

THIS MESSAGE INTENDED ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE YSU-OEA



# The Advocate

A Newsletter of the YSU-OEA

Spring 2022

## President's Report

Susan Clutter, YSU-OEA President, [suzclutter@gmail.com](mailto:suzclutter@gmail.com)

Hello All,

Some updates from the YSU-OEA:

It's that time again! Negotiations are right around the corner, and we are well aware we face an uphill battle. The Union is already at work preparing for the fight. The Research and Planning Committee is working on a faculty survey to gauge opinions on what we should be negotiating for in 2023, and we are anticipating that the financial advisor we hired will gather ample data to prove that the University is not as poor as they (repeatedly) claim to be!

We also want to rectify several shortcomings that we witnessed during our strike in 2020. One important area that we want to improve is the frequency of communications with faculty, and we know we need your help! Over the summer months, the Union would like to offer a 2 hour training (via Zoom) for those faculty who are interested in becoming College Advocates. The training essentially reviews the contract and the duties of the major committees within the Union so the Advocates can give faculty in their College guidance. College Advocates are NOT required to spend a lot of time working on union business, so for those of you who want to help with Union activities but are already strapped for time, this is your opportunity! We would like at least one advocate representing each undergraduate college at YSU.

Duties include:

- During a crisis, the Advocates shall assist their college with emergency needs such as phone tree setup and communications, strike plans, etc.

- Advocates shall make every effort to become aware of concerns and interests within their respective colleges, and shall articulate and/or aggregate those interests to the Advocates as a whole, and, as appropriate, to the Executive Committee, the Negotiating Team, and/or the Grievance Committee.
- Advocates shall also be responsible for communicating information from other bodies of the Association, such as the Negotiating Team or the Grievance Committee, to their college constituents.
- Advocates shall make reasonable efforts to meet every bargaining unit member in their colleges and to encourage them to participate actively in the Association.

As you have likely heard, Administration is planning to make another series of cuts this June, and we fully expect more programs to be 'sunset'. Unfortunately we don't know which programs, and we are unsure of what will become of those faculty who are working in them. We do know that Admin is making these decisions based almost exclusively on number of majors in the program and the Gray dashboard snapshot. Unfortunately, the data that YSU gave to Gray is based on CIP codes, and is often grossly inaccurate. For example, the Forensic Science program has two full time faculty, but our dashboard indicated that there were eight. Another example was the number of Chemistry Masters graduates in 2021- Gray reported 15 when the actual amount was closer to 32. A deeper dive into the statistics showed that Gray was only including May graduates, ignoring August and December graduates. When this issue was brought up to the Associate Provost, she told us that YSU was aware that the CIP code information is not always correct, but there is no time to fix it before June. Bottom line- the Administration is cutting programs based on bad data, and this is inexcusable. **We STRONGLY ENCOURAGE all faculty to pay close attention to the dashboard, and address any inconsistencies immediately.**

The Union continues to be concerned about our health care changes. Among the highlights:

1. The new medical and prescription plan is effective July 1, 2022 at 18% PPO and 15% for CDHP employee contribution per pay.
2. The final funding rate adjustment for July 1, 2022 is +4.45% includes plan change worth -5%.
3. The Federal Mental Health Parity Act, effective May 1, 2022, requires health insurance plans to cover Autism without age restrictions.
4. Twelve members that are enrolled in the Diabetes Supply Benefit program must also enroll in the new Chronic Condition Management program. We understand that those who are affected have been notified of this new requirement.
5. Thirty-four members will receive a reimbursement (totalling \$733.07) from Express Scripts because high cholesterol (statin) medications have been added to the preventive medication list. This resulted in a new \$0 copay to members who take statins.
6. There is a new 'Make Your Move' (Find Moves That Fit You) program being offered soon to all faculty and employees that supports members throughout their wellness journey. All participants who sign up will receive an activity kit. More info will be available soon through the wellness center.

7. Every member can now be more educated in where they receive medical service from because the 'Transparency in Coverage Rule' now requires health insurers and group health plans to make health plan pricing information accessible to members. It is to our advantage to be knowledgeable so we can reduce our personal costs. For example, members might "shop around" for the best price of an MRI to reduce their out of pocket cost.
8. A special thank you to Karen Larwin and Nicolette Powe, who have served on our Health Care Advisory Committee for the past several years. We are looking for volunteers who would like to serve on this vitally important committee, which requires attendance at approximately 8 meetings per year (one per month). If you are interested, please reach out to me at [suzclutter@gmail.com](mailto:suzclutter@gmail.com).

## Chief Negotiator's Report

AJ Sumell, Chief Negotiator, [ajsumell@gmail.com](mailto:ajsumell@gmail.com)

I'd like to acknowledge and express gratitude to other members of our Negotiations team: Karen Larwin, Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, Michael Pontikos, Kivie Cahn-Lipman, and in particular, our President, Susan Clutter, who is stepping down as President effective July 1. In working closely with Suz over the past year and a half I have witnessed the extraordinary amount of time and effort she has devoted towards fighting for faculty interests. As challenging as these times currently are for faculty, it's difficult to overestimate how much worse they would be if the Administration's powers to diminish faculty and academics were not limited by our Union. No one has devoted more to our Union in the past 3 years than Susan Clutter, and we are collectively better because of her effort. So, if you see her on campus, say thank you, and if you see her in a bar, buy her a drink (or two).

I'm also happy to announce new members of our 2022-2025 Negotiations team: Mike Ekoniak, Amanda Fehlbaum, Jackie Mercer, and Martha Pallante. Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, Michael Pontikos, and I are returning members. Our term officially begins July 1, and soon after we'll begin the difficult but important work of negotiating a fair Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The effort of fighting for a fair Contract is led by the Negotiations team, but is not exclusive to them. Faculty involvement outside of negotiations is essential, so if there is a call for nominations to a Union position or committee, such as College Advocate, Research and Planning, Crisis Committee, etc., please consider nominating yourself or a colleague.

Enjoy the summer!

AJ Sumell

# Grievance Committee Chair's Report

Gabriel Palmer-Fernández, Grievance Committee Chair, [gpalmerfernandez@gmail.com](mailto:gpalmerfernandez@gmail.com)

## CROOKED TIMBER

Article 13 of our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) requires administration to notify by November 15 those members of the faculty who are to be retrenched. More than a handful received such notification. Some of them chose to accept a Separation Agreement developed by Susan Clutter, AJ Sumell, and administration. Others chose instead to fight for their careers and filed grievances. Among these is a former president of our union, who led us during a strike, and a former department chairperson, whose return to faculty status some months prior had caused administration to an external hire for that post. Neither one is particularly liked by administration, and one wonders whether their selection was retaliatory. There were also several non-reappointments of untenured faculty members (per Article 11) and one of these has filed a grievance. Among faculty retrenched and non-reappointed, during a time of rising anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are two scholars of non-Christian religions, both funded by the kindness of community members.

Thus far three grievances on retrenchment have been presented and the provost has adjudicated them, rejecting the reinstatement of faculty. No surprise. After all, the provost in his role of chief academic officer had played a crucial role in the retrenchment decisions and it would be unreasonable to expect that in response to grievances he would change his mind. One would, however, given the gravity of the matter reasonably expect that if he couldn't be fair at least he would be thorough, responding to each of the alleged contract violations. But he did not. He was neither fair nor thorough. Consequently, the three grievances will be presented in arbitration. Two of them are scheduled for late July and the third will be scheduled for early fall.

Arbitration of grievances is the last resort for settling disputes between faculty and administration. While arbitration is the last step available to us, it is also the *only* step in our grievance procedure in which we can hope for a neutral, impartial - i.e., fair - adjudication of the case. In all the prior steps in our procedure administration is judging a case brought against them, and their usual response is almost invariably a self-defense of its action.

"From such crooked timber," Kant famously said, "nothing straight can come."

## Treasurer's Report

Taci Turel, YSU-OEA Treasurer, [tacibaht@gmail.com](mailto:tacibaht@gmail.com)

Charge	Deposit	Balance	Description
	\$15,142.00	\$134,711.80	Member dues -- Pay #03, 2/15/22
\$35.00		\$134,676.80	Reimbursement -- Palmer-Fern. for arbitration fee - online payment
\$35.00		\$134,641.80	Reimbursement -- Palmer-Fern. for arbitration fee - online payment
\$948.21		\$133,693.59	Secretary wages -- 60 hours (online payment)
\$300.00		\$133,393.59	Rent --February
	\$15,142.00	\$148,535.59	Member dues -- Pay #04, 2/28/22
\$26,836.78		\$121,698.81	OEA dues -- statement 2/01-2/28 Invoice# 8525061
\$130.15		\$121,568.66	AT&T Uverse (online payment)
\$948.21		\$120,620.45	Secretary wages -- 60 hours (online payment)
\$500.00		\$120,120.45	Union Party -- Jeff Crystal Catering Deposit for May 1st party
\$300.00		\$119,820.45	Union Party -- Jamal Tartir deposit for Pavillion for May 1st party
	\$15,142.00	\$134,962.45	Member dues -- Pay #05, 3/15/22
\$72.00		\$134,890.45	Reimb. Susan Clutter for NEA Conference dinners
\$948.21		\$133,942.24	Secretary wages -- 60 hours (online payment)
\$300.00		\$133,642.24	Rent --April
\$209.68		\$133,432.56	Reimb. Taci Turel for NEA Conference dinners, Zoom, Eballot, USPS
	\$15,220.00	\$148,652.56	Member dues -- Pay #06, 3/31/22
\$25,955.00		\$122,697.56	OEA dues -- statement 3/01-3/31
\$948.21		\$121,749.35	Secretary wages -- 60 hours (online payment)

## College Advocates Chair's Report

Have you ever thought, "Well sure, YSU-OEA is standing up for faculty as a whole, but there are specific issues here in my program that I don't want to see fall through the cracks"? I'm sure every one of us thinks that from time to time. We all face different pressures and stresses here at YSU, which are only increasing. That is the impetus behind the College Advocates, which I invite you to join. The Advocates, one or more from each college, act as liaisons between faculty at large and various levels of OEA leadership, with the expressed goal that program specific issues do NOT fall between the cracks.

The College Advocates provide a critical link by which faculty can voice concerns and suggestions, and through which they can be regularly informed of broader campus developments. The Advocate committee is, of course, crucial and active during contract negotiation cycles, but it plays an increasingly vital role in the day-to-day labor climate on campus. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that relations with YSU administration have deteriorated to the perennially adversarial. Long gone are the days of six months of negotiations and debate followed by two and half years of calm!

Anyone interested in serving as a College Advocate please feel to contact me at your convenience: Tom Diggins, Chemical and Biological Sciences, [tpdiggins@ysu.edu](mailto:tpdiggins@ysu.edu), x3605

## First VP's Report

Beckey Curnalia, First VP, [drcurnalia@yahoo.com](mailto:drcurnalia@yahoo.com)

Thanks to everyone who attended the YSU-OEA 50th Anniversary party at Pioneer Pavilion May 1!

It was great to see so many of our members brave the spring weather and come out to celebrate both YSU-OEA's 50th and OEA's 175th anniversaries.





Thanks in particular to YSU-OEA Second Vice President, Jamal Tartir, who planned the event, and to the members of the Executive Committee who helped set up the venue and clean up after the event.



Congratulations to the YSU-OEA members who received awards for their service to the union's communication and strike organization committees during the 2020 contract negotiations and strike: Diana Palardy, Michelle Nelson, Shelley Blundell, Jacob Labendz, Mark Vopat, and Tim Francisco. Our YSU-OEA leadership during the 2020 negotiations and strike was also recognized for the outstanding work they did leading our faculty union throughout that turbulent process: Steve Reale, Susan Clutter, and Julia Gergits. This team worked countless hours, and we deeply appreciate their collective effort on behalf of the faculty at YSU.

