

At the General Membership Meeting, a number of important questions or concerns were raised and we didn't have the time to get to them all. As promised, we have attempted to answer all of the questions raised. There were a lot of questions and comments in multiple formats, so something might have slipped past us. Please let us know if we missed something. As always, please feel free to send any additional questions or concerns. We always like hearing from our members. It is how your Union knows what is going on. We are answering these questions based on what we know now in the beginning of May. Things are changing fast, and while we are trying to be open and truthful in our answers, in many of the questions we just don't know yet or things might change. As we learn more, we promise to update you.

1. Will we / can we continue to work remotely in the fall?

We were surprised by Provost Jefford's email on Friday discussing the potential reopening of PSU. While no final decision has been made regarding the fall yet, we have given them direct feedback that we have concerns that the University may reopen too soon, that it could be unsafe, and some of our members might be uncomfortable returning. We have also submitted a proposal that would stop PSU from making our members work from campus if they felt unsafe due to COVID-19. This is something we are keeping a close eye on. For more information, please refer to the opening post in the member news this week re: [PSU AAUP Response to OAA Announcement](#).

2. What is the position of AAUP on furloughs?

AAUP has not been asked to consider furloughs at this time. It is difficult to see our fellow employees--many of whom are SEIU members, but also some unclassified employees--be furloughed or lose their jobs. While we have no direct control over non-AAUP furloughs, we are deeply concerned by them. Furloughs are the very last thing we would want to see for our members, and we will fight hard to keep that from happening. We are fighting hard to preserve every job on campus that we can.

3. What is happening with promotion next year?

As of right now the contract has been extended through June 30th. If we extend the contract into next year, as is, then promotion schedules and pay increases will not be affected. PSU has not approached us about making cuts to promotion increases at this time.

4. A member said that they are willing to take a pay cut or voluntary furlough if it means more people can stay employed at PSU (Anyone, not just PSU-AAUP members). It was also noted that for some members, a pay cut would be very financially difficult.

PSU is not currently requesting or asking that we take a pay cut. PSU-AAUP President Kerns meets weekly with the other Unions on campus and we have pledged to work together to maintain as many positions on campus as possible. We have made a number of data requests in an attempt to better understand what the real economic situation is on campus. There are a lot of unknowns right now, but in the near future as we get more detailed information on the impacts of the economic and human costs of the pandemic on PSU, we will have more details on what options will be on the table.

Our membership is a diverse group, made-up of Academic Professionals, Non-Tenure Track, and Tenure Track Faculty. Pay cuts or even other economic considerations may affect some members much more than others and this is something that the Bargaining Team is aware of. While we admire the selfless motivation and concern behind this request, we also recognize that matters of pay, contract terms, etc. must be done collectively to have a broad and long term effect. Please note that negotiating one-on-one with administration (be it the president or your department chair) can undermine that collective work, and while it may make an individual feel better, it most likely will not have the intended impact. If you are approached and asked to make cuts to your individual working terms or conditions, please contact PSU-AAUP immediately, as it is a violation of the contract for management to directly negotiate with represented PSU-AAUP members, and vice-versa. Please do not offer to negotiate any change to your contract individually or in solidarity with one or a group of colleagues. If you have any questions, please contact us immediately.

Members who are concerned about recent SEIU furloughs and are financially able can contribute to the SEIU 503 COVID-19 hardship fund here:

<https://seiu503.org/members/seiu-503-covid-19-hardship-fund/>

5. Has anyone had problems with the COVID leave?

*Every member should be able to access 80 hours of COVID-19 Leave. This may be taken all at once or in sections. This leave may be taken for COVID-specific reasons, including the need to care for children, **or any other regular sick leave reason**. PSU will pay 100% of members' regular rate of pay for any emergency leave used. (For 9-month employees, this leave is not available to you for summer 2020) If you are having any issues or have concerns about the leave, please let us know by sending an email to aaup@psuaaup.net.*

More information about COVID-19 leave can be found at

<https://www.pdx.edu/hr/emergency-leave-families-first-coronavirus-response-act>

6. Some members are uneasy and anxious about the general history of PSU being spontaneous and seemingly operating without a plan.

We share in your unease. For many years PSU has operated without a clear plan or clear direction. Constant leadership changes, mismanagement, poor planning, and lack of foresight have left PSU lurching from year-to-year. One of our goals in this coming year is to build a more robust relationship between labor and management so that we can have a real meaningful voice in the planning of PSU. This will be hard in the short-term as PSU continues to make decisions without being truly transparent, respect for faculty governance, and lacking feedback from the people that make PSU run -- the faculty, staff, professionals, and students.

7. Does the Union anticipate taking a position on early retirement?

An early retirement incentive system is something that we brought as a bargaining item last year when we began bargaining. It is something that has not been discussed yet.

AAUP may consider a system that would benefit our members, but we are also keeping

in mind that an early retirement system could do undue harm to units by leaving positions unfilled. Although junior faculty can be more cost-effective in the short term, administration has a variety of options in replacing the retired faculty member. As we move forward, we will need to weigh these concerns.

8. Some members noted that soft-money and grant-funded members are likely to be specifically hurt by the economic situation at PSU.

This is something that the AAUP and the Bargaining Team is also concerned about and are looking at ways to limit the impact.

9. Members have noted that they would like to see a pause in the Post-Continuous Appointment Review (PCAR) process for our NTTFs like what was done with pausing the tenure clock.

The Bargaining Team is already negotiating around this issue. We are currently proposing that NTTFs will not be negatively reviewed or have their PCAR impacted by the pandemic and remote work. We are not currently requesting that the clock be paused as we recently began discussions about tying pay increases to PCAR. As such, any delay in PCAR, one that could be 4 years from now, could result in delayed increases. If the remote work period extends too far into next year, we do plan on requesting a delay in the review process of those up for review next year, but not a delay in their service time.

10. Members noted that layoffs at Helen Gordon and other places around campus have also impacted AAUP members.

*It certainly does and, in addition to the human costs of the furloughs on those who lost their jobs, the impact of the closures impacts others. If your workload has been impacted by layoffs, please contact us ASAP: aaup@psuaaup.net. It is **not** your responsibility to take on the work of laid-off persons.*

11. Workload is an important issue to our members prior to the pandemic and it has been exacerbated by the pandemic. What is PSU-AAUP doing to address these concerns?

As noted in this question, workload is an important issue that the Bargaining Team brought to the table prior to the pandemic. As we moved to remote work and our lives have been disrupted, we are seeing the university respond poorly in many circumstances to the issues related to workload, work-life balance, and being a family-friendly environment. We have pushed the university to be mindful of the difficulties during this time and that we can not and should not be expected to work in the same ways as before. We need flexibility, we need reasonable workload expectations, and we need our time respected. Workload will continue to be on the forefront of bargaining.