

# NEWS FROM UWFA

EDITOR: DANIEL STONE

## 1997 / 1998 UWFA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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## resident's Report

Dear UWFA Members

As you probably know, the negotiations involving AESES Members have come to a turning point. On Tuesday, AESES held a ballot of its Members on their last offer presented by the Administration. As a result of this vote, AESES is in a position to go on strike as early as Tuesday, November 10th.

UWFA's Executive will meet on Wednesday, November 5th to decide how it will support AESES in its present situation.

In the meantime, here are some general pointers to keep in mind in the event that AESES does go on strike:

1. UWFA Members are bound under labour law to fulfill their contractual obligations, to meet their classes and fulfill their normal functions; and,

## SPECIAL EDITION



2. UWFA Members are not in any way obliged to undertake any of the tasks normally fulfilled by AESES Members.

It has been raised by some UWFA Members whether, to avoid crossing a picket line they might locate their class off-campus. This would entail negotiating with the whole class. It would not overcome the obligation to perform other normal functions that might be located on campus and to get to which would involve crossing a picket line.

Also, I would encourage Members to be sensitive to the concerns of students who have an issue of conscience over crossing a picket line. Should students not attend class, I would hope that Members will be respectful of the student's moral decisions.

In the event of a strike UWFA will, of course, be in touch with you about other matters of this situation.

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Members have asked me about the issue I raised in the last UWFA Newsletter regarding how recently appointed faculty were put on the new salary scale.

The negotiations this time were especially complex because we were introducing a new salary structure. A crucial part of the negotiations was to ensure that individual Members would be placed on the new scale, fairly and equitably. Above all both sides sought to deal with the mutually perceived issue of raising the salaries of junior faculty. Imagine then the disappointment when about 30 junior Members received no increase in their base salaries even though the floors for their ranks had been significantly increased. Why was this?

The problem has its origin in terms guaranteed to Members in their Letter of Appointment.

For most Members the obvious and correct thing to do was to place them on the new scale consistent with their "years in rank". To illustrate: individual A has been three years in rank as an Associate Professor. She should be placed at Step 3 of the new salary scale. So far so good.

But what about junior faculty who had not yet been promoted? Their position under the old salary scale was determined by the terms of their Letter of Appointment.

These letters varied in their terms for Members. But there was a persistent pattern of newly appointed Members being given more steps into the salary scale than years in rank for promotion purposes.

Let us say that a new Member had 4 steps into the salary scale but zero years in rank for promotion purposes in his/her Letter of Appointment. That person, if a years-in-rank placement was used would be placed on the new salary scale not at step 4 but at the floor (step zero). Such a Member would receive no benefit of the new salary scale with its new floors.

And so some 30 Member did not receive any base salary increase when they were put on the new salary scale. Yes, they received an increased CDI, yes they will get the benefit of the new floor when they are promoted to Associate Professor. But for now their base placement salary was unchanged.

This is an issue of equity and fairness. The Letters of Appointment were drawn up by the Administration and signed by the President. It is clear that steps given on the salary scale were rewards for intellectual and research experience that the Member brought with her. They were not arbitrary or capricious "gifts". A year in rank placement system washes out these decisions and allocations that, after all, the Administration chose to give. This is unfair, especially since a similar system continues to be used by the Dean's Office. This means that newly appointed Members in 1998 given more steps-into-the-salary scale than years-in-rank for promotion purposes are leap-frogging the salaries of Members with more standing and academic experience.

To illustrate further the absurdities and anomalies of this system, consider the case of someone appointed, say 2 years ago, as an Instructor III. This is the highest rank in the Instructor system. In a Letter of Appointment for such an individual there cannot be any credit given for years in rank for promotion purposes because there is no further promotion beyond that rank. All that the Administration can do is to recognize past experience and qualifications by granting steps into the salary scale. Under a years-in-rank placement system, those steps are washed out and the Instructor is placed on the new scale at the floor of the new Instructor III rank.

We had hoped that a new salary scale would eradicate anomalies and inequities. In fact the manner of implementing the new structure has been for some 30 members anomalous, unfair and absurd.

UWFA regrets this and has lobbied to correct it. All to no avail. I think that 30 Members morale is too important a consideration not to deal with.

I hope you will support UWFA in our attempt to rectify this inequity.

**ALLEN MILLS**