments and then late fees, have had difficulties in accessing needed medication for sometimes life threatening illnesses, and endured numerous other hardships due to the administration's lack of respect for us. As we've seen with this semester's fight back, it is only because of the collective actions of the union and its allies that the administration moved in any way to fix their mismanagement.

AFT Benefits

UPTF members are eligible

Because the UPTF is affiliated with the AFT (American Federation of Teachers), UPTF members are eligible for the many member benefits offered by the AFT, including discounted insurance rates. For instance, the AFT offers a Limited Supplemental Medical Plan for \$62.35 per month for individual members. This plan has no deductibles and no preexisting condition limitations.

Other AFT benefits include:

- Discounted life insurance, long-term care insurance, car insurance, home insurance, and renters' insurance;
- Free 30-minute legal consultations;
- Free credit counseling;
- Health club discounts;
- Discounts on theme park admissions, car rental, and hotel rates

To find out about all of the AFT benefits that you are entitled to, pick up an AFT Member Benefits booklet outside the UPTF office on the 3rd floor of 5057 Woodward (the Maccabees building) or go to: www.aftbenefits.org.

Celebrate May Day!

4th Grand Peaceful March Friday, May 1 2009

11 AM - 1 PM

March for Worker/Human Rights!

March in support of immigrant workers and their families!

Demand an end to raids and deportations!

Bail out the people NOT the Banks!

- March with us in Southwest Detroit -

- Patton Park to Clark Park -

MEET AT 10 A.M. on W. Vernor & Woodmere
RALLY, Clark Park at 12 Noon

For more information:

Rosendo: (313) 580 - 5474 / rosendo@luum.org

Ignacio: (313) 575 - 4933 / laborexchange@aol.com



Letters to WSU president Jay Noren and the Board of Governors from UPTF supporters

January 29, 2009

President Noren,

I was dismayed, but not surprised, to learn that a very large number of part-time faculty were not paid on time this semester. I am sure that by now you know the details of that situation. What you might not know, however, is that faculty at all levels are regularly paid late. Indeed, the delayed paycheck is so much a part of the Wayne State experience that people are surprised when they *are* paid on time.

I can cite two recent examples. In early August 2008, my area hired a one-year lecturer. When she arrived to teach in September (approximately three weeks later) she was not yet "in the system," i.e. she was not listed as an employee of Wayne State in the university computing systems. She did not get paid, and could not even get a pay advance because, as far as the University was concerned, she did not exist. This also meant she had no One Card (thus could not park in University lots nor use the library) and had no access to her own class Blackboard sites. About three weeks into September she was finally forced to borrow money from me, because after having incurred the expenses of a last minute move to Detroit and then not getting paid for weeks, she was simply out of money. She finally did get paid in late September, but had taken ill in the meantime, and ended up on sick leave. I cannot help but think that the stress involved in this payroll situation contributed to her ill health.

At the point that she was hospitalized and no longer able to teach, two colleagues and I took over her classes (this was the second week of October) as extra service assignments. Only after threatening to bring a grievance against the University did I finally get paid for this work on December 24, a week after I had completed all the work involved.

I could cite other examples from all parts of the University dating back as long as I have been at Wayne (including a new provost who was not paid until November when he was began working in August). The normal administrative response to this situation is "well, you know, no one ever gets paid on time around here." I don't see how such callous disregard for employee welfare is acceptable. Wayne State must institute policies that ensure that employees are paid in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,
Jennifer Sheridan Moss
Associate Professor
CLAS, Classics, Greek and Latin

January 23, 2009

To Dr. Jay Noren, WSU President:

I am a concerned resident of Detroit who has learned that dozens of part-time faculty - those who bear the teaching burden at WSU - WERE NOT PAID THIS WEEK.

This is an outrageous violation of labor law.

I insist you take measures to see to it that all workers who were not issued a paycheck this week be compensated IMMEDIATELY.

I am a community activist and am prepared to make this outrage known throughout the City of Detroit. Those in the labor movement will not stand for this type of behavior from WSU.

Sincerely,
Kristen Hamel, Detroit



What's going on at Wayne State?

January 27, 2009

Dear President Noren:

I am shocked to hear of the failure of Wayne State University, one of our premier institutions in the city of Detroit, to pay its part time faculty in a timely manner. As president of UAW Local 2334 representing workers at the City of Detroit Water and Health Departments I have encountered bureaucratic problems that have led to some members of my union not getting their regular paychecks. But in those cases even the City of Detroit, known for its inefficiency, has issued replacement paychecks the same day or a day later.

Aren't you aware that most workers, including part-time faculty, do not have big savings accounts to fall back upon. Many of us have our mortgages payments or car payments automatically deducted from our accounts and we depend on the regular payment of what we have earned! This is no small matter.

I urge you to put the full resources of your office into solving this problem immediately and to ensure that no future disasters like this are inflicted on your part time faculty members.

Sincerely
David Sole
President UAW Local 2334

January 25, 2009

Dear President Noren,

As a UAW activist I am deeply concerned about any injustice affecting workers, but especially workers in Detroit. I am sure many of the members of the Union of Part Time Faculty are the children, spouses, partners or siblings of autoworkers like myself. Furthermore, I of course believe in the union adage that "an injury to one is an injury to all."

Thus I was furious to learn that a newly unionized group of Wayne State's workforce were not even paid for work they had already performed. This failure to pay workers on their regularly scheduled payday does not meet even the most minimal basic standard of economic justice. It has created hardships for the workers who, like most part-time workers, are just getting by, living from paycheck to paycheck.

Please pay these workers immediately and make arrangements now to prevent such a gross injustice from occurring in the future.

Sincerely,
Martha Grevatt
Executive Board Member UAW Local 1212 / Ohio

January 26, 2009

Mr. President;

As a past UPTF officer and as a Wayne State part time instructor (Africana Studies) I have been dismayed to hear from colleagues that for at least the second time in two semesters, (this being the latest in a host of such occurrences in the past) instructors were not paid upon their designated pay dates.

Wednesday, January 21, 2009 was one such pay-date. It was in fact the first pay-date of the semester for Union of Part-Time Faculty (UPTF) adjunct faculty members.

I assume that this error has not occurred due to the implementation of the UPTF contract, for the contract was activated last summer, giving Wayne State months to implement appropriate payroll changes, as needed, to ensure that you can meet your legal obligation to pay employees.

The fact that this has happened several times in the past, and the fact that we were told that steps would be taken to ensure that it would not become a frequent error on the university's part, makes it unacceptable that once again, part time faculty members are faced with the hardship of having to seek forgiveness from landlords, to make up for bounced checks, and for late rent payments. There is also the issue of those who must feed children, pay utility bills, pay credit card bills on time to avoid late fees and interest payments, and buy food and essentials.

Our paychecks are an absolute necessity, not a luxury, which certainly is obvious merely if you consider the fact that some members depend upon their salaries to buy essential medication for chronic illnesses some of which can easily become life threatening illnesses if left un-medicated.

You, Sir, and the administration are both legally and ethically obligated to:

1. Make immediate arrangements to cut checks for payment in full of the salaries owed to your employees, and
2. Take steps to ensure that this error not occur again.

Thank you,
Professor Rayfield A. Waller
Department of Africana Studies

UPTF supporters from throughout Southeastern Michigan and the larger Midwest and from as far as the Northeast sent letters to WSU president Jay Noren and the BOG to support us in our payroll fight back. We once again thank our labor/community/student and faith-based supporters. Together, we know we can continue to win social and economic justice!



Education NOT Prisons!

Faculty, Academic Staff, Graduate Students,
- all WSU Employees:

Send A Letter!

Urge Funding for WSU, Not Prisons

Personal contact with your state representative or senator can reinforce the message that we need to support

“Schools First, Not Prisons.”

If you can take just a **few extra minutes** to print out the sample letter → with your revisions and send this hard copy to your representative and senator, it has a far greater impact than just sending it to the email address. But any communication on behalf of WSU helps.

To Find Your Representative or Senator:

- 1) Go to the Michigan Legislature Website: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>
- 2) At the bottom of the home page, click “Contact Your Representative/Senator”;
- 3) Enter your zip code and county;
- 4) If more than one name comes up, click on each name to get their personal page;
- 5) Click “Link to District Map” to determine which district you live in;
- 6) The personal page for each representative or senator has mail and email addresses.

The mailing address for hard copies will be the same for representatives and senators. Just add the name to:

Representative (Name)
House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Senator (Name)
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Representative/Senator:

As a constituent and as an employee of Wayne State University, I am writing you because of my concern about the misguided priorities in state budgeting that have diverted resources to our bloated prison system while cutting spending on higher education. Wayne State University, in particular, has been harmed by this misappropriation of resources.

Unlike many states that have increased their funding for higher education, allocations to Michigan universities have fallen sharply in recent years. To compensate, state universities have been forced to raise tuition. Wayne State University has struggled to keep these tuition hikes to a minimum, including last year when the increase was held to 3.4 percent, the lowest among the 15 state universities. Even so, for many working families higher education is becoming a luxury they cannot afford.

Wayne State University trains the doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers and other professionals whose skills can drive economic development and improve the quality of life in Michigan. But we cannot do this effectively without state support.

We need to enact legislation that will reform our sentencing and parole policies so that we no longer spend more than any other mid-western state on prisons. If our incarceration rate was lowered to the level of surrounding states, we could save as much as \$400 million for schools and other social needs that are now neglected.

Michigan was once a leader in providing affordable and quality education to its citizens, and we can return to that position if we redefine our priorities to favor *schools first, not prisons*.

I look forward to your taking action on these issues.

Sincerely,
(your name, title, and address)

Note: Please cc a copy of your letter to us so we can monitor our progress: aaupaft@wayne.edu.

Note to UPTF members: The Union Council has voted to participate in the “Educations Not Prisons” campaign.



UE workers victory tour excites Detroit

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

At the packed International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 58 union hall in Detroit Feb. 9, a diverse crowd witnessed history. Armando Robles, president of Electrical Workers union (UE) Local 1110, and Bob Kingsley, UE director of organizing, presented a "Sit-Down Pioneer" award to two Flint sit-down strikers of 1936-1937, Geraldine Blankenship of the Women's Emergency Brigade and Olen Ham.

Upon taking the podium, Robles dedicated the sustained applause for him to the Flint sit-downers. He began by noting that the first sit-downers at Republic this past December in Chicago were mostly women, thanked everyone present for the solidarity during the sit-down and said that it's the workers who make the wealth.

"We have to force the government and the bosses to get our rights and our dignity for ourselves and for workers around the world," declared Robles to rousing shouts of "That's right!" and applause.

Bob Kingsley, UE's director of organizing, explained how UE Local 1110 received international support from thousands of labor, community, student and faith-based organizations.

"This 15-city tour is to encourage more resistance. Real change—change that benefits workers, not bankers and CEOs—must be driven from the bottom up by collective action and collective protest, by more resistance. Workers are so powerful. Vic-

tory to working people everywhere," concluded Kingsley.

The Detroit meeting was sponsored by Southeastern Michigan Jobs with Justice and co-sponsored by numerous labor and community organizations. Bill Bryce, JWJ organizer and UPTF Political Action/Education chair, said, "We win when we work together."

Feb. 9 participants were invited to the hall by Elaine Crawford, president of the 5,600 member IBEW Local 58. Sandra Williams, president of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, thanked the UE for the fight back inspiration and called for all present to sign Employee Free Choice Act cards. Members of the Michigan AFL-CIO also participated.

A UE video explained how teams of Republic workers engaged in security, cleaning, food distribution and other tasks. Numerous allies explained how and why they supported the sit-down, describing the dozens of protests at Bank of America branches, including in Detroit and in North Carolina at BOA headquarters.

Music was provided by Bill Meyer, the Soneo Latin Jazz Band, the cast of the opera "Forgotten" and Jose Rios, all members of the Detroit Federation of Musicians Local 5. Martha Reeves performed "Dancin' in the Streets." The cast of "Forgotten" sang the 1930s CIO song, "Sit Down."

The Industrial Workers of the World Detroit's Wobbly Kitchen provided refreshments. A photograph display by Alan Pollock of MECAWI

entitled "Detroit Solidarity Delegation with UE Republic Workers—December 2008" depicted four current or former union members and this writer/UPTF organizer from Detroit who traveled to Chicago Dec. 10 for a rally and then were invited onto the occupied shop floor by the workers. The event closed with a rousing version of the song "Solidarity Forever."

Press conference & labor tour

UE members attended a Feb. 9 morning press conference held at the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO that only progressive media attended. In the afternoon UE field representative Abe Mwaura, Robles and Kingsley visited a plant in the city of River Rouge, adjacent to Detroit, where 1,700 of the

1,800 members of the United Steelworkers have been laid off.

Robles emphasized at all of the Detroit events that the UE workers' victory tour was meant to inspire fight backs from the international working class, such as the ongoing Waterford Crystal plant occupation in Ireland. Robles said that he and many his fellow Local 1110 members believe that workers have a property right to their jobs and, due to the labor they expend, they have a property right to machines, plants and products as well.

During a tour stop in Providence, R.I., UE tour members pledged their support to help win justice for over 200 workers locked out of a local manufacturing company.

Union of Part-Time Faculty Local 477

AFT / AFL-CIO

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Upcoming Union Council Meeting

Friday, April 17, 2009

1:15 p.m.

UPTF Union Office, 5057 Woodward Avenue, Suite 3301