

This is an edited version of the questions asked during the September 6, 2012 webinar about the new UAW 4121 contract. Answers in italics were answered verbally during the webinar and are summarized here.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Why do you say you have a three year contract and then state that the contract's life is only for one year.

- A. For the past few years it's been a one year contract, but the new contract is three years.

Q: What information has been communicated to grads (about the new contract)? Are Departments being asked to do this?

- A. Offer letters should always include the URL to the contract. ASEs have a responsibility to read the contract and departments can encourage them to do so. The union also holds orientations. But it is not a department's responsibility to communicate about or interpret contract details for ASEs.

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/laborrel/contracts/uaw/contract/preamble.html>

Q: Membership/Election Dues Deduction Forms - is there any change to the procedure for collecting and forwarding these forms to Labor Relations?

- A. *There is no change to the procedure.*

ONE-TIME PAYMENT

Q: Will it only be paid centrally if the source of funding is a state budget? What if the RA is paid on a research budget? Is it the same?

- A. *It will all be paid centrally, whether state or research budget.*

WAGES

Q: You mention the possibility that a continued state wage freeze will trigger new negotiations. What if federal funding imposes salary ceilings or there are other federal constraints. Will that trigger anything?

- A. No it will not. Federal restrictions do not impact this contract.

Q: Will we have access to the GCS survey data?

- A. That has not yet been determined; we'll let you know.

Q: Will we have the new salary data in time for admissions season this winter? It could make a big difference in recruitment having better salary offers.

- A. *That is the goal. But if it isn't available in time, you know that there will be at least a 4% rate (on base rates) or at least 2% on variable rates barring unusual circumstances (e.g., continuation of the state salary freeze). In your letters you may wish to use more general language, such as, "current salary is X, new salary will be at least Y." We (Office of Fellowships and Awards) are happy to help with some of the general language.*

OFFER LETTERS

Q: Currently, we do not have a university wide offer letter for RA/RA/SA. Has there been any thought that we need one?

- A. There are appointment letter templates on the contract website.
<http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/laborrel/contracts/uaw/addons/forms.html>

This is an important issue, since offer letters are binding and grievances may stem from incorrect or incomplete letters. Once a letter is sent, changes cannot be made. Labor Relations is working on language, templates, and policies that can be used across campus to assist departments and reduce liability. In the meantime, departments should review letters to make sure the essential elements are present.

Q: Should we, then, have someone from Labor Relations review our current appointment letters?

- A. *As they work on new language they will look at letter templates, but for individual offer letters, review should be done internally (department or college/school) first. If there are questions about specific information that should be in the letters, you can ask Labor Relations, but Labor Relations does not approve individual offer letters.*

Q: Funding uncertainty has caused us to go to quarterly appointment letters. The process of creating, sending, and tracking letters for 100 students is onerous. Any suggestions? This is time consuming.

- A. *This is something where feedback from other departments will be helpful. If you have suggestions, please send them to gradappt@uw.edu and they will be forwarded to the questioner.*

Q: Have departments been issuing electronic appointment letters?

- A. Electronic offer letters are acceptable and are done.

Q: If you use electronic offer letters, what do you use as 'proof' that the student has accepted the terms of the letter? An email?

- A. *You can send the email with "Request a Delivery Receipt," "Request a Read Receipt," and/or require a return email from the student that he/she received it.*

MANDATORY TRANSPORTATION (U-PASS) FEE AND FACILITIES RENOVATION FEES GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION

Q: Has there been any update regarding the mandatory UPASS fee?

A. *Background: There was a grievance that went to arbitration regarding the new mandatory transportation fee and the Facilities Renovation Fee (on the Seattle campus only). The formerly optional U-PASS fee was changed to a mandatory transportation fee; the rationale of student government was that having a universal fee would lower the cost and make it more broadly available. The Facilities Renovation fee is for construction on student buildings: HUB, Hall Health Center, and the Ethnic Cultural Center and was approved by student government. The union grieved the fact that these could be considered new fees and the contract prohibits charging ASEs new fees; the University considered them student fees. The grievance went to arbitration and the University lost.*

The University is looking at options for dealing with this ruling and what it will mean for the University and the cost of hiring ASEs—nothing is resolved yet, so we cannot tell departments or colleges/schools what the ramifications will be. Right now students will continue to be charged and should pay these fees—if reimbursement is required it will be done at a later date.

You will be kept informed as this comes to resolution.

Q: But will ASE students be paying the UPASS fee this year?

A. For now, until this is resolved. *If reimbursement is required it will be made at a later date.*

Q: Did you say the facilities fees have increased to \$260 this year and students are responsible for this also?

A. Yes, if you look at the tuition rate fee charts on Planning and Budgeting's website you will see the break out of tuition and fees.

<http://opb.washington.edu/content/tuition-and-required-fees>

The Facilities Renovation (FR) fee changes as the newly renovated buildings are occupied. So last year it was \$6 per quarter (\$18 per year) for Hall Health. This year the HUB is included and the cost is going to \$80 in autumn 2012, and \$91 in winter and spring 2013 (\$262 per year).

Q: So will our students be billed for UPASS and FR fee this quarter? If UPASS is now opt out...how do they do that?

A. Yes, please see the response above. On the Seattle campus it is not an opt-out fee.

Q: How does this concern Grant funded appointments?

A. *Because the resolution has not yet been reached, it is impossible to say at this time how it might impact grant funded appointments.*