

The *Negotiator*

FALL 2013

PIO, other activists, rally for Campus Equity Week

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *Campus Equity*
- *Adriana Rosas*
- *Outreach Grant*
- *Letter to Provost*
- *Contract Fun Facts*

PIO OFFICERS

Thomas Kostrzewa

President

Tracy Hall

Vice-President

Adriana Rosas

Communications

Michael LoPresto

Treasurer

Like us on
Facebook!

Check out
www.piowmu.org!

PIO members, graduate teaching assistants, students and full-time faculty gathered in the Wesley Foundation on a rainy, Halloween to celebrate Campus Equity Week, a national movement to promote greater equity on college and university campuses.

Eric Denby, speaking for the Teaching Assistants Union, addressed health equity issues at WMU. According to Denby, student health insurance costs have more than doubled in the last five years, while the university's share of those costs has fallen 42%, leaving graduate students on fixed budgets to choose between health insurance and student loan debt. Because the costs have risen so dramatically, Denby said, TAU recently filed a grievance against WMU for refusing to renegotiate the health care provision of the contract.

PIO president Tom Kostrzewa spoke about historical inequities facing part-time instructors at WMU, including our exclusion from faculty teaching awards, professional development funds, and research WMU does not allow us to apply for jobs as internal applicants," said Kostrzewa. "If we want to apply for a job at WMU, we are forced to apply as outsiders, as though the university does not recognize our existence."

Meet Adriana Rosas, new communications officer!



My name is Adriana Rosas. In September I volunteered to be the communications officer for PIO. I have an undergraduate degree in Anthropology and a Masters in Anthropology and Social Work. I have more than five years' experience in community organizing in the city of Kalamazoo. I was part of the Michigan Organizing Project and later the Kalamazoo Homeless Action Network. In both organizations I worked on issues of permanent affordable housing, immigration rights, and back pay. I have taught anthropology and health courses at both WMU and KVCC.

I came from Mexico in 1985 with my family. My family has a strong history in community organizing and a strong passion for social justice. My father organized to keep people from losing their homes in Mexico as well as rights of indigenous peoples. My grandfather was a union man from Illinois.

I enjoy extra curricular activities such as mixed martial arts, JiuJitsu, Sambo, and Judo. I have been married for 13 years to my husband Michael Robertson and have two wonderful, strong, independent, and intelligent girls, ages 12 and 3.

Members elected Adriana to fill a communications officer vacancy at our October 18 meeting.



PIO President Tom Kostrzewa speaks to students and faculty about the history of part-time faculty at WMU



Community outreach grant will help promote local charities

This fall, PIO and TAU members approved the inaugural WMFCE Community Outreach Grant program. The grant will provide a one-time contribution of \$1,000 to a Kalamazoo-based charitable organization chosen by our members, to provide financial support to a member-nominated charitable organization each year, encourage volunteer opportunities for our members, educate our members regarding the charity's specific goals and programs, and to promote labor solidarity in the Kalamazoo area. The grant may be used for any organizational expenses or programs that meet the nomination criteria.

Only union members may nominate a charitable organization for selection. The nominating member must submit a basic grant application by October 31 each year, and the outreach committee will review applications and narrow the list down to three nominees. The final vote will take place at the end of the year WMFCE holiday party in December.

To be considered, an organization must serve the greater-Kalamazoo community and must have a proven track record of charitable activity. Ideally, members nominating organizations will have a direct personal connection to the organization. The member who nominated the winning organization will act as a liaison to the organization and will assist the union to coordinate all activities, including volunteer events, publicity and the distribution of information among union members. A new organization will be chosen each year, so long as funding is available, and the award will be announced each December following our WMFCE holiday party.

Nominated Organizations for 2014

PIO members approved the Community Outreach Grant program at our September 20 membership meeting. We sent an email to all members to call for nominations on September 27 and nominations closed October 31. TAU and PIO members nominated six organizations:

Benton Harbor Sunrise Rotary Club. "Our emphasis is improving and enriching the lives of the children in the Benton Harbor community." We would love to have the opportunity to partner with WMFCE for a picture book and chapter book drive to collect more books to distribute to children during the summer through the Red Wagon program and offer opportunities for the WMFCE members to help distribute books during the summer to the children and see the excitement and difference that this program makes to promote family literacy and help keep children reading over the summer when school is out.

Fair Food Matters. Fighting for food justice and quality in Kalamazoo, Fair Food Matters' mission is to "improve access to healthy, local food by educating, connecting, and empowering the Kalamazoo community." We could assist in the educational aspects of the program, figure out some way of doing a "good food" food drive, and assist them in their gardening efforts.

WMUK (102.1 FM). WMUK is a public radio station serving southwestern Michigan. WMUK is owned and operated by Western Michigan University. It is a non-profit public radio station and charter member of National Public Radio (NPR). It is also affiliated with American Public Media (APM) and Public Radio International (PRI). Through a WMUK, we have an opportunity to reach potentially hundreds of thousands of individuals with information about WMFCE.

Birth Kalamazoo. Birth Kalamazoo is dedicated to making the birth and parenting journey better. The group offers birth and postpartum doula services, natural birth and breastfeeding classes, in-home lactation consulting, birth doula training, mother's renewal groups, and community education and support. This grant would make a big difference, both to the doulas and to the families they serve. It would also bolster the birth support community in our town's African-American population, which would be a huge gift because Michigan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country, especially in the African-American population.

Kalamazoo Literacy Council. In 2014, the Kalamazoo Literacy Council will celebrate its 40th anniversary, which will offer even more opportunities to get involved. The organization is always seeking individuals willing to become trained as tutors and work one-on-one with struggling readers. KLC also hosts an annual SCRABBLE Fest, where both competitive and non-competitive players partake in an afternoon of Scrabble. As a group, we could volunteer at the event and also participate as players. The event requires time-keepers, judges, food preparation and helping with registration.

Open letter to Provost Greene regarding midterm and “first work” requirements

Dear Dr. Greene,

This past summer, part-time faculty first noticed language in our appointment letters stating that our “duties also include submission of ‘first work grades’ and midterm grades. The deadlines of both are published by the registrar’s office.” This language was troubling for many part-time instructors, particularly those who have taught at WMU for several years and were never formally required to submit “first work” and midterm grades.



Dr. Tom Kostrzewa
PIO President

While ensuring student success is certainly our top priority, we are disappointed that this language was rather thoughtlessly imposed on part-time faculty, and many of our members were concerned about how this duty will be enforced, including how WMU defines “first work” grades, and what possible repercussions could await instructors who fail to submit those grades by the mandated deadline.

Last spring, Dr. Ed Martini, chair of the Early Alert Project Action Team, met with PIO officers to discuss the project, and to recruit a PIO member to participate on the team. At that point, PIO vice president Tracy Hall volunteered to serve on the team, and has continued to participate in the project. Dr. Martini assured us, and we strongly agree, that faculty buy-in (full-time, part-time and teaching assistants) is critical to ensuring student success and promoting broad acceptance of an early alert system across campus. We were therefore dismayed when WMU attempted to mandate our participation in an early alert system, using boilerplate appointment letters, even though the Early Alert Project Action Team has yet to complete its work and even though full-time faculty are not held to the same standard.

As you well know, part-time instructors are excluded from teaching awards, professional development funding, research funding and internal applicant status at WMU. This incident is simply the latest example of how WMU takes part-time faculty for granted, benefiting greatly from our hard work, while refusing to welcome us as equal members of the campus community. If early alert systems are integral for student success, we expect that all faculty should be held to the same standard. Instead, the administration tried to impose a new, undefined requirement on hundreds of part-time faculty, with absolutely no explanation of the importance of early alert systems and no training, guidance or even recommendations for best practices in tracking and reporting early student performance.

Once again, it seems, nearly 700 part-time instructors at WMU were an afterthought.

Please remove reference to our “duty” to report first work and midterm grades from part-time faculty appointment letters, until such time that the Early Alert Project Action Team completes its work and until there are clear requirements, guidelines and goals articulated to all faculty. If WMU implements a new early alert system, all faculty should be required to participate. The courses we teach are truly “learner centered” and if WMU hopes to live up to that goal, the administration will provide support, guidance and encouragement for part-time faculty, rather than boilerplate mandates. If you have any questions or concerns, please keep in touch.

Member Representatives

Chris Bendekgey
Family & Consumer Sciences

Martin Burch
Frostic School of Art

Steven Cartwright
History

Douglas Coulter
Biological Sciences

Nate DeBoer
Comparative Religion

Tracy Hall
Gender & Women’s Studies

Britt Hartenberger
Anthropology

Robert Humiston
School of Music

Michael LoPresto
English

Thomas Kostrzewa
Haenicke Institute, Lee Honors

Mark Miller
Physics

David Paul
Philosophy

Tracey Quada
Indust. & Manuf. Engineering

Glenn Roehrig
Office of Field Placement

Adriana Rosas
Health & Human Services

Karl Schrock
School of Music

Adam Schumaker
College of Fine Arts

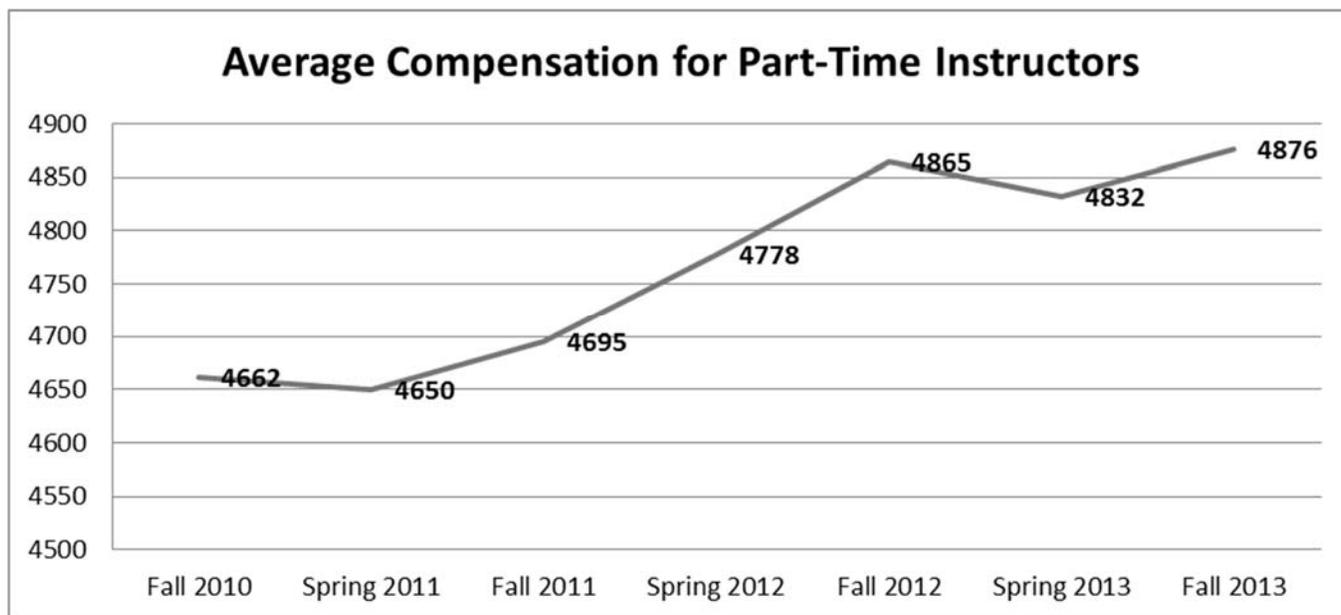
To learn how you can get involved, contact Kevin at 269.290.8656 or kevin@wmfce.org today!

Get to know the PIO!

There are 513 part-time instructors this fall and 329 of them are PIO members. Back in Fall 2010, we had fewer than 270 PIO members and fewer than 475 part-time instructors. Our membership percentage was 57% at the outset and is now 64%. Membership growth is slow but steady. Average compensation for part-time instructors continues to grow and is up nearly 4.6% since Fall 2010.

Forty-five percent (45%) of those teaching classes part-time are teaching 3 or fewer credits, thirty percent (30%) are teaching between 4 and 6 credits, and twenty five percent (25%) are teaching 7 or more credits.

The departments with the most part-time instructors are: Family and Consumer Sciences (38), English (34), Physician Assistant (33), Office of Field Placement (27), World Languages & Literatures (26), and School of Social Work (24). The departments with the most members are English (27), Family and Consumer Sciences (25), Office of Field Placement (21) and Center for English Language & Culture (19).



Contract Fun Facts!

Our new contract with WMU includes new rights and opportunities that you might not be aware of:

- **Article 5.6.** Access to the Student Recreation Center on main campus. The SRC offers an indoor climbing wall, basketball courts, squash, racquetball and tennis courts, a swimming pool, weight room, aerobic room and much more **for only \$90 per semester**, less than \$25 a month! Contact the SRC at 387-4REC for more information.
- **Article 11.** “Senior status” has been renamed and improved as “continuing status” strengthening job security benefits and doubling the number of instructors with some job security. Departments will notify you of reappointment 60 days prior to each semester.
- **Article 19.1.** Increased *minimum* base pay for all instructors to \$800 per credit hour in Fall 2013 and up to \$850 per credit by Fall 2016.
- **Article 19.6.** Part-time instructors may use Sindecuse Health Center, including its pharmacy, at low cost.
- **Article 19.8.** Employee **tuition remission** up to 4 credit hours during each semester or session that you teach.