

Faculty Leader

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Protecting Academic Freedom and Quality Education for 31 years

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NEGOTIATIONS: WHERE WE STAND

Your Professional Negotiating Committee (PNC) has been at the negotiations table since November, 2007. As we have been reporting, the complete list of contract issues placed on the table by either the UDMPU or the UDM administration was sorted into six basic categories, with a subcommittee of the PNC responsible for discussions and negotiations for each of the sets of issues. The six basic categories included: compensation; benefits; tenure/promotion/faculty status; resources and working conditions; intellectual property and on-line teaching; and, contract language. We have made progress on many of the issues and have had comprehensive discussions on all of the issues on the table. As a result of progress, both sides have agreed that the six subcommittees can now be combined into two "mega" committees to better focus on any remaining unresolved issues. These two "mega" committees are: compensation/benefits and faculty status/on-line teaching. This issue of the Leader summarizes progress to date and describes in general terms what remains to be accomplished.

Compensation -- We have tentatively agreed to a formula that results in a course release when sufficient directed readings have been accumulated. In addition, we have created remuneration levels for theses and dissertations for both chairs and readers. An agreement has been reached to compensate librarians who complete activities for which faculty receive course releases. In addition, a formula is being developed to "regularize" compensation for department and program chairs based on task requirements. Equity is still an open issue as is specific pay raises for UDMPU members. The issue of a merit-based compensation system may become a letter of understanding that agrees to study it during this contract. Two additional issues have been added to our list of concerns and are at this time still open for discussion and resolution, namely, librarians' use of non-contract days and questions of summer benefits for several different scenarios (e.g., term appointees between the first and potential second years of non-tenure track appointments). The two critical issues remaining for this committee, therefore, are a compensation package over the

length of the contract and an equity study (with any resultant equity pay increases).

Benefits -- Retirement benefits will now include one year of dental benefits for post retirement, though all other retiree benefits remain the same. Raising the cap for long term disability is still being discussed. The issue of childcare was studied and the administration is still trying to find a child care company to have on-campus facilities. The survey done in this area, however, does not really indicate an overwhelming desire for child care on campus and even less desire off-campus. There are several possibilities for finding ways to include domestic partners within health care plans, and they are being investigated. We are looking into a dental plan for coverage beyond UDM's Dental School. Many options are being evaluated for health benefits. There will likely be a phasing in of single subscribers contributing to health benefits coverage. This process will likely take the entire five years of this contract to have single subscribers pay a consistent percentage of health care costs with couple and family health plans. The final plans are still

being evaluated, but there will be at least one Blue Cross Blue Shield and one HAP plan as available options. Specific plan design changes are being considered, and discussions have also taken place regarding a vision plan option (which already exists) and a modification to the cap for our present dental plan. The critical issue for this subcommittee is considering a change in the basic approach to how yearly health care increases are absorbed.

Working Conditions -- Most issues in this category have or are very close to having tentative agreement. The administration's concerns about section 11.3 of the contract (relocation of academic units and comparable conditions) have been withdrawn. Questions of sections 11.8 and 11.9 (publication assistance and a research fund) have been included into a larger "voucher" fund. In addition, there is a new "internal grant" fund that will solicit competitive bids for research funds. Both funds provide a substantial increase in academic research support for UDMPU members. Formalization of external grant guidelines is being written. In addition, tentative agreement has been reached on a modification to section 10.2 of the contract that allows members on research leaves to earn additional money to bring them up to their regular full salary without being penalized. Finally, we are close to agreement on a modified and shortened statement on Conflict of Interest/Ethics. The work of this committee is essentially completed.

Language -- several "housekeeping" (contract language) issues have been worked out. All language modifications resulting from

agreements from the other subcommittees will have to be included into the contract. This subcommittee, therefore, will reform at the end of negotiations to complete the work of revising contract language.

IP/On-line Teaching -- Two IP documents have received tentative agreement, both of which used the rough drafts created by a joint committee of faculty and administration as established by our present collective bargaining agreement: a copyright policy and a patent policy. Extensive discussions regarding a pilot on-line program that would establish guidelines for all future on-line teaching is now being evaluated by the MFA, which has a specific process to determine the acceptability of new academic programs. In addition, a feasibility study for on-line teaching at UDM is in process.

Tenure/Promotion/Faculty Status—A single issue has become the focus of this subcommittee, and it has an impact on many concerns placed on the table by both parties. Specifically, the administration's request to create an additional academic rank of "Lecturer" has widespread ramifications for several areas of concern, e.g., UDMPU/adjunct ratio, and impact on and extension of the tenure clock. Some language has been developed and discussions continue. Due to the interdependence of several issues in this category, as one area is resolved, several others will also gain tentative agreement. The critical issues revolve around the issue and ramifications of the "Lecturer" position, the UDMPU/adjunct ratio and the enforcement of contractual obligations in this area. While this committee has

the largest number of issues, many of them are related to these critical issues.

PNC Committee Contributions

Your elected representatives have not only committed to long and hard negotiations at the bargaining table, they have spent many hours at our PNC meetings preparing for these difficult negotiations. Mike Canjar, UDMPU President, takes an active leadership role as chair of the working conditions and faculty status subcommittees, while being a contributing member of three additional subcommittees. Doug MacDonald is also a chair of two subcommittees (language and IP) and is active on two additional groups. Kris McLonis, Gail Presbey, Carla Groh, Shuvra Das and Prasad Venegopal are each effective members of two committees. They willingly do research for issues as they arise and regularly attend and contribute to our PNC meetings. Their imprint on strategy and issues is readily apparent to our negotiating team. Nancy Calley provides insightful comments in subcommittee meetings. Three additional faculty members add to our committees: Barry Dauphin, Kate Walters and Mary Higby. They bring important perspectives to IP, Language and Benefits, respectively. This is a very committed and effective PNC and their hard work and contributions throughout these negotiations is greatly appreciated.

Larry Zeff, Chief Negotiator