



UFAS NEWS

June 2017

UFAS Wins Pay Increases, Retitling for Faculty Assistants

On April 3, 2017, the Dean's office in the College of Letters and Science announced a 4.5-9% raise in minimum pay rates for Faculty Assistants in L&S for the 2017-2018 academic year. This was a direct result of a six-month campaign initiated and spearheaded by Faculty Assistants who are members of United Faculty and Academic Staff (UFAS), American Federation of Teachers Local 223, to achieve parity in pay with Teaching Assistants on campus.

Faculty Assistants (FAs) are a small group of instructional staff at UW-Madison (about 50 in each given semester) who perform duties that are similar to or greater than those of graduate student Teaching Assistants. The FA title was created for situations where not enough Teaching Assistants could be found to cover all the teaching needs of a certain department, and it was intended to be a temporary position for which instructors would be hired for just one or two years. However, as student enrollments increased in certain programs like English as a Second Language (ESL) and Chemistry, many FAs, most of whom have graduate degrees, have remained in these positions long-term; some have been teaching as FAs for over a decade. At the same time, FA pay rates have remained stagnant for many years, leading to the situation that despite their qualifications and experience, Faculty Assistants' pay minima are lower than those of TAs (based on 100% appointments).

Early in the fall of 2016, a group of FAs in the Program in English as a Second Language, with the help of other UFAS members and [AFT-Wisconsin](#) organizers, set out to address this disparity. They located and connected with many other FAs on campus; reached out to department heads in programs that rely heavily on Faculty Assistants; met with deans, campus Human Resources staff, and other administrators to ask for pay equity; and presented their case to the University Committee and the Academic Staff Executive Committee. Early in the spring semester, the Teaching Assistants Association (the graduate workers' union) issued its support for the campaign, [as did the Associated Students of Madison](#), the campus's student governance body. In March and April, UFAS members who serve in the Academic Staff Assembly and the Faculty Senate introduced a resolution on "Fair and Equitable Pay for Faculty Assistants" for consideration by these bodies. "The resolution hit a nerve for many [Academic Staff Assembly representatives](#), with several speaking emotionally and eloquently in favor of the resolution. Although attempts were made to stop discussion, the body decided that FAs deserved their opportunity to speak up. The resolution passed overwhelmingly—a result that [was repeated in the Faculty Senate two weeks later](#)," said Tim Dalby, Faculty Associate in the Program in English as a Second Language, UFAS member and Academic Staff Assembly representative.

The April memo from L&S Dean Karl Scholz, which was issued on the morning of the Faculty Senate meeting in which senators would consider the equitable pay resolution, announced not only pay raises but also a staff restructuring plan in the ESL Program to be implemented for the Fall 2017 semester. Under this restructuring the FAs who have been employed for more than three years will be transitioned to renewable Lecturer positions and additional lecturers will be hired in place of short-term Faculty Assistants. “This shift from short-term to renewable staffing is intended to help the ESL Program more dependably meet student needs and maintain the highest quality instruction,” the memo concluded—a position that UFAS strongly supports. Parthy Schachter, one of the campaign leaders and incoming UFAS First Vice President, expressed the sentiment widely shared by her colleagues: “As lecturers, we [in the ESL Program] will have higher pay and a clear path to consistent raises over time, which we lacked before. This retitling more adequately acknowledges our contributions to the university and the fact that we are professionals.”

Although both the retitling in ESL and the increase in pay minima for Faculty Assistants in L&S are positive developments, rates for some FAs still remain lower than minima for Teaching Assistants, and FAs who hold PhDs will not be affected at all by the rate changes. In the coming year UFAS will continue pressuring the UW-Madison administration for equitable pay and job stability for all Faculty Assistants—and for other campus employees who lack fair pay and job security. Gains for FAs are “part of a broader push for equity,” said UFAS president, faculty senator, and sociology professor Chad Alan Goldberg. Instead of a “winner-take-all campus,” he added, the union promotes “a campus where concerns about fairness, justice, and solidarity still play a role in the work we do together.”



SAVE THE DATE

Fall membership picnic

Sunday, September 17, 4–6pm
[BB Clarke Beach Park, Madison, WI](#)

Family friendly and open to non-members!

“Having a voice to speak for matters that affect academic staff is reassuring, especially given the recent changes in political climate.”

— Jesaiah King, Chemistry/Chemical and
Biological Engineering

UFAS Active in AFT-W’s Campaign “Fund the Freeze”

In 2011, the Wisconsin legislature froze tuition across the UW System even as state legislators made deep cuts to the UW System budget. The AFT-Wisconsin [Fund the Freeze](#) (FtF) initiative, started in the fall of 2016, asks the state legislature to sharply increase public funding to compensate for the cost of the tuition freeze, thereby ensuring high-quality education while maintaining affordable tuition and fees for our students. UFAS has been actively promoting the initiative throughout the 2016-2017 academic year through teach-ins and public forums on campus, other outreach efforts to UW-Madison and UW-Extension faculty and academic staff about the campaign, and lobbying our local state legislators during meetings at the Capitol and at listening sessions on campus and in the community.

To cap this months-long campaign, on May 2, 2017, UFAS issued a joint statement with Senator Fred Risser (Senate District 26) and State Representative Chris Taylor (Assembly District 76), supporting FtF and calling for increased public spending for the UW System. “A college education is more important than ever for Wisconsin students’ well-being and secure future. Making sure that every Wisconsin student can afford a quality UW education is critical for every community in Wisconsin and our state’s overall economic prosperity.... Now is the time for Gov. Walker and the state legislature to show they will invest in our students and in the future of the UW,” the [statement reads](#).

If you haven’t signed on to the initiative yet, please join thousands of your colleagues and neighbors in supporting adequate funding for college education in Wisconsin: pledge your support [here](#).

UFAS Members Attend AFT Higher Education Organizing Conference

Four UFAS members—Jambul Akkaziev, Alyssa Franze, Jason Lee, and Parthy Schachter—attended the American Federation of Teachers Higher Education Organizing Conference in Detroit this April, their attendance made possible in part by a Member Mobilization Grant from AFT-Wisconsin.

Alyssa Franze (academic staff, Department of English) writes about the conference experience:

I went to the AFT Higher Ed Conference because it seemed like an opportunity to learn more about union work at the end of a year in which the union had become a very important part of my life. Together with our UFAS group, I attended one workshop on organizing contingent faculty and another on academic freedom in today’s political climate; heard three interesting and inspiring plenaries by author and union and community organizer Jane McAlevey, AFT President Randi Weingarten, and social scientist and activist Frances Fox Piven; went to the contingent faculty reception; and just spent time getting to know people, in particular representatives from the UW-Madison TAA and from Milwaukee Area Technical College’s local. All of the workshops and events were engaging and very informative—I think we all left feeling we had learned strategies and ideas we wanted to implement for our own union; but for me the most powerful and meaningful part was the more informal interactions and connections with members of other locals. It felt validating to meet and hear about fellow contingent workers struggling with and working on the same issues, and it was rewarding—and fun!—to get to know AFT-Wisconsin members beyond UFAS.

Jason Lee (academic staff, Social Work), UFAS secretary and member of the AFT Program and Planning Council (PPC) which organized the conference, adds:

Throughout the conference the experience of Wisconsin, and the work of our members, was highlighted. The Faculty Assistants’ campaign was recognized at a reception for adjunct faculty, where Parthy Schachter, one of the lead organizers of the campaign, spoke about the efforts within UFAS to generate wins and organize without collective bargaining. AFT President Randi Weingarten singled out Wisconsin union members during her address to attendees, saying, in part, to look no further than the inspiration of Wisconsin for how to organize in difficult circumstances. Finally, the work of UFAS in particular and among AFT members in Wisconsin broadly was featured as a model in the post-conference business meeting. Many PPC members know their states may soon experience conditions like ours in Wisconsin and they want to focus, with more urgency, on how to learn from our experiences.



“At the University of Virginia, where I had a position before coming to UW–Madison, I had a chance to see the importance and effectiveness of an organized collective faculty voice. Given current issues in higher education nationally and especially in our particular community, now is as important a time as ever to protect and champion the high quality teaching and research we do here, which we can best accomplish together.”

— Aaron Hill, School of Music

“As a native of Detroit area, I witnessed the positive and beneficial roles of unions among family members and neighbors across various professions and trades. For me, I enjoy being part of a community of practice with peers across disciplines who are devoted to the undergraduate experience at UW–Madison.”

— Julie Larson-Guenette, German, Nordic, and Slavic



FROM UFAS NEWSWIRE

Jambul Akkaziev (academic staff, Department of English) and Anna Paretskaya (academic staff, Department of Sociology) participated as presenters in the public forum “Frozen in Place: But Don’t Leave Compensation Out in the Cold.” The forum was coorganized by UFAS, the Wisconsin University Union (WUU), and the UW-Madison chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and was held on April 5, 2017, at the Pyle Center on campus. In the context of the state legislature’s deliberations

about the next biannual (2017-2019) state budget, the presenters were asked to reflect on the university's budgetary needs and share major concerns about the draft budget of their respective constituencies. One specific focus of the forum was on the years-long lack of across-the-board pay raises for university employees; the organizers asked the speakers to present ideas about the best ways to distribute limited funds that the legislature had promised to UW campuses for selected pay increases. Akkaziev and Paretskaya in their presentations made strong arguments for moving away from the winner-take-all mentality and for prioritizing raises for lowest-paid campus employees, including student workers and clerical workers, as well as the lowest-compensated categories of academic staff and faculty (who are often concentrated in the humanities and student services and are disproportionately female). Other speakers at the forum included Mara Matovich from the Associated Students of Madison, then Interim President of AAUP Michael Moscicke, and former UW-Madison Chancellor (2001-2008) John Wiley.

On April 20, 2017, member Parthy Schachter (academic staff, Department of English) represented UFAS at a panel discussion at UW-Stevens Point "What Do Labor Unions Do? (And What Does the Future Hold for All Employees?)." This event was hosted by SPARC, the labor union for faculty and academic staff at UWSP and other AFT-Wisconsin affiliate (Local 6505, organized in spring 2011). The featured speakers, in addition to Schachter, included: Kim Kohlhaas, President of AFT-Wisconsin; Ray Nass, former CEO of Joerns Furniture, Inc., Stevens Point; Brian Oberstadt from IBEW and Portage County Labor Council; and Bill Skelton, Professor Emeritus of History at UWSP. Schachter gave an overview of UFAS's FA pay campaign (see the story above) as an example of a practical, meaningful way that labor unions can make a difference in the lives of workers, even in a right-to-work state like Wisconsin.

During the Spring 2017 semester, UFAS for the first time polled candidates running for the Academic Staff Executive Committee and the University Committee, the executive bodies of the academic staff and faculty respectively, on their attitudes towards unions in higher education and support for UFAS specifically. All four candidates of the UC and two out of four candidates for ASEC responded to the questionnaire; UFAS disseminated these responses to its members urging them to vote for candidates in these elections based on their responses. UFAS plans to continue surveying candidates for these offices every year.

In 2016-2017 UFAS general membership voted to contribute \$250 to [Voces de la Frontera](#), an organization championing immigrant rights and wider social justice issues, for a paid community organizer in Madison; \$100 to [Sacred Stone Legal Defense Fund](#), one of the groups supporting resistance to the Dakota Access oil pipeline; \$40 to [Workers' Rights Center of Madison](#); and \$25 to [South Central Federation of Labor](#) scholarship fund. The money comes from our membership dues.

"Before I joined the union I enjoyed my job, I liked my coworkers, but I basically did nothing that connected me to the wider university community. Through my union I've found a powerful voice and courage that I didn't know I had but that emerged with the mentorship and solidarity of my colleagues. I have also found a way that I can be fully engaged in what goes on in the university and a vehicle for making real differences in my life and the lives of my coworkers. Most importantly, I've discovered an incredible group of people who are willing to give their time, talent, and energy for causes that don't necessarily pertain to their own individual situations. **They do this because they recognize that when we work together for improvements in working conditions, we**



all benefit, and when we support each other, we are truly powerful.”

— Parthy Schachter, English

UFAS OFFICERS, 2017–2018

President: Chad Alan Goldberg (faculty, Sociology)

First Vice President: Parthy Schachter (academic staff, English)

Second Vice President: Jambul Akkaziev (academic staff, English)

Secretary: Jason M. Lee (academic staff, Social Work)

Treasurer: Amihan Huesmann (academic staff, Physics)

Chairperson, Academic Staff Committee: Aaron Crandall (academic staff, Population Health Sciences)

Chairperson, Compensation and Benefits Committee: Anna Paretskaya (academic staff, Sociology)

Chairperson, Equity and Diversity Committee: Susan M. Nossal (academic staff, Physics)

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