

NEWS

AAUP contract settlement or fact-finding? We'll know within two weeks.

Contract negotiations for AAUP Bargaining Unit 1 are headed toward either resolution or fact-finding within the next two weeks.

A Fact-Finding Hearing has been scheduled for August 25—the first day of Fall Semester classes—if the Faculty and Administration Bargaining Teams cannot reach a tentative agreement by that date.

AAUP Chapter President David Simmermon said, “We hope that a settlement can be reached at the bargaining table. We know our team is working hard to achieve a negotiated

settlement, without need for fact-finding. We hope the Administration has the same goal.”

Faculty Chief Negotiator Geoff Woolf said bargaining sessions have increased in frequency and in length recently. The teams met three times during the week that began Aug. 4, and the session on Aug. 8 lasted seven hours.

Bargaining took place Aug. 11, and sessions are also scheduled for Aug. 13 and Aug. 16.

“If we have to go to fact-finding, and then wait for the

fact-finder’s report, this contract might not be settled for several weeks, or perhaps even longer,” Dave said.

“Even though the Ohio collective bargaining law specifies a timeline for fact-finders to deliver a report, there’s no way to force a fact-finder to keep to that timeline.”

“It would be better for everybody, including our students, if the contract can be resolved without fact-finding, and we don’t have to deal with the uncertainties that come with

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SEIU returns to bargaining Tuesday; strike is possible if settlement is not achieved

Contract negotiations for SEIU, which represents nearly 150 clerical, technical, and professional employees at Cincinnati State, are scheduled to resume on Tuesday, Aug. 12. A mediator will also attend the negotiation session.

A meeting of SEIU members is scheduled for Wednesday.

The bargaining session on Tuesday will be the first since SEIU members voted to accept a

fact-finder’s recommendations for settling their contract, and the College Board of Trustees voted to reject the fact-finder’s proposed settlement.

Following the Board’s rejection of the fact-finder’s report, SEIU members authorized their chapter leaders to file a notice of intent to strike.

Ohio law requires unions to give 10-day notice of a possible strike. A date has not yet been

set for when a possible strike by SEIU members would begin.

Negotiations for the SEIU contract began in August 2013. A tentative agreement was rejected by SEIU members in December, and negotiations resumed early in 2014. Those negotiations continued until May.

The fact-finding hearing was held July 2, and the report was received July 17.

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prolonging the time it takes to reach a settlement," Dave said.

Members of the Faculty Bargaining Team said after the session on Aug. 11 that the list of unresolved issues is getting smaller, but the remaining issues are complex.

"We are essentially finished with the non-economic topics such as Selection and Hiring," Geoff said. "But the issues that are not resolved include all of workload, compensation, and benefits, along with the distance education article."

"The Administration Team told us on July 31 that reaching a contract settlement depended on an agreement to facilitate expanding online education in partnership with Pearson Learning Systems," Geoff said.

"Then on Aug. 6, the Administration said they would not bring any contract proposals related to Pearson," Geoff said.

"However, there's still a lot to discuss regarding possible changes to Article 10, which describes procedures, compensation, and ownership rights for faculty who develop

online courses," Geoff said.

"The language of Article 10 has been the same for many years, and may need some updating," Geoff said. "But agreeing on possible updates is not a simple matter."

"Also, we've had a lot of discussion about the possibility of adding annual contracted, non-tenure track faculty positions to the bargaining unit," Geoff said.

"Even though various kinds of non-tenure track positions are common in higher education,

it's something the AAUP has resisted for a long time," Geoff added.

"We have a lot of concerns about possible misuse or abuse of this employee category," Geoff said. "Reaching an agreement to create such positions is not easy."

"As a whole, the topics still on the table are complex and interrelated. We hope both sides are equally committed to unraveling these issues and finding a path to an agreement within the next two weeks," Geoff said.

Employees want to know:

Why can the College afford only \$187,000 in the FY15 budget for retention initiatives (via mandatory advising), but support an athletic program that costs more than \$1 million?

How can the College remain independent and public while making deals with for-profit companies?

Why is the College considering self-insurance-- described by some insurance experts as suitable for organizations that "have a tolerance for retaining risk, and capital to devote to financing the program"?

Why have total budget lines for academics decreased by \$180,000 over the past 4 years, while total administrative budget lines have increased by more than \$1 million?

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According to an article published in the *Hamilton Journal-News* on July 31, the Board of Trustees rejected the fact-finder's report "because the administration had concerns about its findings involving the school's fiscal health and improving operational efficiencies."

The same article quoted Becky Williams, President of SEIU District 1199 (the organization that Cincinnati State SEIU is part of).

Williams said, "Workers are committed to sitting down and

continuing conversations with Cincinnati State administrators that would avoid a strike and any disruption to services to the students, staff and visitors of the College."

At the AAUP Chapter Meeting on Aug. 4, the President of the Cincinnati State SEIU, Dawn Wilke, spoke to faculty about the SEIU negotiations and the hopes of reaching a settlement without the need for a strike.

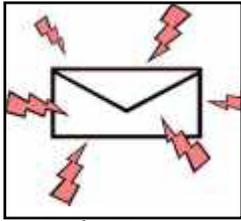
AAUP President David Simmermon said that if SEIU must strike, faculty should not take on any duties or

responsibilities of SEIU members.

"Ohio law prevents a 'sympathy strike,'" Dave said.

"However, just as SEIU members supported us when we were on strike three years ago, faculty will support SEIU by doing only our own jobs, and not theirs," Dave added.

"We hope that SEIU and AAUP negotiations at Cincinnati State can end soon, with good contracts for both unions," Dave said. "Then all of us can get on with our work that benefits our students and the community."



Letters

To the Editor:

As many of you know, one of the goals in the College strategic plan is to “Expand Our Reach” by increasing the number of online courses offered.

You probably also know that College administrators want to accomplish this goal through a partnership with Pearson Learning Systems.

I consider myself one of the strongest advocates for online education at Cincinnati State. As students demand more online options, distance education is increasingly important.

However, I have seen some of Pearson’s distance education products and I have reservations about this partnership, especially if it requires us to relinquish control over the content of our courses.

During the past three years, I developed two online courses: MAT 130, Intermediate Algebra for Statistics, and MAT 131, Statistics 1.

The Statistics 1 course was the first online course at Cincinnati State to be Quality Matters (QM) certified, which required review by experts in online education from outside Cincinnati State.

The QM Master Reviewer said about my course, “You have the best collection of resources, websites, and self-assessment activities that I have encountered thus far. It has made me rethink my own courses.”

There are no shortcuts to developing a quality online course that facilitates student success. An effective

online course must provide clear directions to students, deliver engaging lessons in a way that promotes student understanding, and contain resources for students who need additional explanation.

Students should also be able to assess their understanding as they learn the material, and should be able to direct comments and questions to the instructor and their classmates.

While developing the online Statistics 1 course, I worked with a Pearson Instructional Designer for several weeks. I agreed to share some of my handouts, and she claimed that she would make them “interactive” so as to “engage the learner.”

I was deeply disappointed in her work, as she did little more than convert the handouts into an HTML (website) link. Clearly, Pearson and I disagree on what is “engaging” to our students.

Initially I was very excited to work with Pearson, since they promised to enhance my online course. Ultimately, I viewed our collaboration as a waste of my time.

In 2013, I attended a meeting showcasing Pearson’s new CourseConnect 3.0 Statistics 1 course.

The CourseConnect Statistics 1 appeared to be a one-size-fits-all course. It included many topics that are not covered in our Statistics 1 course, and are not part of the essential learning outcomes defined by Ohio Transfer Module standards.

Pearson is a business and I’m sure they want their online Statistics course to appeal to as many colleges as possible. However, the result looked like the same “mile wide and inch deep” coverage of the subject that has plagued math education in this country for decades.

In contrast, the Statistics 1 course I developed is much more focused and coherent and allows students to explore topics in greater depth.

Earlier this year, I attended a demonstration of Propero, Pearson’s self-paced online learning program. Propero was promoted as a product that would benefit our students, but again I was disappointed.

Formal assessments involved only multiple-choice questions, and lacked the higher-level, short-answer questions used in our Statistics courses. In my opinion, Propero could not adequately evaluate students’ critical thinking and understanding of many important statistical concepts.

If Pearson is not the answer to increasing the College’s online course offerings, what is? I believe that the best people to create online courses are the College’s full-time faculty. We are the ones who best know our students and what they need to be successful.

However, the administration needs to recognize the amount of work needed to create these courses. According to current contract language, if an instructor is developing an online course, the release time provided is the number of course units plus one. I believe this release time should be increased to at least three times the number of course contact hours.

The MAT 131 online course took me about 1,000 hours to create. The College administration should view this as an investment, since a quality online course will benefit future students for many years to come.

Scott Horn
Mathematics Department

What is Fact-Finding?

Contract negotiations between Cincinnati State unions (AAUP and SEIU) and the College administration take place under procedures defined in Ohio's Collective Bargaining Law, Ohio Revised Code 4117.

The law includes timelines and processes that are intended to help keep negotiations moving toward a settlement.

If a new contract agreement has not been reached 45 days prior to the expiration of the current contract, the State Employment Relations Board (SERB) designates a **mediator**, an expert in labor relations who tries to help both sides reach an agreement.

Any time after a mediator has been appointed by the SERB,

either side can ask SERB to begin the process of designating a **fact-finder**, a neutral third-party with knowledge and experience in labor law.

If the sides reach a point of impasse, then a fact-finding hearing takes place. Both sides present to the fact-finder their proposals for the unresolved issues, along with evidence that supports why this proposal should become contract language.

Following the hearing, the fact-finder writes a report with a recommended solution for each of the unresolved issues. The fact-finder can recommend that a proposal submitted by one of the sides become part of the contract, or the fact-finder

can recommend their own compromise solution.

Both sides (the union members, and the College Board of Trustees) vote on the fact-finder's recommendations. If the recommendations are accepted by both sides, negotiations are finished.

If either side rejects the recommendations (60% of total membership votes "no"), then negotiations continue, and a strike could take place.

The union must provide notice of the intent to strike 10 days in advance of when a strike would begin.

Want the most recent AAUP negotiation updates? Visit www.cinstateaaup.org

**CINCINNATI STATE CHAPTER
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS
3520 CENTRAL PARKWAY
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45223-2690**

CHAPTER WEBSITE: WWW.CINSTATEAAUP.ORG
EMAIL: EXEC@CINSTATEAAUP.ORG
OFFICE: 124 MAIN BLDG., CLIFTON CAMPUS

PRESIDENT
DAVID SIMMERMON
PHONE: 513.569.1797

VICE PRESIDENT
PAM ECKER

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE
GEOFFREY WOOLF

SECRETARY
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JOEL KNUEVEN

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