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Featured in This Issue:

The Grievance Process

The number of grievances at NEIU has tripled in recent years, and NEIU generates significantly more grievances than other Illinois campuses. For these and other reasons, many have expressed concern about our grievance process. In response, the UPI and Administrative negotiating teams have created a more streamlined and efficient system. Grievance Officer Cyndi Moran emphasizes, however, that official grievances are only part of the responsibility of her office and that a great number of difficulties get resolved informally. The goal of the new system is to make informal resolutions even more likely and to make the formal grievance process more productive.

As in the past, grievances start with a member's concern. One job of the Grievance Officer is to help members consider whether concerns are simply problems that need to be addressed or actual Contract violations. UPI members can only grieve those problems that are direct violations of the Contract. In addition, even if an issue is determined to be a violation, the Grievance Officer may not file a grievance until she meets with the Contract Administrator to discuss the issue informally.

If a resolution cannot be reached informally, the grievance process begins, and several features of our contract have improved this process. For example, unlike in previous contracts, we now have guarantees that grievances will be heard within a reasonable timeframe, so there will not be weeks or months before a grievance is addressed.

The previous contract also allowed for two different "steps" in the grievance process, while our new contract streamlines this process and makes it more neutral. Instead of the Contract Administrator running grievance hearings (as in the past), an outside party will facilitate these meetings. The Administration and UPI will choose and train these neutral moderators. In addition, four panelists—two chosen by the Administration and two chosen by the UPI (with at least one of these individuals being from the same employee group as the grievant)—will listen to both sides, ask questions, and deliberate on the matter before offering a recommendation to the President, who, as before, decides on the matter.

If the President rules against the UPI member, the potential for arbitration—an outside legal hearing—still remains. If the UPI Local does pursue arbitration, however, our new Contract makes it easier for informal negotiations between the UPI and the Administration to resume so that a resolution may be found before the issue reaches an arbitrator.



Cyndi Moran, Associate Professor—Communication, Media and Theater & UPI Grievance Officer

NEIU generates significantly more grievances than other Illinois campuses.

Finally, our new grievance process, like much of the new Contract, opens the door for your participation. Cyndi Moran will be training panelists to represent the UPI in the grievance process described above, and we need people from every employee group to take part. Such work will not be intense, and might entail only one hearing a semester, but it is critical that panelists be trained in key areas of the Contract to participate. In the process, panelists will gain an insider's view into how grievances are handled and how the UPI and Administration

negotiate some of their most difficult issues. We all know—from our own experience and from the experiences of our colleagues—that the grievance process can be complicated and frustrating. My experience as a panelist in a grievance last year helped me appreciate the subtle issues that go into grievance negotiations and made me eager to learn more, both for my own protection

and so that I can stand with Union leadership in understanding and safeguarding the Contract. As we move into a new era of NEIU's UPI, one that emphasizes broad and ongoing involvement from all of our members, I hope that you will join me in this important task.

—Tim Barnett, Dept of English

Upcoming UPI Events & Announcements

A University Celebration of the Contract

Hosted by the University Professionals of Illinois

Guests of Honor:

The UPI and Administrative Negotiating Teams, President Hahs and Members of the UPI Executive Committee

Tuesday, November 1, 2011
Alumni Hall 3:00-4:30

E-portfolio workshops

The UPI and Academic Affairs are conducting e-portfolio workshops primarily for first-year, tenure-track faculty, as noted below. Tenured faculty who are applying for promotion to full or for a PAI may also attend the workshop as can probationary tenure track faculty wishing to review the e-portfolio process.

November 17 at 8 am - 9:30 am OR
November 18 at 2 pm - 3:30 pm
E-portfolio Refresher Workshops, Location CBM 158

What Your Union Has Done For You Lately

<http://www.upi4100.org/neiu/>

Parental Leave:

Under the new contract, parents may take up to two consecutive weeks of parental leave at full pay commencing with the birth or adoption of their child. This is a new benefit, and the days are not taken out of an employee's sick or vacation leave. If both parents are employees of the University, the individuals may divide the time between them in any proportion they choose. In addition, retention, tenure, promotion, sabbatical, education leave, and PAI clocks stop while employees are on the new parental leave and existing Family Medical Leave Act, which makes new parents eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid. On return, employees shall be placed in their former positions or in positions of equal rank at the same pay (if the former position doesn't exist). The UPI continues to work to ensure that no employee is adversely affected by pregnancy or adoption or faces negative action due to request and/or approval of parental leave.

Sick Leave Bank:

Under the new contract, employees who have accumulated at least 12 sick days may donate sick days to the new Sick Leave Bank, which is administered by the UPI. Those who have joined the bank may apply for up to 20 days of sick leave per year if their own sick leave is exhausted. To join the Sick Leave Bank this year, you must complete the Sick Leave Bank enrollment form and return it to the Office of Human Resources by November 11. Your first two days of leave will be transferred to the bank when your enrollment form is processed. Initially, you may also donate up to 5 additional days. Thereafter, after July 1st of each year, one leave day will be transferred from your benefit days to the bank. The transfer of days will continue every year unless you fill out a revocation form. This addition to the Contract has the potential to improve the lives of many at NEIU since it adds flexibility to the sick leave process and will especially help newer employees who have not accumulated much leave but face serious challenges. New parents may also apply for up to 20 sick days to help fund unpaid leave taken as part of the Family Medical Leave Act. **Please enroll in the Sick Bank by November 11!**

Work is important, but families matter too, and the UPI continues to seek strategies for balancing these two priorities in all of our lives.

Comments? Suggestions?

Please contact:

Tim Barnett at tbarn12000@yahoo.com or x5822
Chuck Steinwedel at csteinwedel@comcast.net or x5624

Thanks to Michael Armato, Paul Lempke, Mary Ellen McGoey, Laurie Fuller, Zach Schiffman, and Marshall Thompson for their assistance.

Who is Eligible to be in the Union?

The Criteria for Entry into the Bargaining Unit and eligibility for Union membership are as follows:

Teaching Professionals and Resource Professionals:

Membership in Bargaining Unit immediately upon hire.
Instructors: Membership in Bargaining Unit after having taught fifteen (15) credit hours with no more than a total of three semesters break in employment. These hours can be nonconsecutive but they must comprise two (2) credits or more per semester.

Academic Resource Professionals: Entry into the Bargaining Unit occurs after one year's employment at 100% or after two years if appointment is 50% or greater.

Academic Support Professionals: If the position is state-funded then entry into the Bargaining Unit is immediate upon hire. If the position is grant-funded, membership in Bargaining Unit occurs after one year's employment at 100% or after two years if appointment is 50% or greater.

Academic Support Professionals employed hourly on grant funds. Entry into the bargaining unit occurs after employment of at least 1560 hours (at least 80%) within 12 months of the hiring date.

Have You Signed a Member Card?

Having the largest representation of NEIU faculty and professional staff is essential to the health of the Union. Many assume that a person is a member if dues are deducted from their paychecks. However, in order to be able to vote in Union elections and enjoy Union benefits, a member of the bargaining unit must sign a membership card. More than 500 NEIU teaching professionals, instructors, academic Resource professionals, and academic support professionals have already done so.

Since all members of the bargaining unit benefit from Union-negotiated contracts, Illinois law allows unions to collect "fair share" funds from all employees regardless of union membership. In the UPI's case, Fair Share contributions are the same as Union dues, so joining the UPI does not increase deductions from your paycheck.

Please contact Mary Ellen McGoey, our membership chair, at m-mcgoey@neiu.edu if you would like a membership card or fill out the card below and forward it to her in the Department of World Languages and Cultures.



University Professionals of Illinois

Local 4100
IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

I hereby authorize a deduction in the amount certified as the current rate of deduction to be withheld from my pay in accordance with the State Salary and Annuity Withholding Act (Membership Dues to UPI may not be deductible for federal income tax purposes.)

Membership Dues

Payroll Deduction Authorization
State of Illinois

Deduction for the UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONALS OF ILLINOIS, Local 4100, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	ID number
Street	City / State	Zip	Home Phone
University	Dept./Unit	Classification / Rank	Campus Address
Campus Phone	Preferred E-mail address	Payroll Code No. (for payroll office use only)	Effective pay period
Signature	Please forward completed cards to your Chapter President.		Today's Date