



Pittsburg State
University

The PSU/KNEA Communicator

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Kansas National
Education Association

Pittsburg State University – Kansas National Education Association



IS NOW THE TIME TO JOIN PSU/KNEA? – A MESSAGE TO NON-MEMBERS

Dr. Chris Anderson, 2017-18 PSU/KNEA 1st Vice President

It's a challenging time for higher education nationally and for Kansas universities in particular. As administrators make difficult decisions regarding the direction of the university in a time of ongoing budgetary crisis, who will speak for faculty? Becoming a member of PSU/KNEA is one way to show that you care about the direction PSU takes in the future, a way to have a voice in decisions that will directly affect you and your students, and a way to show support for what PSU/KNEA has accomplished: for example, small but regular increases in salary; merit pay for "exceptional" ranking in faculty's annual report; clear policies for tenure and promotion; increased pay upon promotion; clear policies for family and medical leave; grievance procedures for faculty affected by violations of the contract; and the protection of faculty's right to the ownership of their own intellectual property (achieved via a 2005 Kansas Supreme Court ruling in PSU/KNEA vs. Kansas Board of Regents).

In a recent faculty survey, 57% of respondents indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied working for Pittsburg State University, which is good to see. But over 25% reported feeling dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 58% of respondents said that their level of job satisfaction has decreased in the past 1-2 years. This is a worrisome trend, and although some of the challenges facing Pittsburg State (such as budget cuts and decreased enrollment) are part of national or statewide trends not fully within our control, it's vital that PSU faculty have a strong and clear voice in how our university responds to these challenges. PSU/KNEA membership dues come to approximately \$32 per pay period for faculty on a 9-month contract. Although that financial sacrifice is not negligible, I hope you'll consider becoming a member in order to help establish a robust and influential voice for Pittsburg State faculty.

2017-18 PSU/KNEA YEAR IN REVIEW

Faculty Salaries

In the 2017 fall semester, tenured and tenure-track faculty employed less than five years received a 2.5% pay increase mandated by the Kansas State Legislature. Faculty not eligible for the state-mandated increase received a 1.5% salary increase beginning in January, as agreed to during negotiations between the PSU administration and the PSU/KNEA Bargaining Council. In the closing weeks of the 2018 spring semester, the bargaining council began meeting with administrators for this year's round of negotiations, focusing on salary issues such as merit pay, general salary increases and increases for promotion, and the total amount of money contractually committed to summer school.

Student Course Evaluation Task Force

This task force, established by PSU/KNEA and the Pitt State administration through the meet and confer

process, spend the academic year exploring possible replacements for the SPTE (Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness) course evaluation instrument, a move prompted in part by the high cost of administering the SPTE and the burden it places on PSU's aging Scantron machine. Over the course of the academic year, the task force gathered feedback from faculty, department chairs, and students, while also examining relevant research and evaluation tools used at other institutions. In May, the task force presented draft questions for a new PSU evaluation instrument and sought additional comments from faculty. Moving forward, the task force will present the proposed evaluation instrument to the Provost, with testing of it expected to take place in selected courses during the 2018 summer sessions.

Campus Safety and Security Task Force

Prompted by faculty concerns regarding campus safety (such as the inability to lock many classroom doors from inside the room) and by national conversations regarding acts of violence at educational institutions, this task force began meeting in January 2018. President Steve Scott expanded the charge of the task force to include a look at all aspects of campus safety and security, including policies and procedures regarding weather events, fire, and personal safety. The task force has reviewed existing policies and will make recommendations for updating outdated material. This work is ongoing, and the task force has recommended an extension of its timeline through fall 2018, when it expects to issue a final report to President Scott and to recommend that the task force transition into a new status as a permanent university committee.

Task Force on Summer School

During the 2017 meet and confer process, Pitt State administrators asked to discuss possible alternate models for summer teaching and funding. Because of faculty concerns that arose when 2017 summer contracts were distributed later than usual, with some classes cancelled, PSU/KNEA agreed to take part in a task force that has begun to review models for summer school at other institutions, as well as PSU financial data related to summer courses. Despite decreases in enrollment at Pitt State, summer courses as a whole remain profitable, and PSU/KNEA representatives on this ongoing task force are working to advocate for faculty who depend on summer teaching salaries and for the timely distribution of summer teaching contracts. More information on the task force's recommendations will be available once a final report is completed and submitted to the Provost.

Survey results

In May 2018, PSU/KNEA conducted a faculty survey containing questions regarding three issues: summer teaching, job satisfaction, and perceptions of the PSU/KNEA bargaining unit. More comprehensive results of the survey will be distributed separately, but here are some notable results:

- 58% of respondents favor adding a portion of the summer salary allocation to faculty base pay as a permanent increase in salary.
- 66% of respondents prefer to teach every summer; in practice, 62% report that they do teach every summer, with an additional 13% teaching once every two years.
- 57% report being satisfied or very satisfied working at Pittsburg State, 17% are neutral, and 25% report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 58% report their level of job satisfaction decreasing in the past 1-2 years, 35% say it has stayed the same, and 6% report an increase in overall job satisfaction.
- 42% of respondents report looking for employment elsewhere in the past 1-2 years or planning to do so in the next 1-2 years.
- 34% of those taking the survey are dues-paying members of the PSU/KNEA bargaining unit. 66% of unit members have not joined PSU/KNEA. However, 57% of non-members indicated they have no objection to joining, but haven't found time to do so.
- 61% of respondents say that their department chair always or mostly follows the faculty contract, 21% aren't sure, and 17% say the contract is followed "not always" or "rarely/not enough."



What is PSU/KNEA?

Affiliated with the Kansas National Education Association and the National Education Association, PSU/KNEA is the official bargaining unit of Pittsburg State University's tenured and tenure-track faculty. Comprised of PSU faculty, the bargaining unit is responsible for negotiating faculty salary increases and faculty contracts that establish policies regarding tenure and promotion, medical and parental leave, working hours, summer employment, grievance procedures, workplace safety, retirement, non-discrimination, intellectual property rights, and other important workplace issues.

For more information about PSU/KNEA, its goals, and how it benefits faculty, contact any member of the Executive Committee or visit our web page at <https://www.pittstate.edu/audiences/faculty-staff/knea/>

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

Pitt State faculty: PSU/KNEA is your organization, consisting entirely of PSU faculty members. Please become an official member! Faculty are not required to join the organization, but we represent all tenured and tenure-track faculty, even nonmembers, and it's important that everyone's voice be heard regarding workplace policies that affect us every day.

For membership information, contact President Grant Moss, Membership Committee chair Randy Winzer, or Treasurer Susan Schreiner. You may also visit Susan in her Axe Library office to fill out a brief member application and a Human Resources payroll deduction form. Dues can be deducted from paychecks over the course of a year (just over \$32 per pay period for faculty on a nine-month contract). Membership forms will also be available at the August 2018 opening meeting for faculty and staff.

2018-19 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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