



April 2006

AAUP-KSU Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty
Newsletter



**Your New Executive Committee
For Academic Year 2006-2007**

President: Tracy Laux, Math/Kent
Vice President: Kim Winebrenner, English/Kent
Secretary: Mary Lou Britton, Math/Kent
Treasurer: Mahbobeh Vezvaei, Math/Kent
At-Large Representatives:
Mary Lee Sandusky, English/Trumbull
Catherine Snelson, Nursing/Kent
Kim Todd-White, English/Kent
Margaret Wick, Communication Studies/Stark
Kathy Wolf, Math/Kent

**Spring Membership Drive
Now in Full Swing**

Our spring membership drive continues until April 30th this year. Each new member will receive a \$40 gift card from Amazon.com, once all forms are completed and turned into the AAUP-KSU office. If you are already a member and have worked diligently to get one or more new members to join, and they put your name on their form as someone that encouraged them to join; your name will go into a drawing for another \$40 gift certificate from Amazon.

We have had several new members join already during this membership drive, and we congratulate all of them for taking a step to strengthen AAUP-KSU and for accessing both local and national resources available only to AAUP-KSU members.

Remember that in the fall of 2006, all full-time TT and NTT faculty will be required to pay their "fair share," an agency fee of .78 of 1% of their salary that will cover the costs of all negotiating that the Association does for the benefit of all faculty. Union members will have that fee waived as their dues are only .8 of 1% of their salary. That is a difference of \$8 for someone with a \$40,000 salary. Think of it: a small price for a

voice in negotiations with the university and the support of the largest organization for the support of university faculty in the United States.

If you haven't already joined, please consider signing up before the end of April. AAUP-KSU members number 52% of the full-time NTT's on all campuses. We are reaching for 60% this year; won't you help?

If you have any questions, contact Mary Lou Britton at mbritton@kent.edu or the AAUP-KSU office at aaupksu@kent.edu or (330)673-9118.

**Medical Benefits Information
from our President**

Greetings,

Strike? Both units of AAUP-KSU came uncomfortably close to a possible strike during negotiations last year because of the Medical Benefits package proposed by the University. There is no reason to relive the details in this newsletter, so I shall just comment on the results.

Unfortunately, the health care issues that face our nation as a whole finally reached KSU. The ever-increasing cost of medical care in this country has made such costs a major factor in the budget of every organization and individual. Thus, the negotiating team and the Executive Committee of the NTT Unit (reluctantly) realized that the \$0 contribution option for medical insurance and the 100% coverage plan would become things of the past. We have a responsibility to bargain in good faith with the University, and from that, we agreed that because of the financial burden medical benefits had become to the University a compromise would be to require faculty to assume more of the cost.

However, we could not agree to the "cost pass through" (to be defined below) portion of the University's proposal. Currently, the amount contributed toward a faculty member's health insurance is based upon his/her salary. The more you make, the more you pay. The actual amounts

are generated from a table (Schedule B in our CBA) that uses a base of 90/10 for those at the median salary. For those in the median salary range, the University pays 90% of a faculty member's health insurance premium, and the faculty member pays 10%. The percent paid by the University decreases as salary increases and increases as salary decreases. This 90/10 ratio remains constant for those in the median salary range (as do the other ratios for the salary ranges) regardless of any increase (or decrease, yeah right!) in the health insurance premium cost.

The "cost pass through proposal" would have allowed the University to pass on a greater percentage (for example 50/50) contribution required by faculty members if health care costs increased more than a certain level. How much could your contribution to health care have increased under this proposal? No one knows. It would have been dependent upon the actual increased health care costs incurred by the University. Theoretically, the level required for the "cost pass through" might never be reached, or it might easily be reached and surpassed causing your contribution to increase by an unknown amount (maybe double over the life of the contract). In effect, agreeing to that proposal would be like giving the University a blank check signed by us. We could not agree to such a proposal. Eventually through much hard work by both Units, the "cost pass through" proposal disappeared.

Although we now bear a greater financial burden for our health care benefits, please note the improvements that were realized with our new CBA. Routine physical exams are now covered, well child coverage has been extended from nine years old to eighteen years old, and the previous limits on amounts have been removed; the lifetime benefit amount maximum increased from \$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000 (a more realistic figure given skyrocketing costs). We also received a health savings account (the WageWorks card) funded with various amounts of money dependent upon salary. For more details about your health care and other benefits, please refer to our CBA or visit the HR website.

Our negotiating team did what it was charged to do: Bargain in good faith and get us the best deal that they could. The team accomplished both. We made some concessions but received some improvements in our health benefits; such is the world of

negotiations.

Regards, Trace
(next month: lesser known provisions of our CBA)

Executive Committee Actions

At its January 27, 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee of the NTT Unit of AAUP-KSU approved a fair share rate of .78 of 1% of base salary. The fair share fee is 97.5% of the dues rate currently paid by AAUP-KSU members and reflects the fact that almost every penny we spend is related to expenses associated with collective bargaining and enforcing our CBA. This new fee will be deducted automatically from non-members paychecks starting at the beginning of fall semester 2006.

The Executive Committee also approved a proposal that requires the payment of association dues through payroll deduction only and that takes effect starting with the first paycheck of the fall semester.

Dan Berardinelli Appointed to Quality of Work/Life Committee

Dan Berardinelli (English-Kent) was appointed to represent NTT faculty on the Quality of Work/Life Committee. Except for Dan, the committee is composed of TT faculty and Administrators. The committee investigates and makes recommendations to the Vice-President of Human Resources (Carolyn Pizzuto) regarding issues that can have a beneficial effect on the work life (and other types of life) of all faculty.

"Oh, What a Wonderful World It would be!" . . . Or would it?

Many times when I have been stuck inside grading papers on beautiful spring days, I fantasize about someone inventing a Scantron-like machine that will grade my students' papers for me. Well, Kentucky's community colleges may have come up with a solution. They are experimenting with outsourcing their freshman composition papers to a company called Smarthinking. Just imagine! For more, see insidehighered.com's Sept. 22 issue.