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January 18, 2019 - From the President's Desk

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Dear Wright State partners and friends,

I am writing today to clarify claims made by AAUP-WSU, the union that represents some of Wright State University's faculty members. These claims undermine the university's labor relations with our faculty.

Following the vote of the university's Board of Trustees on January 4, 2019, to implement terms and conditions, the AAUP-WSU misrepresented to its members the employment terms implemented by the university. The terms and conditions keeps intact and does not change the existing retrenchment language (layoffs), defers to state law and university policy to govern faculty workload, and calls for AAUP-WSU faculty member healthcare plans and furlough language to mirror that of all other university employees.

Please find below a limited, concise response correcting some of these misrepresentations.

When the Board of Trustees implemented working conditions for AAUP-WSU members, it did not do so lightly. The university needs structural change to recover from its financial crisis that required it to address a \$30 million budget deficit. All of the university's other employees have already accepted changes to their terms and conditions of employment.

Healthcare

There is no basis for AAUP-WSU's claim that the university's healthcare plan is the worst in the state. It is simply not true. Wright State's plan is comparable to universities in the Dayton area and statewide. Also, other universities besides Wright State have a uniform healthcare plan.

Wright State has modified the healthcare plan for all non-bargaining unit faculty member employees as part of the structural changes needed to move forward a balanced budget. But AAUP-WSU has refused to accept the same healthcare plan as all other employees. Again, the university is providing the same plan to AAUP-WSU members that it provides to clerical staff, support staff, and everyone else. The uniform healthcare plan will result in significant savings for the university but no disruption in service to AAUP-WSU members.

Wright State's healthcare plan is competitive with healthcare plans provided by other universities. For example, the university's deductibles are lower than or equal to the plans provided the University of Dayton, Miami University, Kent State, NEOMED, Central State, Shawnee State, and others:

80/20 Plans	Single Deductible	Family Deductible	Out of Pocket Maximum Single	Out of Pocket Max Family
WSU	\$800	\$1,600	\$4,000	\$8,000
CSU	\$900	\$1,800	\$7,350	\$14,700
Central State	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,500	\$7,000
NEOMED	\$400-\$1,500	\$800-\$3,000	\$2,000-\$6,000	\$4,000-\$12,000
Sinclair	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$8,000

U. Dayton	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000		\$8,000
HDHP Plans	Single Deductible	Family Deductible	OOPM Single	OOPM Family	Co-Insurance
WSU	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$6,000	10%
Miami	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$6,000	20%
Shawnee	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$12,000	10-20%
Kent State	\$2,700	\$5,400	\$6,650	\$13,300	0%
Sinclair	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$4,500	\$9,000	0% (requires pharmacy co-pays)

In addition to being competitive locally, Wright State's healthcare plan is competitive statewide. An analysis by the State Employment Relations Board showed that the majority of colleges and universities in Ohio have deductibles comparable to or higher than Wright State.

Workload

There is no basis for the AAUP-WSU's claim that the university will assign workload in a manner to hurt students, spread faculty thinner, and lower the quality of education at Wright State.

There is no merit to AAUP-WSU's claims that Wright State removed workload from the labor agreement to hurt students. That could not be further from the truth. In fact, average class sizes have declined over the past few years. Teaching workload will remain the same as it is now in accordance with Wright State's Carnegie R2 classification to ensure faculty continue to have time to work with students, conduct research, and engage with the community.

During November's Faculty Senate meeting, Provost Edwards made it clear that Wright State will continue to maintain its workload requirements in line with its classification as an R2-Doctoral University-High Research, and the university is not changing those basic requirements of a 3-2 teaching load for tenure eligible and tenured (TET) faculty and a 3-4 load for non-tenure eligible (NTE) faculty. But the university is required by law to remove workload from the AAUP-WSU labor agreement. Under state law and rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court and the Ohio Supreme Court, it is illegal for workload to be bargained, as the fact-finder found. The fact-finder made clear that workload is an inherent management right.

As the Provost has stated, in developing a workload policy, she will work with the Faculty Senate through committees that are composed of faculty from both NTE and TET ranks from across all colleges covered by the MOUs of the previous contract. The leadership of the Faculty Senate has and will continue to be involved in the development of a workload policy.

It is our understanding that all but one other comparable Ohio public university (Kent State) maintains workload requirements in policy rather than in a MOU that is subject to the adversarial collective bargaining process.

Cost Savings Days (Furloughs)

Again, there is no basis for AAUP-WSU's claim that faculty have to work during a cost savings day, or that the number of furlough days is unlimited. That is incorrect.

Employees are not permitted to work on a furlough day. This is a reasonable alternative to a more permanent cost-savings measure like a layoff. Because a cost savings day can occur during a holiday break, for example, it provides immediate financial relief with minimal long-term individual or student impact.

Many universities across the state have cost savings days policies, including Miami University, Ohio University, Youngstown State University, among others. Additionally, Wright State can only require cost savings days in limited circumstances, and AAUP-WSU members can only be required to take cost savings days on the same basis as other employees. And furloughs are specifically permitted and sanctioned under Ohio law in the Ohio Revised Code for faculty cost savings measures.

The union has also repeatedly represented that the number of furlough days that faculty could be subject to are without limitation. Those assertions are without basis and inaccurately characterize the existing university policy and the board resolution provision on faculty furlough.

Under the board resolution, which directs the Administration's use of the terms of employment, Bargaining Unit Faculty Members (BUFMs) could only be furloughed, and only for a window of two years, if the SB 6 (fiscal watch) score for the university falls below 2.4 for two consecutive years. Further, BUFMs could only be furloughed after or simultaneously with other employees, in a manner not inconsistent with the university's general furlough policy, which caps potential furlough days for all employees. Moreover, the administration has accepted the board's advice in the resolution that BUFMs could only be furloughed up to two days per semester until June 30, 2020.

I will continue to update you as necessary.

Warmest regards,

Cheryl B. Schrader, Ph.D.
President

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Posted Friday, January 18, 2019

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