

USW Local 1088-04 Newsletter, Feb. 2025

Welcome to the first issue of our faculty union newsletter! In here you will find updates on recent union wins, meeting schedules, stewards, and some info on our contract. You will also find invitations to participate in your union, whether by attending a meeting, joining a committee, or acting as a steward. The union represents all bargaining unit faculty on all Pitt campuses, but only union members can vote and serve on committees. **If you are not yet a union member, you can join by visiting pittfaculty.org and clicking “Become A Member!”**

Celebrating Grievance Wins

First of all, let’s celebrate the union difference! Your grievers have been hard at work helping unit members solve a variety of issues in areas such as benefits, pay, and reappointments. Backed by the USW legal department, your grievers have won some major victories for bargaining unit faculty. Recent wins include:

- **Back pay for faculty who were paid less than the new minimum of \$2500 per credit for summer teaching.**
- **Restored access to health benefits for part-time faculty who had those benefits incorrectly revoked.**
- **Reinstated presumptive renewal and pay for faculty who were non-renewed with little or no advance notice.**

Do you have a problem relating to pay, benefits, appointment, or anything else about your working conditions? Check in with your steward about filing a grievance! (Not sure who to check in with? Read “Contact Your Steward” on the next page to find out.)

Federal Funding

The freeze in federal funding resulted in massive confusion and impacted many of our colleagues’ working conditions. You may be one of them. Reach out to your steward if this freeze or any other federal policy changes have impacted your work. Your local elected officers may be able to assist you in mitigating any adverse consequences and the USW has representatives in DC advocating on our behalf.

Union Meetings

The next 1088-04 unit meeting for Pitt faculty members will be Tuesday, February 18 at 6:30 PM on Zoom.

The next Local 1088 meeting will be Wednesday, February 26 at 6:30 PM at USW Headquarters, 60 Blvd of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Come on in and tell the front desk you’re here for the Local 1088 Meeting. Only union members can attend union meetings.

Wondering why there are two sets of meetings here? Our **local** is known by the name USW Local 1088 and it is a group of faculty unions who are all represented by USW. It includes faculty at Pitt, Point Park, and Robert Morris. By working together as a local, we all gain more collective power to improve faculty working conditions in the western PA area. Our **unit** is just our own union of Pitt faculty, officially known as USW Local 1088-04. As a union member, you can participate in both local and unit meetings. 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.

Join a Union Committee

Participation in union committees is a great way to make an impact, share your expertise, and learn about your union. Here are some of our committees, plus the names of the chairs and how to contact them if you wish to join:

- **Workload Policy:** Gretchen Aiyangar (gretchen.aiyangar@gmail.com) and Jeff Shook (jjshook102@gmail.com)
- **Shared Governance:** Drew Flanagan (flanagandrewedward@gmail.com)
- **Organizing:** Melinda Ciccocioppo (melindaciccocioppo@gmail.com)
- **Regional Campus Advocacy:** Kelli Maloy (loamlikely@gmail.com)
- **Civil and Human Rights:** Ellen Lee (ellen.cole.lee@gmail.com)
- **Grievance:** Marcy Pierson (piersonpittsburgh@gmail.com)

Contract Corner

In each newsletter issue we will highlight a different part of our contract. This time we're looking at **Article 22.1.2: Teaching Load:**

“a) Except as otherwise provided in this Section, the normal teaching load for full time bargaining unit faculty members will be no more than twelve (12) credits per term or twenty-four (24) credits per academic year for bargaining unit faculty members at the regional campuses, and nine (9) credits per term or eighteen (18) credits per academic year for bargaining unit faculty members at the Pittsburgh campus.

b) Within these limits, teaching loads, including credit hour equivalents, shall be determined by the workload policy of the school, regional campus, or department, as applicable.

c) Bargaining unit faculty members may be assigned to teach credits in addition to the applicable normal teaching load, in the Employer's discretion, subject to Section 22.3 of this Article regarding overloads.”

This article limits the number of teaching credits anyone can be assigned per year (a). It allows departments to work within that limit to tailor their own workload policies, which must also acknowledge work that is not tied to formal credit hours (b). Lastly, it allows faculty to voluntarily take on teaching loads that exceed the limit, in the form of a paid overload (c).

If your teaching workload is over the limit and you're not getting paid the appropriate overload amount (minimum \$2500/credit Pittsburgh campus; minimum \$1875/credit Regionals), contact your steward!

Contact Your Steward

The first person to contact for any union related inquiry is your steward. This is usually a colleague who works in your department or center, so they'll 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. On a related note, being a steward is an awesome way to serve your union and help your colleagues, so please consider volunteering if this kind of work sounds interesting to you!

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's a subject you'd like to see covered here, or if you have something you'd like to share, contact Abagael West: arwest19@gmail.com