

**1. Why are we voting on dues and agency fees for the UNTF?**

Member dues enable the UNTF to successfully represent your needs and rights as an employee of the University. Plus, they represent an investment in the UNTF's future success. They enable us to hire a full-time UNTF organizer, utilize effective grievance procedures, commission research, coordinate efforts with other contingent faculty unions, and implement our first contract in the most positive matter possible. Our dues demonstrate our commitment to securing better wages, job security, and working conditions for the fixed-term faculty at MSU.

The UNTF is legally responsible to represent all bargaining unit employees. Given the size of our bargaining unit – approximately 700 in any given semester – and the complexity of our conditions of employment, the responsibility of implementing our contract is too heavy to place on our officers and board members alone. To fulfill our legal and fiduciary responsibilities, the Executive Board and officers will be relying on internal support (namely, a paid organizer) as well as external support (namely, the state and national AFT staff and resources).

**2. What is the difference between a member and an agency fee payer? Can I refuse to be a member of the UNTF or pay any dues at all?**

As a result of the democratic vote during the union certification campaign and the contract agreement, people whose work at MSU places them within our bargaining unit are required by law either to become a member or to pay an agency fee. A full member of the union may vote on all matters affecting the conduct of the union and may run for office or serve on committees; a full member also pays dues. An agency fee payer is subject to a union assessment, at a slightly lower rate, but has no vote. In either status, you will be entitled to benefit from the gains affecting your salary, benefits, working conditions, and job security won through the effort that the UNTF exerts on behalf of all non-tenure track faculty who are part of the bargaining unit.

**3. How am I better off after this contract than before it?**

Even after paying member dues for the four years of the contract, you will come out ahead.

Prior to the union contract we were each on our own. The university could terminate our contracts without notice, and departments had no obligation to increase our salary or to give any weight to our previous service at the University.

In our first contract, we achieved minimum wage increases that many of our members would not otherwise have gained. Job security, the members' most important issue, has been improved by setting up a new appointment system that moves bargaining unit members from one-year appointments to three-year appointments. Bargaining unit members also have a grievance procedure that offers protections under the terms and conditions in the contract.

By the fourth and final year of our contract, we all will have seen raises totaling at least 5.5%. Our initial contract establishes a set of expectations for each department in the University and for the University as a whole. These minimal standards will serve as a floor, not as a ceiling, for the conditions of employment of fixed-term faculty at MSU. Now that the baseline has been set, we can move toward improving our working conditions in all areas.

Like all workplace agreements, our contract is a living document whose impact on our professional lives is shaped by our implementation of it, every day, in every department and program across

MSU's campus. Full and enthusiastic commitment to the process of implementing our first contract will allow us to negotiate second and third contracts that build on the successes we had in the first.

#### **4. What will our dues be used for?**

The money that is paid to the union organization will go to the administration of the contract, one full-time organizer, office space, equipment and supplies, legal fees, and dues to the state and national organization.

#### **5. What would the member dues and agency fee rates be? How are they set?**

The percentages approved by the UNTF Executive Board are 1.6% and 1.44% for full members and agency fee payers respectively. These percentages will be assessed only on the salary derived from teaching, and the corresponding amount will be deducted from every unit member's monthly pay. Under this rate, for every \$10,000 of salary derived from teaching as a fixed-term faculty member at MSU, the member dues will be \$160 per year and the agency fee will be \$144. For someone earning a salary of \$40,000 from teaching the annual member dues will be \$640 and the agency fee will be \$576.

The dues will be set by the vote of the membership at a meeting called by the executive board after the contract is ratified. The dues will be set by the majority of voting members at the meeting. It is important for members to be active in that process.

Agency fees would be based on the dues rate minus the amount of dues that are spent on activities unrelated to the administration of the contract. Generally, agency fees are about 90 to 95 percent of the dues rate.

#### **6. Are these ways of setting dues/agency fees common?**

This is the most common way to set dues and agency fees. Our dues/agency fees are very similar to those of other higher education locals in Michigan.

#### **7. Do I have to be a member to vote on this proposal? Why?**

Yes. The UNTF constitution lays out the rules that govern union members' rights in the organization. On votes regarding union matters, the constitution is clear that not even associate members (people who pay dues at the lower associate member rate when they are out of the bargaining unit) may vote. The constitution is silent on voting by people who are not union members, because this is never done. It would be nonsense to allow non-members to vote.

People who are not members have other rights guaranteed by law, including the right to representation by the union in cases of dispute about the interpretation of the contract.

To ensure that only eligible voters cast votes, we will compare the names of people from whom ballots are received with the current unit list and current membership list to verify eligibility to vote; votes cast by ineligible voters will be discarded.

#### **8. Why join as a full member, instead of remaining an agency fee payer?**

Full membership accords voting privileges and permits you to shape the development of the UNTF as an officer, steward, or committee member. Becoming a member gives you a stronger voice in your workplace as it is affected by our collective bargaining process. The greater the number of members, the more effective we can be in advancing the cause of fixed-term faculty at MSU.