

There are two main topics below: salaries and politics. That's enough for one newsletter. There are also at least two major issues facing us on campus in the wake of the untimely death of Chancellor Montemagno: the future of restructuring, and the selection of an interim chancellor. Both items were subjects of Interim President Dorsey's [email of last week](#), and a special [meeting of the Board of Trustees](#) on November 9 will outline a process for the selection of an interim chancellor. We expect to weigh in on these topics before the board meets.

Salary bargaining

Our salary bargaining team has reached a tentative agreement with the administration about salaries. This tentative agreement would complete bargaining on the salary "reopener" from the last contract. It has been unanimously endorsed by the DRC (Departmental Representative Council—the FA's main representative body) last week. Final language has yet to be worked out, and this agreement must be ratified by the full membership to be effective. But here are the main points.

- Bargaining unit faculty would receive a 1% raise, applied retroactively to March 1, 2018.
- A "me too" clause would guarantee that our faculty receive any additional raises allocated to other SIUC employees in Fiscal Year 2019.
- Minimum salaries would be set for each rank (assistant, associate, full) and contract term (nine-month and twelve-month). These salaries have been set at the current actual minimums, so do not require additional spending by the administration now.
- We would "rollover" the current contract until June 30, 2019. This means that full bargaining on a successor contract would start late this spring, rather than happening now.

Our bargaining team (Randy Hughes, Sajal Lahiri, Sam Pavel, and Bret Seferian) did well to secure this agreement. Their hard work made the salary hike retroactive (rather than having the 1% begin on July 1, as it did for most other Carbondale campus employees) and established minimum salaries which would protect faculty in the future. This agreement, if ratified, would provide an immediate benefit to faculty.

This very modest raise, however, would still leave SIUC faculty grievously underpaid. As of the fall of 2016, SIUC faculty were paid 15% less than their peers, and that disparity has no doubt increased in the meantime. If we are going to make any real progress on salaries and the other issues facing us, we will need to organize to strengthen the union and support our bargaining team as we start negotiating the next contract this spring.

Voting on salaries and for IEA representatives: 12/4 & 12/5

We will hold a vote on whether to ratify these changes to the contract on **December 4 and 5**; details on location and timing will follow. These dates correspond with the date for elections to the IEA Regional Assembly. We encourage faculty interested in serving as a representative to that body to let us know promptly. Greater FA participation in such IEA bodies could help us influence IEA policies, including endorsements. Which brings us to our next heading.

Ethical politics

State law forbids use of SIU email for political messages. Readers interested in the views of the FA and the IEA (Illinois Educational Association, our parent union) on such matters, including where the FA has disagreed with IEA endorsements, may consult our [Facebook page](#). I will, however, address two related topics here, the state of public discourse, and the IEA endorsement process.

Leaders have a responsibility not only to promote the interests of the groups they lead but to promote responsible, reasoned, moral public discourse. Public debate, whether in Washington or in Carbondale, can and should be vigorous and free without demeaning our public space. The acts of violence we have seen over the last two weeks were inspired by debased public rhetoric. It is perverse to argue that leaders need only avoid direct, criminal responsibility for political violence. It is utterly inadequate for leaders to utter occasional words of condemnation for specific attacks, while failing to accept responsibility for their own role in fomenting racism, sexism, hostility to immigrants, bias against the LGBT community, and anti-Semitism. And it is irresponsible to claim a mantle of respectability by avoiding the worst rhetorical excesses of another leader while supporting them or relying on their support. There is nothing partisan or narrowly political about such values: they are the foundation of any decent society.

Such values play out locally in the otherwise mundane world of IEA endorsements. Endorsements are driven by two factors: the views of IEA locals, and those of the IEA's lobbying arm, [IPACE](#) (the Illinois Political Action Committee for Education). IPACE has professional staffers but is itself led by elected IEA officers and the IEA Board of Directors. The endorsement process starts with a meeting of local union presidents, who interview candidates and vote on whom to endorse. These endorsements are almost always supported by IPACE itself, but in cases where the two groups cannot agree, no endorsement is made.

One central issue dividing IEA leaders about endorsements this year was how to define the range of issues that should influence endorsements. IPACE is explicitly limited to educational issues. I believe that the nature of public discourse is an educational issue in the deepest sense of that term. In my view, the only long-term solution to our political crisis is an educated citizenry. That is a chief end of public education at every level. And the values I proclaimed in the paragraph above are enshrined in the FA bylaws. But

other IEA leaders would limit endorsement discussions to a more narrow range of educational issues.

This is not the place to comment more on this year's endorsements. I believe that I have been able to adequately represent the views of our members at the endorsement meetings I have attended. But we can do a better job of involving members in the endorsement process. In the future, we will announce all such meetings to members (probably on Facebook, as this is a political matter), and encourage other members to attend endorsement meetings, which are open to all members. We will also work on a way to make it easier for members to communicate their views on potential endorsements and thus help shape the FA's role in the IEA endorsement process.

In solidarity,

Dave Johnson

President, SIUC-FA