

E Pluribus Union: Come to your membership meeting Tuesday, 3/16, 5pm, LEO office!

► Bargaining Update: No Zero-Sum Game

Kirsten Herold

In a recent bargaining update, I characterized Management's position about our financial proposals as a "zero-sum game." I'd now like to spell out the implications of this metaphor.

Our financial proposals cover a wide range: increased minimum starting salaries; increased annual raises; major review raises, including bumps for adjuncts and intermittent instructors; long-term sick pay and disability for Lecturer Is after their second year; support for new parents; increased professional development funds; a senior lecturer program; and penalties for late lay-offs. LEO members agreed upon these proposals as the most important among the many that were developed at the October LEO convention.

In some areas, Management's response has been encouraging: the current \$500 maximum for professional development grants seems too low; Lecturer Is deserve the same form of long-term sick pay and disability insurance every other university employee gets. Not surprisingly, Management loves the idea of a senior lecturer program because rewarding a few of us always appeals to them. They agree that adjuncts should be eligible for a second salary bump, and they understand that Lecturer Is should get late layoff penalties. In short, we are trying to fix real problems, and they see the justice of our proposals.

However, they say that anything they do in the above areas will come out of "the pot," a fixed sum of money available for lecturers. Of course, they won't tell us the size of the pot until the bitter end of bargaining. But they've indicated already that it's not nearly big enough to meet all of our demands. So, no matter how reasonable our proposals, any progress in one area must come at the expense of progress in others. That's the game Management wants to play.

Except when they don't. Notice that the above list omits benefits. Here Management is proposing a huge take-back. They want to deprive new hires of UM's 10% contribution to retirement benefits in their first year—effectively a 10% cut in compensation for the employee and a savings of about half a million dollars for UM. And they want to raise what we pay for health care. For lecturers with a fraction of 80% or more, Management proposes a 70-30% cost share—an average increase of 50%. For lecturers with a fraction between 50 and 79.9%, the cost sharing is 55-45%. These proposals amount to a major pay cut for everyone, falling most heavily on those who can least afford it.

This is unacceptable. Cost cuts as well as cost increases must be included in the same pot. And the size of the pot must be increased to accommodate our just demands. The size of every pot is a matter of priorities. The money is there, but the will to spend it on us is not because, as Ian Robinson argues in this issue of *Leo Matters*, undergraduate education is the lowest of the Administration's top priorities.

So how do we make the pot bigger? We make it bigger. *Together*. The Union can present its arguments at the bargaining table, but without membership involvement, this will be an empty exercise. We need *you* to show that you support the Union's demands. So come to bargaining, come to the membership meetings in mid-March, participate in the "No Cuts!" campaign by signing a band-aid, and stay informed and engaged. Together we can win.



► Bargaining Framework: Undergraduate Education— UM's Lowest Top Priority

Ian Robinson

The Administration of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor says that undergraduate education is a top priority. This is true. But not all top priorities are equal. Undergraduate education is not nearly as important as the other two priorities—graduate education and research accompanied by publication. This despite the fact that student tuition now accounts for about two thirds of all General Fund revenues, a much higher percentage than thirty years ago.

How do we know that undergraduate education is at the bottom of UM's top three priorities? We could start with our institutional identity as a Research-1 (R1) university. That's not how UM-Flint and UM-Dearborn see themselves, of course. They have only a few graduate programs, and their tenure-track faculty do more teaching and less research than UM-AA faculty. On those campuses, undergraduate education is the first among priorities. But look at how Flint and Dearborn are treated within the larger UM system. The three campuses are officially part of one university, with one President and one Board of Regents. But the Flint and Dearborn campuses have far fewer resources to support their mission than Ann Arbor because their students are mainly from working- and middle-class families, who cannot pay the higher tuition charged by UM-AA. UM-AA could subsidize Flint and Dearborn, just as richer states in a federal system support poorer states through equalization transfers. But UM-AA does not do this. Why not? Evidently, raising the quality of undergraduate education on these campuses is not as important as advancing UM-AA's place in the R1 rankings. Ann Arbor's research-centered identity dominates the entire UM system.



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The next three negotiating sessions— one at each campus: Dearborn 3/19; Flint 3/26; Ann Arbor 4/2. Your support matters!

Another way to assess the Administration's priorities is to look at who is assigned to teach undergraduates and how those instructors are treated. In the past, all faculty at UM-AA were hired into positions that could result in tenure, whether or not their teaching focused on undergraduates. But faculty at UM-AA, like other R1 universities, have become increasingly specialized. Every year, more undergraduate teaching is done by lecturers and GSIs. Lecturers now teach 36% of undergraduate student credit hours in LSA; GSIs another 24%. Since tenure is highly prized, denying that opportunity to the faculty who specialize in undergraduate education says a lot about how that work is valued. The same reasoning holds for the large pay differences between professors

and lecturers. In Ann Arbor, after subtracting the share of the pay that is for research and service, the median professor's pay per course in 2008-09 was \$17,490; the median lecturer's was \$7,418. As I'll show in an upcoming column, inferior teaching by lecturers does not account for this pay difference. It is whom we teach, not how well we teach, that accounts for the difference in pay.

Because undergraduate education is the lowest of UM's three top priorities, it is here that we can expect to see the greatest cuts in periods of austerity. We're seeing this in LSA, even before the 2% cuts that the Dean has ordered every department to make for each of the next three years. For example, English did not offer enough "first year" writing courses this year, so a number of

students won't be able to meet this requirement until their second year; perhaps the requirement should be renamed! In Spanish, some students took their first semester course in the Fall, but then could not get into a Winter course; they'll now wait nine-months for the next course in the sequence. How much of what they learned in Fall 09 will have been forgotten by Fall 10? Physics has plans to eliminate the discussion section component from some of its large introductory courses; henceforth it will be straight lectures. These changes—and there will be worse to come—would not occur if undergraduate education were a higher priority. But as things stand, they are the path of least resistance for departments looking for places to save money.



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734-995-1813



Why Me?

Michelle Orecchio, Romance Languages, Ann Arbor
Member, Bargaining Team

My life inside UM: *I have taught a variety of Spanish courses at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels. Currently, as a Lecturer IV, I teach two sections of Spanish 101 and 102 every fall and winter, respectively, and I am the Spanish 101/102 Course Coordinator.*

My life outside UM: *I love traveling, eating good food, drinking café mocha, watching movies and home-shopping programs, and spending time with people I care about deeply. I especially love being "Aunt Michelle" to two of the kindest and sweetest kids in the world.*

Why me? *I have been working at the University for thirteen years, which has been an incredible journey of teaching and learning. I have chosen to be a member of the LEO Bargaining Team so that I can use my voice in the current round of contract negotiations to stand up for lecturers. We need a contract that recognizes and respects the amount and importance of high-quality teaching that lecturers do, and we therefore need salaries that reflect this work. Many lecturers are experiencing terrible hardship as it has become increasingly difficult to live on their salaries. To add further insult to injury, many lecturers also find themselves without job security, which is simply unacceptable, especially at one of the most prestigious universities in the country. We contribute directly to the top-notch education that our students receive! As a member of the LEO Bargaining Team, I will also have the opportunity to stand up for complete transparency in performance standards. I will continue to show an unwavering commitment to education—after all, I am a lecturer.*

My favorite...movie is "Shawshank Redemption." **Because...** *it offers an account of inspiration and hope like no other.*

Get Organized!

- *Bring the other lecturers in your department to the membership meeting, 3/16, 5pm, LEO office.*
- *Put your signature on a band-aid so that "No Cuts!" are made to lecturer paychecks! Get your band-aid at the membership meeting or a Friday negotiating session. Or, we'll bring one to you!*
- *Exchange your ideas about negotiations with other LEO members at our blog and with your colleagues around the water cooler.*