

# NEWS

## AAUP Exec investigates STRS reporting discrepancies; CS Payroll dept has solved the problems

The Cincinnati State AAUP Executive Committee met with Kathy Moore from the College Payroll department to clarify concerns expressed by some faculty members regarding discrepancies in reporting annual faculty wages to the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS).

Ms. Moore said that a few discrepancies have been discovered, but for faculty who are in process of retiring, the errors have already been corrected.

For faculty who plan to retire in the near future, Ms. Moore can provide information to share with STRS that will be used to correct any errors that may have occurred.

Ms. Moore said only full-time faculty members who are in the STRS system are affected by the reporting discrepancies. Faculty members who have opted for alternative retirement plans have not been affected, and adjunct faculty are not affected.

Ms. Moore explained that members of the College Payroll department met recently with STRS staff to examine the sources of errors on the *Annual Service Record Report* that the College provides to STRS for full-time faculty members whose

retirement benefits are in the STRS system.

Ms. Moore told the AAUP Executive Committee, "Going forward, all reporting to STRS of annual faculty earnings will be correct."

According to Ms. Moore, problems in annual reporting of faculty earnings occurred because the STRS considers a service year as July 1 to June 30, in contrast to the College's definition of a service year as September 1 to August 31.

For some faculty members, reporting on wages earned in Summer semester (between July 1

and September 1) was affected by the discrepancy.

Ms. Moore said that when a faculty member retires, the College sends a *Deposit and Service Report* to STRS, which corrects any past errors in reporting.

Ms. Moore also said any faculty member who is scheduling a meeting with an STRS counselor to discuss retirement plans should get in touch with her (kathy.moore@cincinnatiastate.edu) to obtain information on salary and overload wages for the past six years. The STRS counselor will use this information to correctly calculate retirement benefits.

### Watch for the Sick Leave Cash-Out form; consider donating days to the AAUP Sick Leave Bank

The Human Resources office will be sending the annual "Sick Leave Cash-Out" form to faculty during the Summer Semester.

This PDF form (not an e-form) is used to request a payment for "cashing-out" half of the faculty member's unused sick leave and personal leave days.

Faculty members who are retiring from the College or leaving after ten years of full-time service may cash-out up to 65 days of unused leave time.

The criteria for the annual cash-out payment are described

in Article 12(J) of the AAUP Unit 1 contract and Article 11(J) of the Unit 2 contract. The retirement cash-out is described in Article 12(K) of the Unit 1 contract and 11(K) of the Unit 2 contract.

The AAUP Executive Committee encourages those who are cashing out a large number of days--especially those contemplating retirement soon--to consider donating some unused days to the AAUP Sick Leave Bank. The Sick Leave Bank Donor Form and additional information are on the Chapter website at [www.cinstataaap.org/service/sick-leave-bank](http://www.cinstataaap.org/service/sick-leave-bank).

# Summer Office Hours FAQs

**Summer is my “off” term, but I’m teaching some classes. Do I have to keep office hours?**

Yes. According to Article 9(I) in the AAUP Unit 1 contract, if you are teaching during your non-teaching (“off”) semester, you should schedule “proportional” hours, meaning 2 office hours for every 3 credit hours taught. For example, if you are teaching two 3-credit classes during your “off” semester, you should schedule 4 office hours per week, on at least two different days.

If all of your teaching during your “off” semester is online classes, you need to establish regularly-scheduled “virtual” office hours.

The most important point of office hours is that students (and others who might need to talk to you) can find you on-demand during these times. You should keep your Outlook calendar updated, make announcements in class and on Blackboard, and follow your division’s procedures for “posting” office hours.

If your hours need to change, make sure you provide timely updates to those who need to know your availability.

**What about Summer Program Chair or Department Chair work? Do I need to schedule those hours?**

Yes. If you are doing chair work (earning chair points) during your “off” semester, then you need to schedule your availability.

According to the Unit 1 contract, Program Chairs and Department Chairs, in consultation with their Deans, will develop mutually agreeable methods through which they will establish their availability (in addition to any instructional office hours the chair may have scheduled).

Chair points account for time you spend in your office, or otherwise around the College, or sometimes off-campus, doing the things that need to be done to keep your program/department running smoothly.

Your chair office hours don’t have to be exactly the same each week, since chair duties vary-- for instance, you may need to spend more time on chair duties during registration periods, and less time during other portions of the semester. Some chair duties can be taken care of outside of the office, and other responsibilities must be accomplished on campus.

The key is that you and your Dean have determined a mutually-agreeable work pattern (in and out of the office) that accounts for the chair work that needs to be done in Summer.

**All my classes are online and I have only “virtual office hours”-- do those hours need to be posted?**

Yes, you need to show virtual as well as in-person office hours on a published schedule. The intent of scheduling office hours--virtual as well as in-person--is to let students (and others) know with confidence when you are “on call” and available.

Virtual office hours may be satisfied through on-demand availability by telephone, email, Skype, synchronous chat apps, text message, Facebook, and a variety of other means.

Follow your division’s process to “post” virtual office hours, and be clear about the tools that can be used to reach you.

**Do you have questions about office hours? Talk to AAUP Contract Compliance Officer Geoff Woolf.**

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