

USW 1088-04 News

Letter: Spring '25 Vol. 2

Hi in the midst of a busy Spring semester from your Pitt Faculty Union, USW 1088-04. In this issue we will provide various updates, including news about committee work, upcoming opportunities to join 1088-04 meetings, and ongoing actions to enforce our contract.

As usual, the upcoming meetings and contact info for committees are at the end of the issue. Solidarity!

Bargaining Updates

Bargaining continues apace this semester. A partial summary includes proposals on:

- **Facilities and Support:** ensuring part-time faculty retain access to online services, bus passes, and other benefits, support for international faculty facing work authorization questions.
- **Research Support and Professional Development:** policies defending faculty amidst increasing research funding precarity.
- **IP and AI:** incorporating IP policy into the CBA and making clear that our work is not replaceable or targetable by AI.
- **Requirements for clarity in notices of appointment.**
- **Health and Safety:** increased protections
- **Defended our existing policies of presumptive renewal and COLA payments for part-time faculty.**
- **AND SO MUCH MORE!**

Reach out to your steward if you're not receiving these updates via email.

Bargaining Survey Results

Pay emerged as the top issue. Many respondents expressed concern about salary compression which has led to some faculty members at higher ranks and with more experience earning less than

their departmental colleagues. Job security was of particular concern to faculty members whose salary is covered primarily by external grant money. Feel free to reach out to your steward if there is something you neglected to mention on the survey, but would like to discuss

Join a Union Committee

Participation in union committees is a great way to make an impact, share your expertise, and learn about your union. We've got updates from various committees in this quarterly newsletter. If you want to join a committee, see below:

- **Civil and Human Rights:** Ellen Lee (ellen.cole.lee@gmail.com)
- **Communications:** Paul Johnson (paulj567@gmail.com)
- **Grievance:** Chloe Dufour (chloe.dufour16@gmail.com) and Tony Fabio (anthony.fabio@gmail.com)
- **Organizing:** Melinda Ciccocioppo (melindaciccocioppo@gmail.com)
- **Regional Advocacy Committee:** Kelli Maloy (loamlikely@gmail.com)
- **Research Stream Advocacy Committee:** Brett Andrews (brett.h.andrews@gmail.com)
- **Women of Steel:** Laura McCarthy (laura.mccarthy.lcsw@gmail.com)
- **Workload Policy:** Gretchen Aiyangar (1088.gretchen.aiyangar@gmail.com) and Jeff Shook (jjshook102@gmail.com)

Research-Stream Advocacy Committee: Fighting for Job Security

Across Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and the Health Science Schools, many faculty are required to obtain external funding to pay their salary and support their research. These positions have always been precarious, and the situation has only deteriorated with the ongoing uncertainty surrounding federally-funded research. As a committee, we are fighting to increase their job

security, so that they can continue to do their impactful research. To learn how to contribute, reach out to Brett Andrews:
brett.h.andrews@gmail.com

What's Membership Get You?

Membership in your union is distinct from being a part of the unit.

- Members can have their voices heard by participating in surveys of the membership
- Can attend meetings to learn more about their union and its ongoing work, raise questions, and offer feedback
- Vote to approve or against any negotiated contract
- A stronger union: unions are only as strong as their membership!

If you are not yet a member of your union, you can sign up here: <https://www.pittfaculty.org/>

Observe Bargaining

Our contract permits us to observe bargaining. It's a great way to see your union and employer in action. Bargaining sessions are on the schedule at the Union of Pitt Faculty [website](#)

- You will need to be oriented before you can attend a bargaining session.
- Contact your steward if you'd like to observe bargaining.
- The more members participate in bargaining, the stronger our union!

Grievance Committee Wins

Recently we have:

- Won protections for a bargaining-unit faculty member (BUFM) who was experiencing bullying from a supervisor.
- Helped a wrongly non-renewed PT BUFM secure a spring teaching opportunity.

- Ensured administration could not repurpose a BUFM's start-up funds for other uses.
- Successfully pushed against faculty evaluations affecting a BUFM receiving their cost of living adjustment.

Among ongoing work:

- We are still grieving another unsatisfactory evaluation - we grieve all these instances because they are tied to the cost of living adjustment.
- We still have some ongoing cases around benefits, specifically for part-time BUFMs.
- We are grieving a title change.
- We are working on some additional bullying and harassment grievances.

Grievance Reminders

Over the last few months, your 1088-04 Grievance Committee has been hard at work helping members resolve a variety of issues. We're excited to celebrate some big wins. Our CBA protected Pitt faculty, our pay, and our working conditions.

Remember, the contract does not enforce itself: if you have (or wonder if you have) a grievance, please contact your steward or the Grievance Committee for help.

- All grievances have a time-window that starts from the event you wish to grieve: **30 days**
- You can always check with your steward to see if something is or is not grievable

Harrisburg Lobby Day

On November 17 higher education workers rallied at each of Senator David McCormick's seven offices across the state to deliver a letter urging him to support full funding for research and student aid in the federal budget.

A contingent of Pitt faculty, staff, grads, and undergrads joined hundreds of students and workers from across Pennsylvania at the state

capitol to meet with legislators and advocate for fully funding our public colleges and universities.

Workload Policy Committee Work

Work is ongoing to write up workload policies that are consistent with our CBA. If your department or school has a new policy, let us know! You can get in touch with the co-chairs of this committee, Jeff Shook and Gretchen Aiyanger, to learn more.

Contract Corner: Academic Freedom

Our contract has provisions for academic freedom:

- “Full freedom from interference to conduct research in their academic fields and to publish their results.”
- The right to translate your knowledge into the classroom is granted in both physical and digital classroom spaces.
- You may list your institutional affiliation to identify yourself but do not present yourselves as spokespeople for the university without official authorization.
- If you think there’s a potential violation of your academic freedom, take careful notes about any interaction/incident between yourself and supervisor and/or in the classroom and reach out to your steward.

Civil and Human Rights Committee

With word that ICE is ramping up activity in the Pittsburgh area, the CHRC is working on providing information and training for what you and your union can do. Stay alert for guidance and resources for faculty.

Union Meetings

- The next **1088-04 unit meeting for Pitt faculty union members will be Thursday Feb 19th at 6:30 PM** on Zoom. Email invites are sent to all union members; reach out to your steward if you did not receive that email.

At these meetings, all union members can make motions, vote on motions, participate in discussion, run for leadership positions, participate in committees, and all the other activities that are involved in the running of our union. Your participation counts: every member has an equal vote.

Happy Hour a Big Success

Our first happy hour of the semester at the Primanti Brothers in Oakland was a great success! We parked upstairs, had some unhealthy fried goods, and caught up on union news. We even discussed things besides the weather! Please join us for the next happy hour **Thursday Feb 26, 4-6 PM at the Oakland Primanti Bros.**

Contact Your Steward

Having a workplace issue? Contact your steward!

The first person to contact for any union-related inquiry is your steward. This is usually a colleague in your department or center, so they will be familiar with issues in your area. Your steward can help you solve your issue or escalate your inquiry to the relevant person or committee. Not sure who your steward is? Want to become a steward yourself? Contact our unit secretary, Melinda Ciccocioppo: melindaciccocioppo@gmail.com.

Contribute to Your Newsletter

If there is a subject you would like to see covered here, or if you have something you would like to share, contact Paul Johnson: paulj567@gmail.com.