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Work By Contract: KNEA and PSU Administration Reach Agreement

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Work by contract

KNEA and PSU administration reach agreement

Pittsburg State University's faculty union, the Kansas National Education Association, and its administration have come to a contract agreement after over two years of negotiations, according to Dr. Russell Jones, professor of music and faculty spokesman.

The 1982-84 contract agreement that was reached pertains to all full-time tenured and tenure-earning faculty members. The main points of negotiation concerned issues of salary determinations and a faculty grievance procedure.

"What most of our work entails right now is evaluating what it means to live with this contract and considering any modifications we feel it may need in the future," Dr. Jones said.

Salaries are determined by merit-type rating system that Dr. Jones said resembles a quota system or normal curve.

"People are given a rating on their performance. Through the state legislature, it has been determined that those individuals receiving a rating of satisfactory will be eligible for at least 50 percent of funds allocated by the

state," Dr. Jones said.

He added that there is no real objection to the merit system providing that the state, does in fact, pay.

"This system has simply been used to save money. In some cases, I think it proves punitive to persons doing a good job but don't receive top ratings. I think it shows an insensitive attitude and legislative bias. However, through the 50 percent provision, we've been able to modify the situation somewhat," he said.

Dr. Jones said that there is definitely pressure upon the University administration from the legislature in imposing this type of rating system and the result has been faculty anger and frustration.

Dr. Jones said that the critical problem throughout the negotiations remains to be the callus attitude toward the average faculty member and the fact that the major source of motivation on the part of the administration was to save money.

"There is some validity to this salary system but I feel the evils far outweigh the good in it. It's guaranteed to create

ill will and unfairness.

Dr. Jones added that if all schools in the state could unite, the system could be changed to a fair deal and the merit system could also be maintained.

Negotiations also dealt with the faculty grievance procedure.

"There were modifications made in the past procedure which simplified and clarified it," Dr. Jones said.

According to Kathi Babcock, spokesman for the PSU administration, the grievance procedure is an entirely different process now—one that relates to merit increments and differs in format and process.

"Our ultimate concern is faculty excellence and this is best achieved by good terms of employment. So, what we're mostly concerned with at this time is the scope, expansion and overall organization of the new contract in order to obtain equitable treatment for everyone involved," Dr. Jones said.

Babcock said that to arrive at an agreement after over two years of negotiations was a relief for almost everyone.

"I think the administration is pretty happy with the new agreement even though there are areas that still need some work," Babcock said.

"I also think that both sides are glad that there is finally an agreement but both will also have many suggestions for improvement. The idea of an adversary process is damaging and a period of peace was needed badly," she added.

According to Dr. James Appleberry, PSU president, the negotiations have given both faculty and administration the opportunity to discuss questions informally and have resulted in better forms of implementation.—by **Jacque Porter**

DISCUSSING POSSIBLE faculty contract modifications is Dr. Don Kerle, professor of political science; Dr. Don Hight, professor of mathematics, and Dr. Edward Galloway, professor of psychology and counseling. —photo by Jo Black

DR. RUSSELL JONES, spokesman for the faculty in Kansas National Education Association and PSU administration negotiations, says that being able to live with the current contract agreement is the faculty's biggest concern at this time. —photo by Jo Black



