



May 20, 2011

Mr. Lowell Rinker
Vice President for Business and Finance
Western Michigan University

Ms. Jan Van Der Kley
Assoc. Vice President for Business and Finance
Western Michigan University

Dear Lowell and Jan:

The officers and executive board of the Administrative Professional Association wish to thank you—and President Dunn—for the several meetings we have had since last fall to discuss our concerns regarding professional-administrative staff compensation and benefits. We appreciated the opportunity to express these concerns with you individually and to share ideas for how to make the economic climate we all must survive in as palatable as possible for our fellow P/A employees. As we shared with you in those meetings, our primary concerns continue to be salary increases that lag considerably behind other groups, most notably the faculty, and that we continue to be aligned with the faculty in what we pay for our own and dependents' health insurance, which is the highest amount at the University. It is our belief that continuing to be aligned with the faculty for our insurance costs is unfair and unsustainable given that, over the past 5 years, the faculty have been accorded salary increases totaling more than twice what the staff have received (and this does not take into account the effect of compounding those increases over time—see first three columns in table on page 3). This year it costs a staff member almost \$5,200 to insure a family; for many staff, this would be more than 10 percent of their salary just for insurance before any deductibles, co-pays, and other costs are incurred.

In order to truly represent our professional-administrative staff constituents, we must unequivocally state that we continue to believe that the economic “pain” at WMU is not being shared equitably among employee groups. We recognize that the faculty will be accorded special status as the primary draw for students to the University and that WMU must remain attractive to new faculty hires. Nonetheless, P/A staff are just as committed to the success of WMU as the faculty are—for instance, our members:

- Are the first contacts with potential and new students through admissions and orientation, and provide a continuous array of services year-round to students throughout their WMU careers;
- Teach a large number of sections of First-Year Seminar (which only a few faculty teach);
- Volunteer for campus activities that directly benefit students such as Bronco Bash, Finals Finish, and the Gold Pride Reception;
- Serve on committees all over campus (see list in appendix) and represent WMU throughout the community through involvement in public schools, PTA, sports, and other extra-curricular activities where we interact frequently with potential WMU students and their parents;
- Represent WMU at the state, national, and international levels by serving as officers and board members for professional organizations (see list in appendix).

Despite these many contributions, we find ourselves being asked to assume a disproportionate share of the burden as the University seeks to constrain costs in ever increasing ways. We offer just a few examples of this differential treatment (not all of which we had time to discuss in recent meetings):

- 1) Faculty continue to have the ability to be promoted within their position to higher ranks and receive pay increases for promotion. Staff members have no opportunity within their present positions for pay increases other than the meager increases mentioned above. Staff find that when they attempt to move to other positions that would represent a promotion, if they are not passed

over because of their present salary, they are likely to receive an offer at the bottom of the new pay grade because the promotion and transfer pay policy is not being enforced. We are aware that vice presidents are inconsistent in their compliance with the University's stated transfer and promotion policy. Thus, for many staff, the offer of a "promotion" comes with a salary cut.

- 2) The non-unionized staff do not receive any pay enhancements such as the merit pay available to faculty, or the longevity pay received by AFSCME employees.
- 3) Compression of staff salaries is further systematized by not updating the staff compensation system pay scale every year, and when it is updated, the increases have been less than the cumulative pay increases since the time of the last update. The scale was last changed in 2009, and since 2005 the staff pay scale has risen a total of only 5 percent (see table on next page). This may not seem like a significant issue, but again, due to the effect of compounding, this amounts to a subtle, insidious, and systematic form of salary compression that bargaining groups are not subjected to. The effects are that both the top and the bottom of the pay scales are moving down, affecting long-time employees at the top end and newer employees at the bottom.
- 4) In addition to these conditions at the University with which we must contend, staff members are increasingly concerned about the impact of the cost of gasoline on commuting costs. Staff members must show up year-round at our work sites on campus 5, 6, or sometimes even 7 days a week, unlike the faculty, who often have the flexibility to come to campus only a few days a week. Some staff may benefit from being able to do some telecommuting or changing their work schedules to four longer days per week, as long as they can do so without compromising the University's service mission.

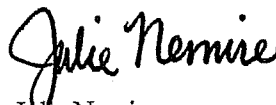
The table on the next page summarizes the cumulative effects of our concerns about salary compression and health care costs and illustrates how far behind our employee group has fallen in recent years in these areas. Now that the faculty have agreed to no salary increase for the next year and President Dunn has indicated that "salary decisions for nonbargaining unit employees will follow the same model," we sadly recognize that once again we are being asked to accept being left behind and to sacrifice for the good of the institution as we have done so many times in recent years. We sincerely hope that the day soon comes when the administration will make it a **priority** to recognize the many contributions of nonbargaining staff not just by words acknowledging our critical work in keeping the University running smoothly but by real improvements in salaries and benefits that will allow us to begin catching up where we have fallen so seriously behind. Since it appears we can expect no base salary increase for the coming year, we respectfully ask the WMU administration to prepare a plan that will make redressing these past inequities a priority and move our employees back to being more in line with the faculty and other bargaining groups for salary increases while reducing our health care contributions to less than what the faculty have negotiated.

Again, we thank you for the opportunities to meet and discuss these matters, and for allowing us to reiterate our concerns. We would be happy to meet again at your convenience for further discussion.

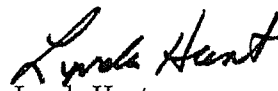
Sincerely,



Amy Seth
President



Julie Nemire
Vice President



Lynda Hunt
Corresponding Secretary



Sue Kohlert
Recording Secretary



Faith Wicklund
Treasurer

Cc: Pres. John M. Dunn

Comparison of Annual Salary Increases and Health Insurance Costs					
Year	AAUP Pay Increase	P/A Pay Increase	Change in Pay Scales for Staff	Faculty/Salaried Share of Individual* and Dependent Insurance	All Other Union/ Hourly Share of Individual* and Dependent Insurance
2005–06	3.5% ATB	3.5% ATB + 0.24% progression	Scale raised by unknown percentage	10%/40%	10%/25%
2006–07	3.0% ATB	\$500 1-time payment	No change	10%/40%	10%/25%
2007–08	3.25% ATB	2.0% ATB	Scale raised by 1% over 2005–06	10%/40%	10%/25%
2008–09	3.0% + 1.0% supplement (equates to 3.91%)	3.0% ATB	Scale raised by 2% over 2007–08	10%/42.5%	10%/25%
2009–10	3.0% + 1.0% supplement (equates to 3.91%)	2.0% ATB	Scale raised by 2% over 2008–09	10%/42.5%	10%/25%
2010–11	3.0% + 1.0% supplement (equates to 3.91%)	1.0% + \$500 1-time payment	No change	11%/43.5%	10%/25%
Cumulative increase 2006–07 through 2010–11	15.25% + 3.0% supplement (equates to 17.98%)	8.0% + 2 one-time payments of \$500	Cumulative change in pay scale since 2005–06 = 5.0%	*Cost share for individual coverage is percentage of two-person rate	

Appendix: Campus Committee Service and Professional Contributions by APA Members

Campus Committee Service

Strategic Planning Committee
 Western Wellness Committee
 Make-A-Difference Awards Committee
 Distinguished Service Award Committee
 Public Safety Oversight Committee
 Millennial Steering Committee
 Student Systems Integration Team
 Institutional Security for Student Information
 Systems Committee

Building Emergency Committee
 Sustainability Committee
 Employment Review Committee
 Digital Humanities Working Group – University
 Center for the Humanities
 WMU United Way Campaign (including loaned
 executives)
 CEDRS Steering Committee

Professional Contributions

Association of University Interior Designers (National President)

International Center of Medieval Art (Director)

Digital Scriptorium (Program Adviser)

Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture (Project Committee)

Alpha Lambda Delta National Council

Michigan Honors Association (Vice President)

Intramural Recreational Sports Association (State Director, two different individuals)