

## President's Report

Prepared for the PSU-AAUP Members Meeting

Monday, April 29, 2019, 3:30-4:30 PM

Dear PSU-AAUP Members:

It has been almost exactly three years since we voted to form a union under AAUP, and as we approach the one-year anniversary of our first collective bargaining agreement (CBA) on July 1, 2019, I would encourage us all to look back at how far we have come as a union. It has been an extremely busy few years, and I am excited when I think of all the great things we have accomplished together to support our faculty, and ultimately, our university and our students. We now have definitive answers to things like our overload rates, our raises, and our professional development funds. We have certainty in knowing there will be no retrenchment and in having a legally binding grievance process. We have clarity in the areas of determining our workload and in our P&T process. I cannot tell you how many questions I have been able to answer this year by pointing to specific provisions in our contract, and I am so grateful once again to our Negotiating Team when I remember that just one year ago, we did not have these legally-binding policies in black and white!

All that being said, there are still a number of issues facing faculty across our campus that we know we need to address. Many of these involve provisions already in our contract that we are waiting on the administration to comply with by making clear decisions and/or developing specific processes. Others are areas that we will need to address in our next round of bargaining, which means, we need to be diligent about noting these areas, to be doing research to develop better contract language, and to begin preparing for our next negotiations. Below, I will address several of these items and let you know where we are in our efforts to press forward on them. I look forward to discussing many of these with our members at our meeting.

One exciting thing to look forward to: Our chapter will be featured in an article in the next issue of *Academe* magazine, published by the AAUP!

### Elections

This month, April 23-24, we held our second elections for the leadership of the PSU-AAUP. The results were:

- President: Jeremiah Duncan
- Vice-President: Evelyn Stiller
- Secretary: Anne Jung-Mathews
- Treasurer: several write-ins, which are being contacted by the Election Committee
- Executive Committee Members-at-Large: Megan Birch and Sean Collins

Many thanks to our Election Committee for organizing and running the election: John Kulig, Brigid O'Donnell, and Alice Pearman.

## Membership

At our last Members' Meeting on Oct 29, 2018, we voted to begin collecting our dues locally. That was the last official thing that needed to happen for our chapter to be converted to a fully autonomous, local chapter, and at that moment, we officially had no members! I am happy to state that our efforts at rebuilding our membership, lead by Nick Sevigny and his Membership Action Committee, have brought us nearly back to our previous membership level, with 112 out of 166 tenure track faculty (67.5%) now in our ranks! Our goal has been to reach 70%, and with a short effort before the end of the semester, I believe we can get there. Thank you to all those who have been out talking with their colleagues and asking them to sign cards, and thank you to all of you, who show your support for one another and for our union through your membership.

## Dues Collection

Although it took several weeks longer for us to work out a system of dues collection with HR, as of Feb 28, 2019, our union dues have been deducted directly from our paychecks. You should see a small amount, equal to 0.85% of your base pay divided by 20, being deducted. Please note that regardless of whether you are on a 9-month or 12-month contract, this deduction will be taken out during the regular pay cycles of the 9-month academic year.

## Office

Our CBA, in Article 6, states that the PSU-AAUP will be provided with a furnished office on campus. That space has been provided for us in 207 Highland Hall, although we are still working with Physical Plant on the "furnished" portion. We hope that this will become a space where our faculty colleagues and union leadership can meet, and we have even discussed holding "office hours" here for that purpose.

## Website and email addresses

You are hopefully aware that the PSU-AAUP has a website: <https://plymouth-aaup.org>. We have been working to update this site to ensure it has accurate information. We have also recently created a handful of email addresses using this same domain name for contacting various members of the union leadership:

- General contact / Communications: [PSU-AAUP@plymouth-aaup.org](mailto:PSU-AAUP@plymouth-aaup.org)
- President: [president@plymouth-aaup.org](mailto:president@plymouth-aaup.org)
- Membership: [membership@plymouth-aaup.org](mailto:membership@plymouth-aaup.org)
- Grievance committee: [grievance@plymouth-aaup.org](mailto:grievance@plymouth-aaup.org)

## Did You Know?

This semester, the Executive Committee sent out a series of emails entitle "Did You Know?" to all our colleagues in the bargaining unit. Our goal was to help educate our faculty on the many rights and benefits provided to us by our CBA. We hope that these have been helpful. Please let me know if there are any other topics you would like to see us cover in these emails. We intend to take a break over the

summer, but will start back up in the fall. For your reference, these emails are being archived on our website: <https://plymouth-aaup.org/did-you-know/>

### NHPFC

On Friday, January 18, representatives of faculty unions from all of the public institutions of higher education meet on the campus of Keene State College. This was the second official meeting of the New Hampshire Public Faculty Coalition, which has been meeting to discuss common issues across our campus. These meetings have been enormously helpful in understanding what is happening on our various campuses and in identifying common challenges we are all facing. These meetings have been held purposefully on the same campus and same day as the USNH Board of Trustees meetings, and we are planning to meet again when the BOT meets in June.

### Grievance

Since the beginning of our contract, the Grievance Committee, co-chaired by Jonathan Santore and Linda Carrier, has handled 5 or 6 situations involving faculty. Two of these have resulted in the initiation of informal grievances with the administration. To help the Grievance Committee respond to potential situations, an intake form has been created and posted on the website. If you or a colleague have a situation that may result in a grievance, we ask that you download and complete this form, then send it to the Grievance Committee using the email address [grievance@plymouth-aaup.org](mailto:grievance@plymouth-aaup.org)

### Issues We Have Been Working On

Our CBA includes a large number of new policies and procedures aimed at improving our workload and providing for fairness and transparency in many different ways. Some of these provisions have already been implemented—for example: raises, specified pay scales, counting of workload credits for labs and studios—but there are still a number of others that require the development of new processes (for example, tracking of credit banking) or specific decisions to be made. Furthermore, as we have begun to implement our first CBA, there are a few areas, where it has become obvious we need to work on further clarification. On Tuesday, Jan 15, I and several other members of our union leadership, including members of the Negotiating Team, met with several representatives of the administration to discuss a large number of these items. To be honest, the implementation of all of the various provisions of our new CBA has been a very large task, as we knew it would be. Unfortunately, I and many of the members of the PSU-AAUP leadership feel that the administration has moved much too slowly in implementing their side of this agreement. As such, I have been working with our PSU-AAUP leadership to press the administration on a number of issues, a few of which are discussed below.

As always, if you are aware of an area in which the administration is not adhering to the CBA, please 1) call their attention to it, and 2) contact me. I firmly believe that the only way we will be able to fully implement our CBA is if all of our members are vigilant in this way.

Furthermore, if there are areas of the CBA that you believe need to be improved, please let our Chief Negotiator, Scott Coykendall, know.

### 1. *Summer compensation*

As you are hopefully aware, Articles 8.3.1.2.2 and 8.3.1.2.3 dictate that faculty should be compensated for work they do beyond their contracted time. In particular, this includes work done in service to the university during summer. Despite our bringing this to the attention of the administration several times over the academic year, they have not provided information about what this compensation will be. In a recent meeting I had with Provost Dorff, he asked me to help develop a list of common tasks faculty do over the summer, so that he could begin to set compensation rates. Accordingly, I have started a list at the link below. Please take a look and add anything else you can think of:

[https://plymouthstate-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/jsduncan\\_plymouth\\_edu/ERaGsluSSc9Cqk54NUWYULEB5j4Y3kOO1jRBBnpgFnzoLw?e=UpsbGi](https://plymouthstate-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/jsduncan_plymouth_edu/ERaGsluSSc9Cqk54NUWYULEB5j4Y3kOO1jRBBnpgFnzoLw?e=UpsbGi)

### 2. *Rolling over professional development funds*

Article 13.7 of our CBA provides for faculty to roll over their professional development funds from one fiscal year to the next. We have had several conversations with the provost, attempting to sort out some of the details of this process that are not specified in the contract. The two biggest ones are: 1) Can faculty roll over a part of their PDF or only all of it? (Certain members of the administration insist we can only roll over the full \$800; we would, of course, like to roll over any amount, and the Provost has indicated that he would also be in favor of this) and 2) What is the deadline by which faculty members must request the roll over? (PSU-AAUP contends that the CBA does not allow for a deadline, although we initially had an informal agreement to set it at May 15. However, the administration later, unilaterally changed this to April 15). At a recent meeting I had with him, the Provost agreed that he will do his best to honor requests for partial roll overs, while he will also request that faculty submit their requests by May 15. In the long run, this is obviously one area that we will need to address either through a memorandum of agreement or through re-opening negotiations on this specific article.

### 3. *Changes to review of applications for sabbatical*

Article 14.1 of our CBA covers sabbatical leaves, and in particular, 14.1.1.2 covers the criteria for judging sabbatical applications. I was asked this past semester by the Provost to help develop guidelines by which sabbatical applications might be judged. In response, I appointed an ad-hoc committee to review the contract, consider the Provost's request, and develop recommendations. This ad-hoc committee's report, in the form a letter to the Provost, is

attached as Appendix A. In short, the PSU-AAUP feels that the development of such guidelines would best be done through the next bargaining process, as currently the contract provides the authority to set those guidelines to the administration.

4. *Compensation for overseeing research courses*

Article 8.3.4.4.2 of the CBA states “Supervising undergraduate research and independent study is voluntary and will not be compensated.” I have been contacted by, and met with, representatives of several programs that teach undergraduate research courses, expressing great concern at this. As an instructor, who commonly mentors undergraduate students in a 3-4 credit “research” course, I strongly agree that this type of important, high impact work ought to be compensated in some way. We are currently considering ways to press this issue with the administration. I welcome all input on this matter from professors who mentor undergraduate research students.

5. *Developing guidelines for notifying PSU-AAUP of possible investigation*

As part of the settlement of one of the informal grievances, the administration has agreed to work with on the establishment of guidelines under which faculty and/or the PSU-AAUP ought to be notified about investigations of faculty that might result in discipline. According to your Weingarten rights, you have the right to have a union representative present at various meetings with the administration (please see the “Union Representation at Meetings and Weingarten Rights” Did You Know? email for more information:

<https://plymouthaaupdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/psu-aaup-dyk-unionrepresentationatmeetingsandweingartenrights.pdf>

Although you have the right to this representation, the administration is not legally obligated to tell you about it. However, they have agreed that it would be a good practice to inform faculty of this right. As such, we are working with them to develop guidelines for this a faculty member ought to be informed, and when or if they PSU-AAUP also ought to be informed that a faculty member is under investigation.

Planning for next round of bargaining

With our first contract set to end June 2021, we are planning our second round of negotiations for Fall 2020. In preparation for this, we anticipate our Research Committees to meet and develop contract proposals in Spring 2020, and the appointment of the next Negotiating Team by the end of Fall 2019. We will be reaching to ask for volunteers to join both the Negotiating Team, as well as the Research Committees. Please let us know if you are interested! Furthermore, remember that your workplans are

due very soon, so it may be worth considering including your intention to serve in one of these capacities within the next academic year.

I would just close by saying that it has been a true honor to serve as your first elected president, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you in a second term. Thank you to everybody who voted for me, thank you to the members of PSU-AAUP, and thank you to all who have served and who continue to serve in the many different ways that make our union.

In solidarity,

--Jeremiah Duncan

President, Plymouth State University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors  
(PSU-AAUP)

## **Appendix A: Report of Ad Hoc Committee to Review Sabbatical Criteria**

03 April 2019

Dear Provost Dorff,

The PSU-AAUP Executive Committee appreciates the offer to be involved in determining additional criteria for awarding faculty sabbatical leave. However, we decline this opportunity at this time since we believe that the criteria agreed upon in our collective bargaining agreement (article 14.1.1.2 ) states clear and adequate criteria. We will be happy to discuss issues around sabbaticals during the next round of contract negotiations.

We are sure that you agree that sabbatical leaves are an important opportunity for faculty to develop intellectually and professionally. Finally, we would certainly challenge the rejection of any sabbatical application that meets the contractually agreed upon criteria.

Sincerely,

PSU-AAUP Executive Committee Ad-Hoc Committee to Review Sabbatical Criteria