

MSU APA May/June Newsletter

APA \$800 Annual Professional Development Funds

In the APA 2015 contract negotiations, we were able to successfully change the contract to allow your annual \$800 professional development funding to be used more liberally including at colleges and for credit courses provided the course was supervisor approved and job related.

From 2015 to 2016, the APA was contacted by several members raising concern that their request to utilize the \$800 was denied by central HR despite being job related and supervisor approved.

In response, a member and the APA jointly filed a grievance to dispute the wrongful denial for use of the funds. The University contested the position of the APA and the case went to binding arbitration earlier this calendar year. The goal of the arbitration was to obtain clarity on how, when, and where the professional development funds could be used under the terms of our 2015 modification.

Last month the APA received the arbitrator's binding decision. In short, the APA won in part and lost in part.

As it relates to the specific concern of use for the PD funds, the arbitrator issued a binding decision that MSU should be empowered to make the decision for use of the PD funds. However, the arbitrator also ruled that the University cannot arbitrarily approve or deny a request.

As a follow-up, the APA is working to schedule a meeting with MSU to discuss the process of approval and denial moving forward. The goal is to establish clearly defined rules for approval and denial of requests.

The APA continues working diligently on this issue consistent with the ruling and we will communicate with the APA membership as substantive progress is made. If you have any question, please contact the APA office at 517.999.4004 or email us at msuapa@msu.edu.

Questions From The Trenches

For this installment of *APA Questions From The Trenches*, we asked APA President Maury Koffman to highlight answers to questions raised by members regarding the ongoing 2017 joint wage and health care negotiations with MSU.

Who participates in the joint wage and health care negotiations process?

As has been the past practice for nearly the last 20 years, the APA has joined with the other support staff unions on campus to negotiate a successor wage and health care agreement. Our current wage and health care agreement is in effect through December 31, 2017. Any tentative successor agreement is presented to the APA membership for review and a ratification vote.

Who sits at the bargaining table for the APA in these negotiations?

Each union has one or two representatives at the bargaining table. APA President and Chairperson Maury Koffman, and APA Treasurer Erica Phillipich, are serving as the representatives for the APA.

Additionally, the support staff unions collectively asked APA/MEA UniServ Director, Melanie Waltz, to serve as the co-chief negotiator, a role the APA previously served during the 2013 joint wage and health care negotiations.

When did bargaining begin?

The MSU Administration contacted the APA and all support staff unions to begin negotiations in March 2017. This information was communicated to the APA membership via the APA Newsletter, APA Community Luncheons, and other APA member meetings and trainings.

What issues are being discussed at the negotiations table?

Only the issues of base wage and health care can be discussed and negotiated at this joint wage and health care bargaining table. Only when a tentative agreement is reached can we then present specifics regarding a proposed successor wage and health care agreement.

Who should I call with my additional questions?

The APA will do all it can to keep the membership updated with specifics while still upholding our duty to bargain in good faith with MSU. Rest assured that the APA continues our fight to preserve and enhance the current wages and health care benefits of all APA members.

Meet a Fellow APA Member

Meet Ross Winter, our highlighted APA member from Intramural Sports.

What is your job title?

Assistant Director, Intramural Sports

How long have you been at MSU?

After spending four years (2004-2008) as an undergrad and one year (2008-2009) as a graduate student at MSU, I returned as a professional in late 2011 as an Intramural Sports Coordinator.

Have you been a member of the APA the whole time?

Yes, I have been an APA member for almost 6 years.

What department do you work in, and can you tell me a little about what you do?

Recreational Sports and Fitness Services. My primary role is to manage the implementation of the Intramural Sports program, which sees almost 20,000 students, faculty, and staff participate in over 25 activities each year. This then requires me to hire, train, and develop more than 225 student employees so that we can deliver outstanding experiences to the campus population.

What brought you to your job at MSU?

MSU is my second home; it's where I developed a love and passion for mentoring students, helping them reach their full potential. And that led me to pursue a return as a staff member. MSU has an ability to change you for the better, and now I get the opportunity to pass that along to my student employees and our participants.

What do you love about working at MSU?

The people. Whether they are colleagues, students, or participants, I get to interact with all types of people who share the same values and who want to make MSU the best that it can be.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my wife, dog, and family/friends. I also enjoy officiating basketball, playing golf, and brewing my own beer.

Know Your Contract – Holidays

After the long Memorial Day weekend, APA members may be looking forward to other contractual holidays. The following nine holidays are provided to APA members working half-time or more:

- New Year's (2 days);
- Memorial Day;
- Independence Day;
- Labor Day;
- Thanksgiving;
- Friday after Thanksgiving;
- Christmas (2 days).

The University will designate the dates on which the holidays will be observed, so be sure to verify if the additional days at Christmas and New Year's will be observed before or after the legal holiday.

All APA members working half-time or more are eligible for holidays and this benefit starts at your date of hire. However, you will not receive a paid holiday if you are on a leave of absence without pay, Worker's Compensation, or on layoff. In addition, your holiday pay will not be payable if you have an unexcused absence on either the day before or after the holiday.

For APA members who work on a holiday and are AP11 and below, time and one-half will be paid. For APA members who are AP12 and above, talk to your supervisor about earning compensatory time equal to the number of hours worked.

Also, if you want to maximize your holiday, you can supplement with vacation and the holiday will not be charged to your vacation time. Follow departmental procedures when requesting vacation.

To review Article 23, or any other APA contractual provision, go to:

<http://www.msuapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2015-2019-Contract.pdf>

Area Representative (AR) Spotlight – Matthew Evans

What is your job title?

Systems Analyst.

What area of campus, building and department do you work in?

Northeast side of the campus in the Geography building and working for the Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Sciences.

How long have you been at MSU?

Two years.

How long have you been an Area Rep?

Six months.

Why is being a member of the Union important to you?

Being a part of the union gives me a voice in what happens to me at my job, it also gives me a sense of security knowing that if anything happens I have the union to support me.

What words of advice do you have for the new hires at MSU?

Take it one day at a time. For some it's a big step from what they used to do. Some people may have never had the opportunity to join a union with a previous employer. Don't wait to join a union, the more you know what the union can do for you the more comfortable you will feel asking for help and guidance.

What do you love about working at MSU?

I love everything about my job. I love my coworkers, I love the social interactions with all of the staff/faculty and the students. There is not anything to not like about working here at MSU for me.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

I love going to concerts. I have been in three hard rock music videos thus far. I also love to read (R.A. Salvatore and Terry Pratchett are my favorites), I homebrew, and am an avid video gamer.

The AR's are appointed by the Executive Board and their role is to assist with distributing APA materials and information and to serve as a resource for members. AR's are assigned to a geographic area of campus, so if there is not an AR in your immediate building, you can find one nearby. For a list of AR's go to <http://www.msuapa.org/about/area-representatives-2/>

Need help navigating the Office of Institutional Equity? Contact APA!

If you are not familiar with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), you may not be alone, as OIE has completed only their second academic year on campus. The purpose of OIE is to review all concerns of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking under MSU's Anti-Discrimination Policy and MSU's Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct. In addition, OIE can provide information, resources and training on both policies.

As staff of MSU, you can request either informal or formal assistance from OIE. In the informal process, OIE's function is to consult, advise and facilitate alternative dispute resolution. When a formal complaint is filed, OIE will act as a neutral party to all individuals involved in the process, while providing a thorough investigation and analysis of each claim. OIE does not act as a representative for either side; rather, it serves as a neutral fact-finder for determining whether the Anti-Discrimination Policy or Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct was violated.

If the OIE determines that the requirements are met for a formal investigation, OIE will promptly notify the individual, office, or unit against whom the claim is filed. OIE will notify the party of the initiation of the investigation, the potential policy violation at issue, the right to participate in the investigation, the timeframe for responding and that the investigation may proceed without either party. If appropriate, the applicable unit administrator will also be notified of the investigation.

As OIE does not act as an advocate, APA members can request representation from APA. Whether you need to file a claim or find that you have been contacted by OIE to participate in an investigation, APA will consult with you and, if requested, attend the initial meeting with you.

You can file an [OIE Report here](#). Please note that your completed report will go directly to OIE and the MSU Police.

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to ask for assistance by contacting the MSU APA office at (517) 999-4004 or email msuapa@msu.edu.