



July 2, 2009

Dr. John M. Dunn, President
Western Michigan University
3060 Seibert Administration Building
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5202

Dear President Dunn:

On behalf of the professional and administrative employees at WMU, the Administrative Professional Association (APA) respectfully submits its annual compensation request.

The professional and administrative (P/A) staff understands that the University continues to face significant financial challenges. We have keenly felt this economic pain. Over the past several years, the non-bargaining staff experienced compensation erosion as a result of minimal salary increases which are consistently below the Consumer Price Index. Adding to this, increasing health care costs, along with a limited ability to earn promotions, has created a “perfect storm” for compensation stagnation for P/A employees. Meanwhile, AAUP (whose salaries are generally higher) has been shielded by its bargaining agreement and has not been asked to make as significant of a financial sacrifice as APA.

Bargaining groups at the University continue to receive notable financial enhancements. Faculty, for instance, are eligible for promotions and corresponding pay increases as well as merit increases and job security when they receive tenure. Performance increases for staff compensation were eliminated with the implementation of COMP 2000 nine years ago. AFSCME, another bargaining group, receives longevity pay for employees with 20 or more years of service, which provides an annual lump sum equal to 7% of the employee’s salary. This is another compensation enhancement that P/A employees do not receive.

Earlier this spring, the APA polled P/A employees at WMU about various compensation matters through an online survey. The APA Executive Board has carefully considered these responses and has prioritized the top compensation issues for professional and administrative staff in 2009–10 as follows:

1. Our highest priority is an across-the-board salary increase that is not less than that received by the faculty. The AAUP contract calls for a 3.0% across-the-board increase for 2009–10 plus a 1% supplement based on median salary within rank.

2. The second priority is that the current level of health benefits be maintained. Our employees are concerned that whatever salary increase is received for next year will be largely swallowed up by increases in health care premiums and erosion in benefits such as higher co-pays and deductibles. Furthermore, we believe that expecting P/A employees to continue to pay the same premiums for coverage of dependents as the faculty, as we have for many years, is no longer a reasonable expectation given that the faculty are generally better paid and their yearly salary increases have outpaced those of P/A employees for most of the past 15 years. Our portion of the health care premiums for dependents, according to the AAUP contract, is being raised to 42.5% in 2009 and 2010, while PSSO and AFSCME employees continue to pay considerably less (currently 25%), and they have not been subject to increasing premium shares over the past several years as P/A and faculty employees have been. We request that the premium percentage for P/A employees be reduced to 35% as a reasonable mid-point between what the faculty and PSSO employees pay for coverage of dependents, and that this percentage not be raised if other employee groups such as PSSO and AFSCME are not subjected to increased percentages.
3. Survey respondents requested consideration of flexibility in full-time work schedules, to include a four-day work week of 10 hours/day in some areas or options for telecommuting. For some employees, these alternative work schedules will result in reductions in their commuting, day-care, and other costs. The current University flex-time policy allows employees to work 10-hour days (with supervisor approval) but does not allow for employees to work only four days a week because they must be present every day during the core hours of operation (9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.). We request that this policy be re-examined and adjusted to allow for work schedules of four 10-hour days or telecommuting options, as long as office staffing is not adversely affected.

APA remains committed to working with the WMU administration to improve the quality of work life of our employees and the educational life of our students. The APA Executive Board requests the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you this summer. We thank you for the opportunity to submit this request and trust that it will receive your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Seth
President

Bryon Glock
Vice President

Faith Wicklund
Treasurer

Mary Ramlow
Corresponding Secretary

Michele McLaughlin
Recording Secretary