

Bargaining Update

*From 6/23/17 All Unit Email

Dear colleagues,

Now that summer is here, we wanted to update you on the status of contract negotiations.

As you know, we began bargaining almost a year ago, in the fall of 2016. We had agreed with the administration that our goal was to finish "expedited" negotiations by January 2017, in order to include our economic package in the main House budget. The MSP was prepared with our proposals and priorities, which we presented. Unfortunately, although we met with the administration for hours each week, we were unable to make much progress. The administration said they were waiting to receive economic parameters from the state before deciding what proposals to put on the table, so we still don't know all of the proposals that the administration will be making. We have not yet reached agreement on our priority issues: improving the system for anomaly/equity increases; improving CPE compensation; benefits for non-tenure-track faculty; ensuring faculty governance around personnel actions; and a fair salary package for faculty and librarians.

By the end of the spring semester, the administration still had not put a salary proposal on the table, and had not countered the MSP's proposal. The state economy is booming, with nearly full employment and a strong stock market. Nonetheless, Governor Baker is saying that there is a budget crisis, revenue is below projections, and cuts are necessary. We were dismayed to hear rumors that all state employees would be offered a salary package including ZERO raises in the first year, and one percent in subsequent years. We consider this unacceptable.

While we wait to hear what the administration's financial offer will be, the MSP is giving our bargaining team a break, since the faculty members are on 9-month contracts and none of us are compensated for bargaining over the summer. We informed the administration that we would happily come back to the bargaining table as soon as there was some progress to be made.

Our current collective bargaining agreement expires next week, on June 30, 2017. We will continue working under the terms of this agreement while we are still in negotiations, and the administration cannot make any unilateral changes until we reach an agreement. Once we reach an agreement, our salary package will require the legislature to approve a supplemental budget. We have every right to expect retroactive pay back to July 1, given the administration's failure to bargain this agreement in a timely fashion. If the administration attempts not to provide retroactive raises, we will be joined by all higher education bargaining units in fighting back.

Stay tuned. We will need everyone's help as we advocate for fair contracts. Please feel free to contact the MSP office if you have any questions or to offer your assistance.

In solidarity,

Your MSP bargaining team