

Summary of Important Academic Staff Council Issues First Quarter (July-September) 2009-10

Effect of Furloughs

Chancellor David Wilson reported that Vice Chancellors Christine Quinn (Extension) and Greg Lampe (Colleges) are heading a committee that will document the loss of service to the state resulting from the 16 furlough days. A member of the committee reported that in addition to reduced service to the state, the furloughs will have long-term effects on UW's competitiveness, recruitment and retention, and morale.

2011–13 Biennium Compensation

The Chancellor reported that UW System is developing a case for "salary enhancements" for UW faculty and academic staff in the next budget for presentation to the Regents and the state. He said that System will push for increased salaries by proposing that they are needed to recruit and retain employees who will give Wisconsin the competitiveness and resources to "lead the next economy" coming out of the recession. David J. Ward (of NorthStar Economics, Inc.) will help System develop this argument.

Collective Bargaining

Below is Director of Government Relations Rosemary Potter's summary of the current legislation:

ITEM E-2. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM FACULTY, ACADEMIC STAFF AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

As passed by the Legislature, Assembly Bill 75 provides faculty and academic staff of the UW System with the right to collectively bargain. The bill would have authorized the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) to assign faculty and academic staff to the appropriate collective bargaining units established under either Subchapter V (State Employment Labor Relations Act) or Subchapter VI (UW System Faculty and Academic Staff Labor Relations) of Chapter 111. ***The Governor's partial veto deletes the provision to authorize WERC to assign faculty and academic staff to the appropriate collective bargaining units established under either Subchapter V or Subchapter VI of Chapter 111. Under current law, WERC has the authority to assign employees to the appropriate collective bargaining unit under Subchapter V. Under the veto, WERC would not have this explicit authority under Subchapter VI.***

The following describes how this would impact the UW Colleges and the UW-Extension:

Thirty collective bargaining units for the UW System were approved on May 12. They include one collective bargaining unit for UW Colleges faculty, one collective bargaining unit for UW-Extension faculty, one collective bargaining unit for UW-Extension academic staff, and one collective bargaining unit for UW Colleges academic staff.

Always important to note: The legislation does not force us to bargain collectively.

Discussion of the likelihood and implications of collective bargaining is ongoing. An Academic Staff Council member noted that because our benefits are good and salary increases must be approved by the Joint Committee on Employee Relations and then passed by the Legislature, unions will likely try to woo us with job security issues.

Corliss Olson, Associate Professor at the School for Workers, gave a presentation on collective bargaining. Among the points she made were these:

- Collective bargaining would not affect tenure, governance rights, and academic freedom.
- The move to collective bargaining—if it occurs at all—will take a long time: many of us will retire before there is any collective bargaining.

Academic Staff Personnel Policies, Chapter 10.06

According to the current language of Chapter 10.06, a fixed-term academic staff member who has received a non-renewal notice can request an informal “reconsideration” conference with the appointing official. The official may or may not grant the conference. Non-renewed *probationary* academic staff may request an informal conference and also request and be granted a formal hearing.

It has been proposed in the Academic Staff Council to rewrite Chapter 10.06 so that non-renewed fixed-term academic staff with at least four years of full-time equivalent service shall be granted an informal conference on request as well as having recourse to a formal hearing. Such an adjustment would bring Extension’s policy in line with policies at most UW System institutions.

The Chancellor expressed reservations about the change:

- In such an informal conference, the appointing authority might be extremely guarded to avoid providing fodder for a possible subsequent hearing.
- A conference seems superfluous because a non-renewed employee can request and receive in writing reasons for the non-renewal.

In response, it was suggested that a conference would allow a long-term employee to have a discussion and a sense of closure, instead of merely a one-way communication from management.

The language change will be submitted to the UW System legal department for an opinion. If it is approved, the Academic Staff Council will vote on whether to recommend the change.

Academic Staff Scholarship

The question of whether academic staff engage in scholarship was raised. The University Committee (governance body of Extension faculty) recently held that faculty are required to do scholarship, whereas academic staff are not. Ray Schultz (outgoing Secretary of the Faculty and Academic Staff) defined scholarship as creative and innovative work that is reviewed by peers and is shared with and meaningful to them.

In upcoming meetings, the Academic Staff Council may try to document scholarship done by academic staff. Greg Hutchins (incoming Secretary of the Faculty and Academic Staff) warned that this should be done carefully to avoid creating a perceived hierarchy of academic staff who engage in scholarship and those who do not.

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<http://www.uwex.edu/secretary/AS/>