

# AAUP-KSU

An independent affiliate of AAUP

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Dear Faculty,

We hope you find these periodic news alerts helpful. Any time you have an issue or a question, please contact us!

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



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## NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Bargaining for a new *Collective Bargaining Agreement* will begin this summer and the Negotiation Committee is gathering input from our membership. Look for a survey in your email on March 30<sup>th</sup> and please take time to respond. Your participation in this survey will help the bargaining team build its negotiating strategy. Deborah (Deb) Smith, Chair of the Negotiation Committee, has met with the members of the Regional Campus Faculty Advisory Committee (RCFAC) and expressed her willingness to meet with the Faculty of each Regional Campus. To date, she has met with the Faculty of Trumbull Campus and has scheduled a meeting with the Faculty of the Tuscarawas Campus. At least two meetings for Faculty will be held on the Kent Campus: the first on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 3:00pm-5:00pm in the Governance Chambers of the KSC and the second at a time and location to be announced. Meeting announcements will be sent out as soon as the dates are finalized. **Any Campus, College, or Faculty group who would like an opportunity to meet with Deb and Chapter President Chris Fenk in advance of negotiations should contact her at [dsmith@aaupksu.org](mailto:dsmith@aaupksu.org).**

## Impasse for AFSCME

Deb Smith met with the members of the bargaining team for AFSCME Local 153 on February 26<sup>th</sup>. AFSCME represents Kent State's maintenance, residence hall, and dining services workers. Despite how vital their work is to the functioning of the University and the wellbeing of our students, many of their members make only a few dollars more than the minimum wage. Sadly, their negotiations with the administration have reached an impasse. Parties are

now in the Fact Finding process in which a third party examines the case and makes recommendations for a resolution.

The Fact Finder's report is expected the first or second week of April. If both parties accept the report, it will become their new contract. **If either party rejects the report, the administration can simply impose its "last, best, final offer."** From what we understand, the administration's last proposal before impasse was reached contained no raises for this year and only a 2% raise in each of the next two years. In many cases, a 2% raise for AFSCME members amounts to less than 25 cents an hour extra. Worse, the administration has proposed increasing the share of the costs for health care coverage by 15% for the 90/70 plan. Coupling this increase to the 15% increase for health care contributions imposed by the administration this year would result in more than a 30% increase in health care contributions since 2014!

**If the administration imposes this proposal on AFSCME members at the end of the Fact Finding process, the only recourse available to AFSCME local 153 will be to strike.** Needless to say, the position that the administration has taken with AFSCME does not bode well for our negotiations this summer.

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#### **GRIEVANCE/ARBITRATION UPDATE**

**Benefits for Dependents of Same-Sex Spouses:** Following a Step 2 Hearing of a formal grievance over the denial of healthcare coverage for the child of a faculty member's spouse, President Warren presented the issue to the KSU Board of Trustees at the March 11th meeting with a recommendation for a more inclusive policy. In an email to AAUP-KSU on March 13, 2015 the administration offered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would provide benefits to dependents of domestic partners (including the dependents of same-sex spouses) retroactive to January 1, 2015. Benefits to be provided include medical, prescription, vision, and dental benefits; dependent life insurance; and the tuition fee waiver benefit. We were delighted to learn that President Warren was successful in her efforts to extend these benefits and we enthusiastically applaud her actions. We are currently working to finalize the agreement as quickly as possible.

**Tenure JAB Case:** Despite a unanimous vote from the Faculty and unanimous positive recommendations from the unit administrator, the CAC, the dean, and the Provost's Advisory Committee, Provost Diacon denied the application for tenure. The Provost's decision was subsequently upheld by the Joint Appeals Board (JAB) and President Warren. On January 30, 2015, AAUP-KSU filed a formal grievance against the KSU administration citing seven (7) major procedural errors. The parties are in the process of scheduling the Step 2 hearing. AAUP-KSU has expressed deep concern over the message the Provost's decision sends to tenure-track Faculty and those who might be considering employment at Kent State University. It calls into question the integrity of shared governance. **UPDATE:** The parties met on February 26 for the Step 2 Hearing. The deadline for the University's Step 2 Answer was extended to March 23, 2015.

**FEA/Merit Eligibility:** AAUP-KSU met with the administration to informally resolve a grievance related to Faculty Excellence Awards (FEA)/Merit. The Association objected to the inclusion of a former interim chair among the list of Faculty members eligible to receive FEA/Merit. The Faculty member was the interim chair of a department for two semesters during the review period. The administration believes that the Faculty member is eligible because he/she was in the bargaining unit at some point during the review period. The Association believes that this interpretation is incorrect as it could hypothetically lead to administrators being moved into the bargaining unit for a period of time as short as a single day to be eligible to receive FEA/Merit. Discussions are ongoing to informally resolve this issue and we are hopeful that a settlement can be reached. Faculty should be aware of such implications when accepting administrative positions. The Association is working towards an agreement that would defer this matter until bargaining this summer where appropriate definitions and timetables for inclusion/exclusion of faculty who accept interim administrative appointments are described. A final, official correspondence verifying this agreement is anticipated in the near future. **UPDATE: The Association and the Administration have agreed to address this issue at negotiations this summer.**

**Regional Campus Interim Dean Appointments:** Discussions are still ongoing to informally resolve a grievance filed against the administration regarding Regional Campus Interim Dean appointments. **UPDATE: Association representatives met with Provost Diacon and Associate Provost Averill on Tuesday, February 24. Negotiations have begun moving forward again and are showing great promise. We are hopeful this issue will be resolved soon.**

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## **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

The Nominations process for Chapter President and Council are moving forward as prescribed in the AAUP-KSU governing documents. There is currently only one nomination for President that was accepted by the nominee. The election slate will now be circulated to the membership and other willing candidates may be added by a petition of at least ten percent (10%) of the number of active members.

**CHAPTER PRESIDENT ELECTION:** April 6 – April 14

**COUNCIL ELECTIONS:** April 13 – April 21

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## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS**

The AAUP-KSU Distinguished Service Award (DSA) is recognition for outstanding service to the Association demonstrated in terms of leadership and accomplishment. Nominations will be accepted each spring semester. The nomination form can be found on the AAUP-KSU website (<http://www.aupksu.org/about-us/content/chapter-resources.php>). Please submit nominations to the AAUP-KSU Chapter Director (Coleen Casey).

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## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

If you are interested in supporting the objectives of AAUP-KSU, consider joining a committee. Committees include Grievance and Arbitration Committee, Oversight Committee, Committee W, Committee Q (formerly LGBTQ Committee), Racial and Ethnic Concerns Committee, Nominations and Elections Committee, Negotiations Committee, Membership Committee, and the Action/Media Committee. Just contact the Office.

**TT Executive Committee Meeting** – Friday, March 13 – 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Council Meeting** – Friday, March 13 – 1:00pm – 3:00pm

**TT Grievance Committee Meeting** – Friday, April 10 – 10:00am – 12:00pm

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## **REAPPOINTMENT/TENURE/PROMOTION (RTP)**

The Kent State University RTP process for AY 2014-2015 is well underway. As always, AAUP-KSU has RTP Counselors available to assist faculty members who have questions or concerns. If you or a colleague needs assistance, please contact the Office. Tenure decisions are due by March 15 and promotion decisions are due by April 15.

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Just a reminder! If you are receiving this email, it does **not** necessarily mean you are a member of AAUP-KSU! Membership is voluntary but must be actively sought. All faculty regardless of membership have paystub notations for “Union Dues.” If you want to be a member, and have not (or don’t remember) signing a membership form, please contact us today! It’s easy and the cost is extremely minimal. <http://www.aaupksu.org/membership/content/dues.php>

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Thanks for reading!

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Director

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