



# TABLE TALK



***Table Talk is a communication of CSU-AAUP to its members to inform them of the progress of contract negotiations with the CSCU-BOR.***

The negotiating team hopes you are having a restful holiday break! Our session on December 18 was a refreshing change of pace compared to previous sessions because it was a productive discussion. There are still several important issues that are unresolved, but we look forward to our scheduled sessions on January 12 and January 29 so we can keep fighting for the working conditions that we deserve.

## CLINICAL FACULTY

The proposal that the Board is most willing to fight for is the creation of a new tier of defined-term non-tenured clinical faculty. Previously, their chief negotiator Jarad Lucan admitted that their proposal was “clunky” because it was shoehorned into existing articles rather than proposed as a distinct article. Louise and John spent some time asking clarifying questions to understand how these positions would work. The Board is proposing these positions for a handful of departments who supposedly can’t fill tenure-track lines because applicants don’t want to do the research that tenured positions would require. In the Board’s initial proposals, these clinical faculty would teach the same load credit as tenure-track faculty but conduct no research or creative activity, just maintain licensing credentials.

The discussion began with the Board’s team clarifying something that was not clear before. It was not their intention that these faculty would maintain full-time employment in the clinical setting and full-time employment as a faculty member, but perhaps switch from being full-time in the clinical setting and part-time at CSU to being full-time at CSU and part-time in the clinical setting. The Board’s responses to Louise and John’s questions highlight that there are still several problems with their proposals on this topic.

- They have stated that applicants for these positions do not want tenure but provided no data to support that assertion. In fact, they admitted that “the market for nursing and nursing anesthesia commands a higher salary than higher education can pay”, suggesting that the issue isn’t tenure, it’s the salary.
- They have stated that the departments would determine whether the positions would be tenure-track or clinical, but the number of positions offered to departments isn’t expected to change (or at least, they could not provide meaningful assurance that the money for these positions could be found), meaning that tenure-track positions will decline.
- They have stated that these clinical faculty would be doing the exact same thing as current faculty, except for research. Other universities with clinical faculty have different teaching loads for clinical versus tenure-track faculty to account for the different workloads inherent in positions that require research or creative activity. We also have defined research and creative activity differently for our librarian and counselor colleagues – it might make more sense to do that rather than create a new tier of faculty without tenure.
- They have stated that there are part-time faculty who work at UConn Health and are limited in how much they can teach for us due to overtime rules, and that they just are “not getting enough of them to cover the classes”. They could produce no data on how many current part-time faculty would consider full-time non-tenured clinical faculty positions.

Our team does not understand why the Board chose this approach to propose clinical faculty, rather than create a tier of tenure-track faculty with altered research / creative activity standards that address the licensing and

certification requirements that accrediting bodies require. As tenure is the means by which academic freedom is protected, we must guard against the erosion of this tenet of our working conditions.

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## **SICK LEAVE FOR PART-TIME FACULTY**

Our team carefully reworked our proposal to provide sick leave for part-time faculty to make it simpler to understand and administer. We proposed that part-time faculty would accrue 1.5 hours of sick leave for each one credit of load activity, provided at the start of the semester, and that when a faculty member moves from Group A to Group B or from Group D to Group E (i.e., once the 30-credit threshold was reached), they would contribute 18 sick hours to the sick leave bank, which corresponds to roughly 40% of their 45-hour accrued sick leave, mirroring the current assessment for full-time faculty of 4 of 10 days at the start of Year 2. We believe that this will ensure that our part-time colleagues can take the time they need to recover without fear of losing their positions. The Board's team decided to spring a counter-proposal on us via screen-sharing. They proposed that part-time faculty could get three days per semester, with no possibility of banking those days, before their contract would be "adjusted to reflect any absences in excess" of those three working days. If you teach one day a week, you can have three weeks off. If you teach on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, you only get one week before your contract will be adjusted (i.e., your pay would be docked). They argued that providing part-time faculty with sick leave hours would require that they fill out timecards. We don't have any independent verification of this. Due to this counter-proposal being dropped on us at the last minute, we have not fully considered or vetted it, but despite Lucan's claim that they're "proposing to make it simpler and more streamlined" and that it's better than "what you have now, which is not anything", we're not going to accept this as-is.

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## **BOARD HOUSEKEEPING**

The rest of the session was spent listening to the Board explain some of their "housekeeping" proposals:

- **Article 10.8.2:** Changing the name of Western's School of Visual and Performing Arts to "Visual, Performing, and Communication Arts in the Art, Music and Theatre Arts departments"
- **Article 4.14.2.1:** Allowing for personnel files to be paper or electronic
- **Article 4.14.2.3:** Removing the log record of who accesses the personnel files, because "there's no paper card that goes in" electronic files
- **Article 3.14.2.10:** Removing the need to notify people that their personnel records have been requested, if they are no longer actively employed
- **Article 5.7:** Removing emeritus faculty from the university catalog, and not giving them a printed certificate
- **Article 6.2:** Removing coaches from the university catalog
- **Article 10.1.2:** Removing the academic calendar from the HR website, as it's already on the university website

Some of these changes are minor, but others have concerning implications. Why is it not possible to have an electronic log file to record access of personnel files? If a faculty member retires and an outside political group requests their personnel file for nefarious purposes, shouldn't the university be obligated to inform them? If university catalogs are all online anyway, doesn't it seem a little mean to purposefully remove faculty from them and not give them a printed certificate after their years of service to the university? It may sound like such a little thing, but it's just one more example of removing the "human" from "human resources".

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## **NEXT STEPS**

Our next negotiating session will be on **Monday, January 12 from 10 AM until 1 PM**. We encourage you to tune in as we continue to fight to improve our working conditions.

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***Be sure to review future issues of Table Talk to stay informed about contract negotiations and collective actions!***