



A Union of Professionals

**AFT-University of Washington English Language Faculty, Local 6486**

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August 21, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

On August 13 the University of Washington bargaining team met with us as promised to present a *comprehensive and definitive settlement* offer with a view to reaching an agreement on a contract: a contract that works for both sides and one that we could confidently recommend to our faculty to ratify. As you well know, we have been at the table for 18 months and we hoped that this opportunity would provide all of us that glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

What we were presented with on Tuesday, however, was not the reflection of an effort to bring this to a conclusion, nor was it a reflection of UW's stated commitment to "*competitive and fair [contracts] which build a strong foundation for long-term relationships with [unionized UW employees].*"

What it reflected was a belief in the same old system with some of the positive parts taken out for good measure. Under this vision of the department:

- You would get a performance-based pay increase *if* it happens to be available and *if* you are eligible. You could become ineligible quite easily: taking time off to care for a newborn, being sick, teaching in a Fulbright position or as an English Language Fellow.
- Even though you have worked with no raise for five years, you wouldn't be getting anything if you did not turn in your PAS or were away for a couple of quarters this past year. (If you are a student in our program, on the other hand, you will be paying 4% more in tuition come September, just like **every** year for the past five years.)
- If you are a very experienced teacher who is working for the minimum salary in the department, too bad. On the other hand a 'stellar teacher' could be recruited from outside and be placed on a higher salary than you. You may be expected to mentor this teacher in the course that you may have developed, though.
- You would still be teaching 150 contact hours in summer quarter for about 19% less pay than other quarters! The students still pay the same tuition as other quarters.
- Your supervisor gets a personal day. The TA teaching the same class as you gets a personal day. You don't!
- You may be referred to as a *team member*, but you are not really seen as a *partner* in the success of the department. You just teach.
- You are expected to mentor, collaborate with other teachers, be innovative, and be consistently excellent in your work. How do you find out how much you are appreciated? (See below.)
- If you are planning a future as a teacher in the department, you had better be constantly on your toes. Each year there would be a ranking chart. Depending on where you fall, you might be offered a four quarter, three quarter, one quarter or **no** quarter appointment. No matter how long you have been here. Having a bad year? Too bad, it just got worse! This is the way feedback on how you are doing is given.

IELP Faculty sees things differently. We know our profession and we know our workplace. In our vision of the department:

- We have a salary step system that consistently provides a basic increase to reward the work and **commitment** to the department.
- We give **everyone** a fair raise starting this year.
- We reward **excellence** with merit increases when available.
- We reward **experience** not only for any future teacher but more importantly for those of us who are here **now**.
- We are treated **fairly**. We are paid fully for summer quarter and we are paid at least the minimum UW says we should be paid.
- We are allowed to attend that one-off special family event without forfeiting a day's pay. **Just like our TA colleagues**.
- We **work together** and build on the strengths of the department to continue its success.
- We ensure new members of our faculty are given the **support** they need to succeed.
- We **commit** to our students and the UW and in return the UW **commits** to providing job security and ongoing employment, and a transparent and objective method for assigning hours.

Although these visions seem far apart, interestingly our stated goals are similar: to make IELP the best in the region, and to make current faculty *want to stay* and new *faculty want to come*. However, we believe it is quite clear which of the above visions will achieve this.

Your bargaining team is committed to negotiating a fair contract. We have worked hard to find areas of agreement and move the discussion on. We are bargaining in good faith. However, we believe that the UW's settlement offer would be unacceptable. It seems that they are unwilling to move us forward. It leaves us as the only group on campus either without a negotiated contract and already implemented salary increases or a promised salary increase in September. This reflects poorly on the UW.

We are requesting formal mediation from the state Public Employee Relations Commission to help us finish this contract. However, summer quarter is coming to an end and the UW has offered no further negotiating dates. We all need to stand up and show how important our working conditions are to us. We therefore ask for your continued backing of the team and your involvement in the contract support actions that are now being planned.

Sincerely,

AFT-UW English Language Faculty Bargaining Team, Rozanna Carosella, Mihaela Giurca, Alex Jones, Nancy Kennedy, Peter Messinger, Richard Moore, Kim Newcomer