



Solidarity Now!

Communication Workers of America

Local 4730, Bloomington and Northwest Campuses, Indiana University

Poplars Building, Room 331, (812) 855-8508

<http://www.indiana.edu/~cwa/>

August, 2011

Volume 27 Number 3

We Stand in Solidarity!

by Bryce Smedley & Hans Van der Genugten

On Tuesday, August 2, 2011 CWA Local 4730 sent a press release to media outlets throughout the state. The intention of this Press Release was to draw attention to some glaring inequities in the way campus employees and staff are being rewarded for their contributions, compared with the remuneration for top executives within the IU administration. After a 1.5% pay increase for staff after years of stagnation, the Board of Trustees approved to increase Indiana University President McRobbie's salary of over 12%.

The Local called upon IU's President to stand with his employees in a sign of solidarity and only accept a 1.5% raise. In view of cut-backs and budget shortfalls now being witnessed, for the Trustees to be giving such an astounding pay raise seems inappropriate. It confirms the impression that IU is prepared to countenance a highly skilled but low paid workforce-one of the lowest paid in the Big 10-having their workloads increase, while employee salaries do not even keep up with increased contributions for health care and parking.

President McRobbie's contributions to our university were never in question, just the way an ever larger gap is being allowed to materialize in pay rates between lower paid staff and administrators. Recent developments at Purdue seem to show more solidarity for working people and a sensitivity which appears to be absent here.

At the beginning of August, Indiana University Libraries announced that staff positions would be eliminated. CWA stewards were available to support all staff who were called into Library Human Resources to have this news broken to them.

Thanks to all who have found time to give input, rendered assistance to those who received bad news of lay-offs and took initiative.

President McRobbie Got It Wrong! By Bryce Smedley – CWA 4730 President

All IU employees got an email from President McRobbie on June 23, 2011 telling us he was pleased that a 1.5% merit based pay increase would take place for all faculty and staff. Unfortunately, the President of Indiana University was terribly WRONG! CWA 4730 NEVER agreed to a merit based increase and, in negotiations with the IU administration, insisted that we wanted a 1.5% raise ACROSS THE BOARD for all union-covered support staff. Through ratification of this agreement, all union-dues paying members voted on the proposed 1.5% increase and flatly rejected a merit based system to allocate raises.

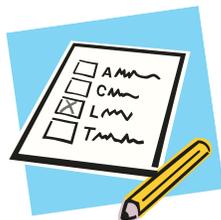
CWA 4730 is the only bargaining body that represents support staff in wage negotiations, and we clearly need your support now more than ever! Only union dues-paying members decide on how wage distribution takes place across campus for all support staff, as only dues-paying members have the right to vote within the union. Membership has its benefits! If you want a say in how your wages are negotiated and distributed, then join us. Make your voice heard; stand up and speak up. The greater our numbers, the louder our voices, and the more likely we will be heard by the administration. Stand with support staff who believe in livable wages and fair treatment in the workplace. Take control of your working environment.

Let Your Voice Be Heard - Join Us!

As required by the CWA 4730 Bylaws, the Local will hold Executive Board elections this year. The office of the President, Vice President IUB, Vice President IUN, Secretary, Treasurer and three Members-at-Large are up for election. All CWA 4730 members in good standing (dues paying) are eligible to be nominated and run for a position on the Executive Board. Nominations will be accepted during the month of September, with elections in October. The new Executive Board term will begin on January 1, 2012.

If you are interested in running for the Executive Board or have questions related to the nomination or election process, please email cwa4730@indiana.edu. If you feel you have something to contribute to our union, please consider running!

Election Update: Audrea Gant-Davis, Vice President IUN of CWA 4730, & Rebecca Hamlet, CWA 4730 Treasurer, have been appointed by Bryce Smedley, CWA 4730 President, to attend the upcoming CWA Election workshop in Chicago, IL to receive training on organizing our upcoming fall elections. If you would like to serve on our election committee for this fall, please email cwa4730@indiana.edu. To guarantee a fair and transparent election, we need individuals to collect, count and verify election results. We are a union that is proud to be based on democratic principles through transparency and equality.



LOCAL 4730

Communication Workers
of America, AFL-CIO

I hereby request full membership, and all the benefits that go with it, in Communications Workers of America (C.W.A) Local 4730. I authorize with this form my membership and the deduction of dues from my pay as established by C.W.A.

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University ID # _____

Department _____

Work phone _____

Work address _____

Room # _____

E-mail address _____

Home address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Received by _____

Please return this form to CWA Local 4730,
400 East 7th Street, Poplars Bldg., Room 331,
Bloomington, IN 47405

A Step in the Right Direction, and a Standstill

by Naomi Buck Palagi

IU Northwest Chancellor Lowe recently commissioned a salary study report, and there have been some very positive results. For example, the pay for Adjunct Instructors, which had been static for many years, has gone up significantly starting this fall. This was a very encouraging sign. Additionally, a 3% increase has been made to the support staff and service maintenance salary schedule at IUN, effective July 1, 2011. While not a huge increase, this is good news for new people hiring in to IUN, and also good news for those who may be at the top of their schedules, as they will be able to receive pay raises as part of their salary, which can also go toward their other benefits. Unfortunately, those are the only two groups of people who benefitted, because although all tiers of the schedule had a 3% numeric increase, this increase was not applied to those who are already working in the middle ranges. So, for example, a person who was 10 cents shy of a "median" salary, and who received the across the board 1.5% raise on July 1, is now actually further from that "median" salary, which went up 3% at the same time.

Currently, there are very few, and cumbersome, ways to actually move up the payscale. Waiting for your years of service to move you up seems increasingly counterproductive, as those who start out with low pay move up exponentially more slowly than those with higher pay, thanks to the standard of low, and percentage-based pay raises, with support staff raises being considerably lower than cost of living increases over the last many years. It seems the only way to move up the payscale is to have a) negotiated a good rate at your time of hire, or b) re-classify your job. Obviously once you are hired you can no longer negotiate your initial rate, and reclassification, a big job in itself, is not always appropriate to the situation. This is why an applied salary schedule increase is such a necessary and useful tool for recognizing (and maintaining) employees who have put in years of quality service to the institution.

Increasing the minimum wage and recognizing that support and maintenance staff are underpaid is a great thing. However, for it to have any effect in actually bringing the majority of workers' salaries closer to market norms and peer institutions, and for it to have any positive effect on workers' lives, it needs to be actually applied to all of the workers it claims to cover.

Hopefully, the administration will rectify this inequity as soon as possible.

Get Your Social Network On!

Look for us on Facebook and join!!

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=47515380185>

Interview with Patricia Hollingsworth, Dir. of the IU Health Engagement Program

By June Wickboldt, Rachel McCann and Hans van der Genugten

On July 26, eleven days after Patricia Hollingsworth took up her new position as Director of the Health Engagement Project, CWA met with her. Ms. Hollingsworth is an alumna of HPER at Indiana University, and her career since graduation has been in health and wellness. She has directed programs at St. Vincent Health, Clarian Health Partners, and Ball State University and was president of a health care consulting firm. Below are Ms. Hollingsworth's responses to a list of questions derived from discussions on the CWA listserv, meetings with Bruce Jacobs, independent research and her initial presentation.

Privacy Issues

Will any information provided by employees to the Wellness Plan administrators about their health be accessible to IU in anyway? If so, how?

Employee confidentiality is a priority; we will ensure all internal and external programs meet regulatory guidelines. Wellness programs and services are voluntary, and we will always be transparent about why we are requesting information and what is done with the information we request.

I do not anticipate having a repository of individual health information, only indication that the employee has participated in a screening or program for the purposes of incentives. We want to be recognized as a leader in wellness, working with vendors to provide quality programs that meet the needs of employees. Only through your input can we continue to provide quality services. I will do all I can to ensure employees have choice. At the end of the day, it's helpful to know the program is effective, but if we impact someone's health and don't know it, I'm ok with that. The goal is healthy IU employees, success in your well-being is more important than outcome data.

Health Engagement and Cost Savings

How and when will IU evaluate evidence that the implementation of the Health Engagement Plan is resulting in significant cost containment?

The health and well-being of the employee population is my concern. I was fortunate to have patient/employee focused care drilled into my head early in my career. I truly believe if you provide quality health and well-being programs and service in a caring manner that meet the employee needs, cost containment will follow.

That being said, it usually takes wellness initiatives about three years before a financial return on investment is seen in medical claim costs. In my view, cost is a measurement of goods and/or services exchanged. Although there are many reasons for increased medical costs, health status is one. The greater evidence of the program's success will be in the vitality of the university employees.

Biometrics

To what extent do high BMI's or high blood pressure contribute to the recent increases in Indiana University Health care costs? Statistics seem to show that increases in physician fees, pharmaceuticals, cost shifting (insured paying for uninsured), and more expensive screening/diagnostic tools (MRIs, CTs, etc.) are the primary causes of the increases in costs.

Employee health engagement programs alone will not solve the health care crisis in America. It is a complex problem and will take a number of complex shifts to slow rising health care costs. As noted in the earlier question, health status is reflected in health care cost, and positive lifestyle choices impact health. Your everyday choices have the greatest impact on your health.

Why set biometric targets? Isn't this demotivating (sticks instead of carrots)?

It's important for people to check their numbers regularly even if they don't feel sick, as many diseases do not have symptoms until it is too late. Targeted measures are values that indicate a lack of disease state, at risk for a disease state, or in a disease state in which the individual needs to be treated. I welcome your input on how we can encourage each other to embrace and take care of ourselves.

Is there a danger that older people will consistently fall behind in health standards and therefore eventually end up paying a higher premium?

As we age health risks go up, but screening is critical for older people; the expectation is not for people to only get to recommended biometric values through lifestyle alone. We want people to be treated for the disease they have so they can feel good and prosper. Making healthy lifestyle choices early in life and taking preventive measures, such as screenings for early interventions, will help keep us healthy as we age.

The Onsite Campus Employee Clinic

Regarding the employee health clinic—with the cut back from the state is this still a viable option? Will it utilize services from IU Health - Bloomington Hospital in Bloomington, the local Student Health Center, or is this still to be decided? Do you know the range of the services that will be provided?

My understanding is the employee health clinic is yet to be decided. You may want to discuss the status with Dan Rives in Human Resources.

Communications

When will we see a roll-out of the Health Engagement Plan for 2012?

I am currently meeting with the system wide groups. IU is fortunate to have so many resources throughout the state. I would also like input from all employees. This is your program, and we need to know from you how we can best support you on your health and well-being journey. Watch for an electronic mechanism to provide input or feel free to send your suggestions to me via e-mail at pwhollin@indiana.edu.

The Personal Health Assessment questionnaire portion of the Health Engagement Program for 2011 was cancelled. Can we expect a revised version to be rolled out for 2012 or later?

I don't anticipate using the assessment this year.

For any program to work well, communication is of the utmost importance. How are you going to interact with all sectors of the university community? Will employees have input into the program? How will you get feedback from them? Employees would, I think, be more open if they knew that information would be kept confidential. Will there be a way of assuring confidentiality?

We want IU to be the healthiest campus in America. The only way we will do this is team work. We want to build a wellness program with employees that will work for employees. There are 17,500 employees, and one shoe does not fit all, so input from all constituents is critical. I can't be everywhere all at once, but I will do my best to work within all sectors of the university community to deliver services that meet you where you are. We will use face to face meetings, focus groups and social media sites for input on existing services and employee needs.

We will be building a website to provide information about the Wellness Programs and hopefully highlight information for individual campuses. We will use many of IU's current communication tools to inform employees of what is happening. These include electronic newsletters, social media, email blasts, etc.

In your presentation you indicated tools to support the employee, such as biometric screening, health coaching, individual nutritional counseling, disease education, disease management, educational classes, population health initiatives, self-care programs, physical activity, recreation opportunities, safety and ergonomics, financial well being, resiliency/stress management, work/life balance services, and employee assistance programs. Which of these do you consider already in place? Which of these have not been implemented yet and deserve priority in your estimate?

Every day I learn of more and more programs sprinkled across Indiana University. I'm thrilled there are so many people passionate about health and well-being. As this is my 11th day of work, I would like to come back next month and answer this question.

On Campus Healthy Living Promoters

As part of weaving health engagement into sectors of influence you mention, "Ensure access to healthy and affordable food both on campus and in the communities we live." How would you like to see this materialize on campus?

We have started the conversations but I would like more input to understand the needs of employees and develop an effective program that meets everyone's needs.

What Has the Union Done?

By Ed Vasquez

Many people ask the question, “What has CWA done for me lately?” One of the big answers to this question is that CWA maintains the Articles for Cooperation between support staff and the trustees. This is especially important now in a national anti-labor environment. I would encourage those who are interested to compare and contrast the Bloomington (IUB) and North West (IUN) agreement (<http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/relations/bloomington/union.htm>) with the rest of the non-union campuses (<http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/handbook/index.html>).

Here are just a few examples of policies we have influenced. On IU campuses which are NOT represented by CWA, you are required to go back on probation if you are promoted from one support staff level to another (from a D to an F level job for instance). This is not a requirement at IUB or IUN. You can have union representation if you are written up. CWA union stewards have saved many jobs throughout the years on these two campuses. When it comes to pay, merit is not used to determine raises on unionized campuses—everyone at IUB and IUN received a straight 1.5% raise this year. On other campuses, not all workers got this modest pay raise.

The union has also worked behind the scenes influencing debates on big issues at IU. We were especially active during the health care change debates. Working with the Bloomington Faculty Council, we made our concerns heard. We helped eliminate the intrusive health questionnaire, which was initially proposed for the Health Engagement Program, and through our voice we managed to get IU Administration to stop using biometric testing in pricing our health insurance. We voiced our concerns at search and screen committee meetings for the Director of Health Engagement, where Patricia Hollingsworth was eventually named to that position (see related article in this issue). The CWA will continue to closely monitor our health care situation and make interventions where we can.

Our union has representation on several search and screen committees, as well as other committees to voice support staff concerns. If you are not a member of the union, you should do your part and join in order to protect our mutual support staff interests. The CWA Local 4730 will continue to seek justice for all support staff at IUB and IUN.

HOW IU SUPPORT STAFF COPE IN TOUGH TIMES

By Carole Baynes

Low raises and high inflation ---just how are members of IU’s support staff handling these rough economic times? Several support staff told me how they are trying to cope. A common theme from everyone was doing with less by cutting back.

Karen White, Office Services Assistant, said she is making it a habit of getting everything done in one trip. She’s not going many places other than church and work. She added that cutting down on groceries helps to balance out the increased gas money.

Several other staff I interviewed wished to remain anonymous. One related that he and his wife have cut down their long distance family visits to one holiday per year, instead of the two they made previously. They drive less and don’t eat out as much. They’ve started a vegetable garden to supplement their food.

Belt-tightening by having less of a social life is how another staff member saves money. He also said he tries to eat out just one day a week. He is trying to “just cut down on going out in general.” Several others added that they carpool and don’t travel much anymore.

Shonna McCracken, Lab Safety Technician, said she and her husband decided not to travel anywhere out of town this year for vacation. They will do everything locally. One positive aspect to this plan is that Bloomington and the surrounding area have a lot to offer.

In general, staff members are saving by doing the following things:

- Buying fewer groceries.
- Cutting back on driving.
- Bringing lunch from home.
- Buying only essential items.

If you would like to share your story on how you’re coping during these difficult economic times, please e-mail cbaynes@indiana.edu.

CWA Local 4730 Calendar

September

Thursday, Sept. 15, 2011

Members Meeting

IMU, Oak Room

5:30-6:30 P.M.

Executive Board Meeting

IMU, Oak Room

6:30-7:00 P.M.

October

Thursday, October 20, 2011

Members Meeting

Poplars Bldg., Room 185

5:30-6:30 P.M.

Executive Board Meeting

Poplars Bldg., Room 185

6:30-7:00 P.M.

November/December

Holiday Potluck for Members-TBA

For updates on union events as they happen, please check our online calendar at <http://www.indiana.edu/~cwa>.

Join Now!
Membership form on page two

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