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## January 8, 2019 - From the President's Desk

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# January 8, 2019 - From the President's Desk

Dear Campus Community,

I hope that you had an enjoyable winter break and I'm sure you are as eager as I am for the start of the spring semester. While you are preparing for the coming semester, I have some additional news to share with you.

On January 7, Wright State University received an official notification of intent to strike from AAUP-WSU, the union that represents some of Wright State's faculty members. The notification indicates a strike may begin on Tuesday, January 22, at 8 a.m.

While the union has a right to do this, we are disappointed. The university will continue to provide fair employment terms and benefits in light of our unprecedented financial crisis. The employment terms will keep faculty salaries among the highest in the state. The terms maintain faculty salaries at current levels, which are above average salaries for university professors, according to the [AAUP 2017-18 Faculty Compensation Survey](#). Wright State University full professors earn, on average, \$119,600 over the nine-month academic year. Full professors at comparable Ohio public universities earn an average salary of \$117,322. The AAUP survey also indicated that full professors at 1,018 institutions nationally earn on average \$104,820.

Faculty will also receive the same competitive healthcare coverage at the same cost as that provided to all other Wright State employees.

## **We Remain Open for Business**

A university's first duty is to its students and Wright State intends to honor that commitment. The university plans to remain open during a strike. Wright State will operate under normal hours of operation and class schedule.

Students should continue to attend class in accordance with their regular class schedule. Should any change in a class schedule occur, all enrolled students in that class will be notified via their wright.edu email account. Students with questions concerning a specific class may call (937) 775-4828 beginning Wednesday, January 9, at 8 a.m.

During this potential work stoppage by AAUP-WSU faculty members, Wright State will continue to provide service to its students; however, service may be modified or reduced. Please be assured, we will continue to be committed to providing the best service possible, even in these trying times.

If there is a strike, the university will utilize the Wright State Alert system to communicate with students and employees.

## **Most Faculty Are Not Part of the Strike**

Wright State employs over 3,000 people, including over 1,700 full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty members of which about 560 are in AAUP-WSU. Neither the Boonshoft School of Medicine nor the School of Professional Psychology has faculty members in AAUP-WSU.

Non-bargaining unit faculty and staff members are not part of the strike. All Wright State employees who are not represented by the AAUP-WSU cannot legally participate in the strike and are required to come to work.

## **Our Critical Need to Stabilize and Adapt**

The university cannot continue on the path to financial sustainability by maintaining the status quo. Our other Wright State employees understand this and have accepted reasonable concessions. We are asking the faculty to do the same.

Wright State has been navigating recovery from a serious financial crisis that required it to address a \$30 million structural budget deficit. Employees not represented by the AAUP-WSU have already made concessions in their terms and conditions of employment, including concessions in health insurance. Yet there have been no similar concessions made by AAUP-WSU faculty members as their labor contract has remained unchanged through the financial crisis.

Wright State University is doing everything in its power to preserve the opportunity for our students and the communities we serve to succeed. Maintaining the quality of our academic programs and meeting their needs is our highest priority at Wright State. To accomplish that and remain financially sustainable, we must stabilize and adapt.

### **How We Got Here**

Over nearly two years, in an attempt to secure short and long-term stability, Wright State negotiators engaged in over 20 different collective bargaining sessions to try to reach a new contract with AAUP-WSU. Wright State and AAUP-WSU also participated in a number of informal meetings to discuss a new contract. Additionally, the efforts of a mutually agreed upon federal mediator, and those of a separate mutually agreed upon, independent state arbitrator, known as a fact-finder, were sought to help bridge the disagreements on terms such as pay, benefits and operations.

On October 29, the parties received the fact-finder's report, a compromise proposal to help settle the contract dispute. Noting that neither party got all that they were seeking, Trustees voted unanimously to approve the report as the next contract. AAUP-WSU members rejected it. With the union rejecting the compromise report, the fact-finder's recommendations are deemed not binding and therefore again the parties could not bring the matter to a close. In fact, to date all efforts of the labor negotiators, mediators and fact-finder have been rejected by union leadership.

The Board of Trustees believed it was necessary to move the university forward beyond negotiations. In this regard, during a meeting held on January 4, the Trustees voted unanimously in public session to implement the terms and conditions of its last, best offer to AAUP-WSU. This vote ended negotiations, set forth what the employment terms would be through June 30, 2020, and looked to change the university's focus to regaining economic stability.

### **Questions and Further Updates**

I'm sure you have questions. Some may be answered on the Wright State administration contract bargaining webpage at [wright.edu/labor-relations](http://wright.edu/labor-relations).

Throughout this bargaining process we have been focused on the fiscal sustainability of the university now and in the future to ensure that we are the university our more than 15,000 students, the region and the state of Ohio need us to be.

I will continue to update you as we move forward during this time. Thank you for your continued support of Wright State and for all you do for our students. Your dedication and commitment is noticed and appreciated.

Warmest regards,

Cheryl B. Schrader, Ph.D.  
President

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