

# THE WESTERN UNION

## UFWW Executive Board

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Dance: P. Kuntz  
Decision Science: M. Springer  
Economics: P. Storer  
Educational Leadership: P.  
Fabiano  
Elementary Ed: M. Riddle-Buly  
Elementary Ed: G. Simone  
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Environ. Sciences: D. Wallin  
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## FACULTY DEMONSTRATE FOR A FAIR CONTRACT

Thanks to all of you who took time out of your busy schedules to support the UFWW's efforts to jump start the contract bargaining process. In case you missed it, more than 150 members of Western's faculty turned out to the April 4 meeting of Western's Board of Trustees to demand a fair contract for the university's faculty. Members of faculty greeted Trustees in the parking lot with an informational picket and then packed the board meeting room and hallway on the third floor of Old Main. Members of the UFWW Executive Board distributed a written statement describing the union's concerns about the pace of bargaining and the positions staked out by the administration's bargaining team.

Before moving to closed executive session, the trustees recognized the crowd and



*UFWW Chief Steward Steven Garfinkle leads the protest at the Board of Trustees meeting on April 4.*

invited UFWW Vice President, Kristi Lemm, to address the board. In her statement, Lemm highlighted the protracted nature of the contract bargaining and the growing level of faculty frustration over the administration's stance on several outstanding issues. On behalf of the UFWW Executive Board, she insisted that the trustees take a more active role in making sure that the university bargaining team approaches the contract negotiations with the best interest

of the institution in mind.

In his response to Lemm, Board President Kevin Raymond told the faculty, "we really are glad you are here. We hear you on an issue that is a concern to you and that is a concern to us and the administration's team. Let's get this done." Raymond expressed his confidence in the collective bargaining process and announced that the trustees have now instructed their team to "work toward a fair contract that protects Western's future."

## UFWW WEIGHS IN ON ACCREDITATION

On April 7 Western entered the penultimate stage of the accreditation process with the visit to campus of an evaluation team from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Dr. Richard Pattenaude, chair of the evaluation team, met with the members of the UFWW executive board to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the university.

Pattenaude asked pointed questions about the university's efforts to support the scholar-

ship of an increasingly productive faculty and about the conditions leading to the vote for collective bargaining.

But the conversation focused mainly on the future of the university. Members of the executive board stressed that, despite challenges related to efforts to develop the resources necessary to keep our high quality faculty, the university is on a strong trajectory and provides a number of reasons for the university's new president to be excited. Most important among

these reasons are terrific students and an extraordinarily productive and engaged faculty that is highly committed to making sure that the university lives up to its potential. The members of the executive board reported that they are excited by the prospect of working with the new president to strengthen legislative support for the university and foster stronger relationships with potential donors. Pattenaude commended the members of the union for taking an optimistic, positive approach

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## BARGAINING UPDATE: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK AND IT WANTS YOU TO WORK HARDER

BY BILL LYNE, DAVID BOVER, AND KYLE CROWDER

Last Thursday afternoon, Western faculty received an e-mail from an ominously disembodied Provost@wwu.edu. In the interest of responding to “a desire to know more about the administration’s positions” the e-mail contained a link to the administration’s “Bargaining News” website, where the administration has posted its most extensive discussion of bargaining to date. Along with the administration’s commitment to “providing factual information and dispelling rumors,” there is also an unmistakable note of new pride at having now found, after more than fourteen months of bargaining, positions they feel they can sell to faculty.

The administration’s last package proposal on March 26 was indeed a breakthrough. Of the five significant issues we have been discussing—Faculty Senate, Grievance and Arbitration, Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Compensation, and Workload—we have reached a compromise position on the Faculty Senate and we have made some progress in the area of Grievance and Arbitration with the administration’s willingness to agree to the principle of Just Cause. We are very close on Non-Tenure Track Faculty, needing only find a way to ensure that high-performing, long-term non-tenure track faculty are not replaced solely to save a few dollars. But in the areas of Compensation and Workload we still have significant bridges to build.

### Compensation

The administration’s latest compensation proposal is more realistic than any of their previous proposals, but it would still leave us making no significant progress toward the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of peer salaries – a goal that President Morse reiterated in a recent talk before Bellingham’s City Club. In the absence of

progress toward their own goal, the administration seems particularly intent to show on their website that their current proposal outpaces the recent compensation agreement at Eastern Washington University. While a quick glance at the numbers makes this seem factual, overall it is not accurate. It is true that the administration’s current offer of 4.3% salary increases in each of the two years of the contract is one tenth of one percent more each year than in the Eastern settlement. But this does not take into account two important aspects of the Eastern settlement. The Eastern increases are retroactive to January 1 and Eastern associate and full professors all received a \$500 increase to their base salary. These increases make the average total salary increase for associate and full professors at Eastern approximately 9.3% over the biennium, or about .7% more than what the Western administration is currently offering. So the most accurate comparison would probably conclude that the compensation in the current offer from Western’s administration is similar to the Eastern contract for assistant professors and somewhat less for associate and full professors. The administration’s offer is also .2% less than Eastern’s settlement for non-tenure track faculty. And for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty at Western who are in their first year of service, the increase would be dramatically less, as the Western administration’s proposal does not provide for 2007-08 increases for those faculty. Overall, the current administration proposal is close to, but still less than the Eastern settlement.

But if we were to merely meet or slightly exceed the salary increases at Eastern, both bargaining teams will have failed. Neither the faculty nor the ad-

ministration at Western has ever thought of Eastern as an appropriate comparison. Right now our average salaries are only about two thousand dollars a year above those at Eastern. Given our faculty’s scholarly productivity, the opportunities we provide for our students, and our number two ranking among western regional comprehensive institutions, simply keeping pace with Eastern is a wholly unacceptable goal. Eastern is not on the list of peer institutions designated by our administration and on no other issue have we sought to compare ourselves with Eastern. Why should we make such comparisons when it comes to salary increases? And lest we forget, it is also much more expensive to live in Bellingham than it is to live in Cheney. Salaries comparable to Eastern will not solve our recruitment problems or help us to retain the kind of faculty necessary to continue our tradition of educational excellence.

After years of neglect, Western’s salaries are substantially out of line with those at institutions with which we actually compete for faculty and students and the repercussions are just beginning to be felt. As President Morse pointed out when the 2007-09 budget was announced, Western received the biggest percentage increase of any university in the state. Western must invest some of this money in its faculty if we are to continue moving toward the university vision to be “the premier public comprehensive university in the country.”

One of the things that does not appear on the administration’s bargaining website is the UFWW’s current compensation proposal. We propose an 8% increase for all faculty upon signing the contract, a 5% increase at the beginning of fall quarter in 2008, and a 5% in-

crease beginning in the winter quarter of 2009. This is a significant compromise from our previous position, as it would not bring us to President Morse’s modest 75<sup>th</sup> percentile goal. Moreover, it is a proposal that is eminently reasonable in the framework of Western’s 2007-09 budget. Our current proposal for across-the-board increases for all faculty would use a little more than \$3.5 million of the \$9.7 million discretionary dollars that Western has in its current budget. That is an investment of a little more than 36% of the discretionary money to strengthen the most important part of the university. In fact, this percentage is in line with the proportion of the total university budget that has, until recent years, been dedicated to instructional salaries. Given both the faculty’s primary importance to the mission of the institution and the significant investment that Western has made in administration over the past ten years, our current proposal looks both modest and prudent.

### Workload

Perhaps the most troubling part of the administration’s current proposal is their new stance on workload. For the past year the administration bargaining team has been telling us that the administration has no intention of increasing faculty teaching loads, but they have been unwilling to make that promise in the contract. Now they want to write into the contract that there will be no “unreasonable” increases in teaching load. So the administration bargaining team has moved from verbal assurances that teaching load will not increase to a written promise that workloads will increase within the two-year span of this contract, just not to a level that the administration finds unreasonable. We cannot see this as anything but a step backward,

not just for our contract negotiations but also for the university.

On this issue too, the administration has tried to muddy the waters by highlighting on its bargaining website passages from other contracts that appear to allow for increases in workload, or at least leave decisions about workload in the hands of administrators. But a careful read of all of these contracts reveals a recognition of the importance of balancing workload issues against the educational mission of the university and the needs of faculty and academic units. None of the contract proposals offered by our administration reflect a similar recognition.

What the administration bargaining team does not seem to understand is that even slight increases to the workload of an already overworked faculty threatens our ability to carry out the stated goals of the institution. In fact, Western's commitment to "engaged excellence" would seem to suggest that the administration should be looking for ways to reduce faculty teaching load. The ability of faculty to develop innovative teaching methods and provide opportunities for student scholarship, community learning, and active engagement in the learning process is directly

related to the number of classes we teach and the number of students in those classes. The amount and quality of the research we do — the research that nourishes our teaching, the research called for in the recently minted strategic plan — is directly related to our teaching load. It seems unlikely that the faculty will be able to meet these ever higher scholarship expectations, including the expectation to secure external funding for our work, in the context of increasing teaching responsibilities. Perhaps most importantly, increasing teaching loads would diminish many of the features of Western that attract our fine students. Many of our best students will confirm that they chose Western because we provide direct, personal access to top quality faculty both in and out of the classroom. In fact, much of our most important teaching and advising happens outside of the classroom where we foster specialized research skills, provide detailed and interactive feedback on writing, and advise our students on their educational and professional trajectories. All of these require significant amounts of time outside of the classroom but are absolutely key to the "Western experience." We cannot agree to a contract that does not hold our teaching

at current levels.

We understand the administration's desire to retain some flexibility over faculty teaching loads and we are mindful of the possibility that adjustments to workloads might be a convenient way for the administration to compensate for the things they believe they are giving up in a new contract. But, in the interest of protecting the integrity of the institution, we cannot sign a contract that heaps more work on those charged with carrying out the educational mission of the university. Even if what the current administration feels are reasonable increases in workload are not completely discordant with the needs of our students and faculty, there is no reason to believe that the definition of what is a reasonable will be shared by the administration that will take over at the helm of the university in just a few months.

Since receiving the latest proposal from the administration,



*David Leaf and Vicki Hamblin work on contract proposals during a recent bargaining session.*

the UFWW bargaining team has been hard at work to develop counterproposals that recognize the stated goals of the administration and protect both the faculty and the quality of the institution. After fourteen months of active negotiations, including six full days with the mediator assigned by the state's Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), the UFWW bargaining team is pleased to have made good agreements on some key issues related to faculty life. But we also recognize that we have come too far to now make settlements on remaining issues that are inconsistent with the mission of the university.

The two bargaining teams meet again with the PERC mediator on April 15 and 16.

### Accreditation

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to the change in administration.

NWCCU oversees the accreditation of 160 colleges and universities in six western states. The accreditation process is designed to assess the quality of programs offered by the university and, if successful, qualifies the university and its students to receive federal funding. The final stage of the accreditation process will continue through the fall with the university's efforts to disseminate results of the review and develop plans to respond to NWCCU recommendations.

## YOUR UNION BY THE NUMBERS

**51,000** Annual salary of a Ferndale K-5 teacher with an MA and two years of teaching experience.

**50,534** Annual salary of a WWU Assistant Music Professor with a PhD and two years of experience.

**25** Number of faculty senators (out of 25 present) voting on March 10 in favor of a resolution to support contract bargaining positions advanced by the UFWW.

**338** Approximate number of hours, to date, spent in direct negotiation of Western's first contract, including over 50 hours with the mediator assigned by the Public Employment Relations Commission.

**435** Number of days between the start of contract negotiations and the administration's first meaningful move on compensation, grievances, and other key issues.

**1,659** Number of state-

allocated salary dollars (not including interest) foregone, to date, by the average faculty member while waiting for the administration to reach a fair contract settlement with the faculty.

### Correction

Katie Stables was erroneously identified as an author of the article entitled, "A Life of Contingency" that appeared in volume 2, issue 2 of the *Western Union*.

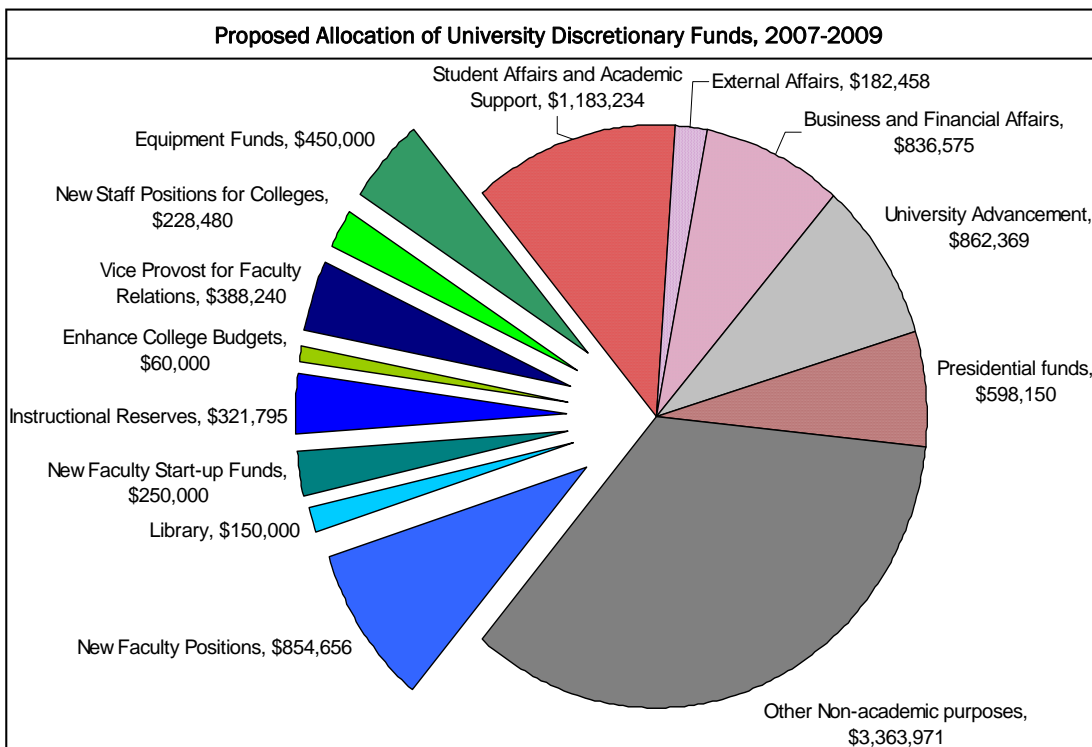
## THE 9.7 MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION

BY BILL LYNE AND KYLE CROWDER

In our discussions about the need for higher faculty salaries, the UFWW has regularly pointed out that Western's 2007-09 budget contains 9.7 million dollars of discretionary money. This is money is available to enhance faculty salaries beyond the modest increases provided by the state legislature or to advance any purpose the university administration deems important. Some colleagues have inquired about this money since our all-faculty bargaining meeting on January 31, voicing concern about what we would be giving up if the university chose to invest in higher faculty salaries. In light of these questions, a fuller explanation of how the administration has decided to spend the discretionary funds is warranted. Our source for this information is the 2007-09 State Operating Plan that was presented to the Board of Trustees on June 15, 2007.

Probably the most important thing to note about the 9.7 million is that it is new money to the university. The funding for all existing and ongoing programs, student services, and salaries is part of the Carry Forward Base Budget. So no matter how the administration chooses to spend the new 9.7 million dollars, on faculty salaries or anything else, it will not take money away from existing university programs.

In each biennium, the legislature adds to the university's base budget with new state appropriations and revenue from tuition increases. Those additions increased the university's total budget for the 2007-09 biennium by about 32 million dollars. Much of that money is earmarked by the legislature for specific things. There is, for example, money for the state-mandated pay raises for faculty and staff, for the new AMSEC program, and the BRAIN program. Other big chunks of that \$32 million go to financing the



transfer of TESOL and Human Services from self-supporting EESP programs to part of the state-funded Woodring College of Education, to the operation and maintenance of the university's Academic Instructional Center, and to plan university expansion on the Bellingham Waterfront.

After all of these (and other) state mandated programs are funded, there is 9.7 million dollars of new money left over. Again, this is money over and above the funding for all of our ongoing programs and state earmarks. It is up to the university administration to decide what to spend these funds on. The administration presented a plan for the allocation of this money to the Board of Trustees in June 2007. Much of this plan has already been implemented. The status of other parts is less clear.

Even adopting a broad definition of "academic," only about 28% (about \$2.7 million) of the \$9.7 million in discretionary funds was allocated to academic functions. Of this, just under \$400,000 was set aside for the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

position—a position that was quickly vacated earlier this year and is now in limbo. Almost one-third of these funds for academic functions was designated for seven new faculty positions. However, earlier this year Provost Murphy announced that he will not be allocating any of the new tenure line faculty positions in this biennium, apparently leaving these funds available for other purposes.

The rest (72%) of the 9.7 million dollars in new state money was allocated to augment the budgets of other, non-academic parts of the university with offices of Student Affairs, Business and Financial Affairs, and University Advancement receiving the largest shares. The allocation for University Advancement (the fundraising part of the university that includes the Western Foundation) is especially notable, as it represents an almost 50% increase over the previous budget.

Much of the money funneled to non-academic purposes has been designation for new staff positions and, as it stands now, Western is likely to hire more new exempt staff than new fac-

ulty in this biennium. In and of itself, this is not necessarily bad. All faculty recognize that the university is a large and complex operation and that the primary academic mission of the university must be supported. But, as we saw in the presentation on January 31, Western has far more administrative exempt staff than any of our peer institutions and we more than double the administrator-to-student average of that peer group.

We don't believe there is anyone on Western's faculty who wants to sacrifice our students' education so that we can get paid more. But we should never forget that faculty are at the heart of our students' education. There is nothing more important than recruiting and retaining the best faculty we can. Our salaries make that more difficult each year. The university administration is on record claiming that faculty salaries are their number one budget priority. We find this public rhetoric hard to reconcile with the fact that the administration did not set aside even a single dollar of discretionary funds for faculty salary increases.