

THE ADVOCATE

THE YSU CHAPTER OF THE OEA

Spring 2020 Special Issue Regarding COVID-19

President's Report: Acting President & Resource Update

Rebecca Curnalia, Acting President

Colleagues, I applaud all of you who have come together to serve the needs of our students during this global pandemic and the unexpected move to online instruction at Youngstown State. I am proud of my colleagues who volunteered to help our full- and part-time faculty move classes online. We are educators, and this is what we do best: teach. I am equally inspired by our faculty who do not typically teach online, but have accepted the hard work of moving online mid-semester in the interest of providing continuity for our students. Please **continue to reach out to each other for help moving online.**

For those who don't know me, I'm Acting President of YSU-OEA until Steve Reale's return in April. Julia Gergits and I have been working with the Provost's Office on contract issues related to the online transition. Please refer to Julia's report below for details. I have worked closely with Steve, our Executive Committee, and our Negotiating Team to ensure continuity in the leadership of YSU-OEA during this difficult time.

Second, I want to point you to some **useful resources**:

- The email addresses for the ACT team assisting with the transition to online instruction are available on the [ACT website](#).
- There are virtual broadcasts and [in-person training sessions](#) scheduled to help faculty move online.
- There are also [one-on-one drop-in consultations](#) available; bring your course materials and laptop.
- [Blackboard also has a YouTube channel](#) with a wealth of 'how-to' videos. The ACT also plans to post videos.
- If you have contract questions, please reach out to our Grievance Chair, Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez: gfpalmer@ysu.edu.
- You can reach out to me via email, rmcurnalia@ysu.edu, with other questions and concerns regarding this transition.

Again, thank you. And please, also **reassure our students that we are dedicated to making this transition because their education is our first priority.**

Negotiating Team Update: MOUs

Julia M. Gergits, Chief Negotiator

We are gathering information about YSU's response to CoVid19 and the governor's declaration of emergency. Anything we learn, we will share. Please continue to share information and questions with us directly and on the listserv. Communication is key to getting through this very peculiar time. You've pointed to many central issues; getting answers, particularly to contract issues, has been slow, but we're hopeful communication will improve.

Several colleagues pointed to aspects of the contract that are affected by YSU's changes. We are pursuing answers to those questions. Being in a statewide emergency affects the relationship, but we are still covered by our Agreement. Everyone agrees that the welfare of our students comes first as we push through the semester--we're more than halfway done--but we have to ensure a return to normal management/faculty relations quickly.

Specifically, we met with Provost Smith and DFR Jenn Pintar and are negotiating an MOU to address contract issues: moving to online office hours, protecting intellectual property rights covering materials developed and shared during this crisis, suspending teaching evaluations, necessary changes to syllabi and protecting faculty from grade appeals, committee and research expectations during the national emergency, adjusting deadlines for annual reviews, maintaining the availability of campus labs, establishing a process for faculty to request remote working (teleworking) accommodations, clarifying faculty responsibilities during remote teaching, and compensating faculty for their development efforts.

Negotiations have been proceeding. Up until this emergency, the negotiations team has been meeting with the Administration team every two weeks. We've exchanged all articles except salaries and health care (Articles 4 and 5). Those were scheduled for this past Friday, but the Administration requested an extension, which we agreed to. We proposed a new schedule, but they have not yet responded. We hope to resume our scheduled exchanges and meetings within a week or two.

You've added important information and asked good questions via the listserv and in direct emails to us. Please continue that process. We can help each other better if we know what you're facing and how it's being handled. We need each other, even more than usual.

Our YSU-OEA Executive Committee

President: Steven Reale, Music (EXT 1844)

1st Vice President: Beckey Curnalia, Communication (475- 9295)

2nd Vice President: Diana Palardy, World Languages and Cultures (EXT 1631)

Secretary: Loren Lease, Anthropology, Gerontology, and Sociology (EXT 1686)

Treasurer: Taci Turel, Human Ecology (EXT 2020)

Grievance Chair: Gabriel Palmer -Fernandez, Philosophy and Religious Studies (EXT 1465)

Chief Negotiator: Julia Gergits, English (EXT 3481)

College Advocates Chair: Tom Diggins, Biology (EXT 3605)

Our YSU-OEA Negotiating Team

Julia Gergits, English

Steve Reale, Music

Susan Clutter, Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences

Megan List, Teacher Education

Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, Philosophy and Religious Studies

Michael Pontikos, Marketing

Kriss Schueller, Computer Science
