

UFSO UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2023 | VOL 2, ISSUE 1

WE EXPECT COLLABORATION: A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It's been an eventful and awful month at UW Oshkosh. The official line goes something like this: we were operating at a deficit year-by-year and now it's caught up to us. We don't have enough money to pay your salaries and 300 of you have to go away, if not voluntarily, then we will show you the door. This is bitter news, and particularly hard to swallow when the same individuals who could not balance our books say "trust us to build the new UWO!"

Your union has been hard at work, focusing on the latter part of that equation. After Convocation we held a listening session attended by more than 60 UWO employees. We bandied about ideas and received excellent suggestions. Among them was to develop a list of expectations for effective collaboration with the Administration. We have done this, incorporating many of the ideas gathered in the listening session into a draft Expectations for Collaboration letter that was presented to Faculty Senate. After Senate made some edits, it passed unanimously as a resolution and was sent to the Chancellor and Provost (see an excerpt below, with the full letter available separately). We have since converted the letter into a petition. If there is shared governance at UW Oshkosh, then some (or, hopefully, much) of this will be accepted by the Administration. If there is not effective shared governance at UWO, then it will not, and we will be forced to advocate for ourselves in other ways. We set an October 1st deadline for specific written responses from the Chancellor and Provost.

This has been an important project for us. It has built a stronger bridge between UFSO and the Faculty Senate. We seem to be, finally, on the same page in fighting for working conditions that provide an optimal experience for our students and work-life balance for our employees. These Expectations also demonstrate solidarity with our fellow workers, for whom we ache. We are, of course, trying to preserve the jobs of our hard-working Instructional Academic Staff, many of whom are our members. But we are also advocating on behalf of University Staff.

(cont'd on next page)



QUICK FACTS BUDGET, ADMINISTRATION & FACULTY

- Administrative expenses at UWO increased by 84.8% between 2012 and 2022. They increased by 18.3% over the past five years.
- Total payroll rose by \$8 million from 2018 to 2022. The share allocated to direct teaching faculty and staff fell from 51.4% to 44.8% .
 - Between 2018 and 2022, the number of full-time faculty declined by 9.8%. The number of full-time lecturers declined by 22.2%
 - The number of chancellors, vice chancellors, associate vice chancellors, assistant chancellors and assistant vice chancellors more than doubled from 2012 to 2022, while the number of FTE students declined by 16.6% .
- The salaries of the 12 members of the Chancellor's Cabinet could fund 50 full-time lecturers or our 37 lowest paid faculty members.
- The salaries of the 76 administrators at UWO could fund 202 full-time lecturers.
- The university has been in poor financial health since 2016, or 6 out of the last 7 years. The only year in which UWO achieved the minimum performance metric recommended by the Higher Learning Commission was in 2021, a function of the COVID-19 pandemic bailout.
- UWO has the worst financial health of any UW System campus [1]. We also have the second highest expenditures per degree, excluding UW Madison and UW Milwaukee. *NOTE: We have citations for all of the above and are happy to share upon request*

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE LORI PALMERI

UFSO Friends,

It's been a challenging few weeks since the Institutional Realignment Plan (IRP) was announced for many of you, with all the uncertainties, the communications, and the rapidly evolving timeline. Please know that I stand at the ready to help in any way I can and have been continuing conversations with the Chancellor's Office, colleagues on Colleges and Universities Committee, AFT reps, and state agencies (Dept of Workforce Development) about resources and information that might be helpful.

I encourage folks to check in with UWO HR and also the Department of Workforce Development (directly) as regards to contract employment and eligibility for Unemployment Compensation if needed. Please feel free to reach out to our office directly if you need further assistance. (cont'd on next page)

WE EXPECT COLLABORATION

(cont'd from p. 1)

Our point to Administration is that you can't preserve a favorable student experience by eliminating the jobs of those who directly help the students. There is an alternative: for every Administrator's job cut two or three IAS or University staff jobs could be saved.

These are and they will be tough times. But tough times can bring out the best in us, and can focus us on what needs to be done: advocating for a UWO that provides effective, relationship-rich education that benefits our students and the state of Wisconsin.

All the best,
Dave Siemers
President, UFSO



Upcoming events:

- 10/3: Walkout, 12pm
- Monthly happy hours at Fifth Ward Brewing:
 - 10/3, 5-7pm
 - 11/1, 5-7pm
 - 12/5, 5-7pm



MEET A MEMBER

Jerry Thomas (above) is a Political Science professor and proud UFSO member. Why? "I am a first-generation college student who grew up gay in an environment that touted both individualism and shame for bucking the system. Surviving meant that I had to go it alone in secrecy as a gay man and alone as a student trying to pull himself out of poverty. I know what it is like to live in isolation, to believe there is no one who understands or shares my struggles. Remembering how hard it was to survive, I have a moral responsibility to support other workers so they know that they are not alone."

**Find UFSO on
Facebook and under
"Join the Union" at
aft-wisconsin.org**

LETTER FROM LORI PALMERI

(cont'd from p. 1)

Leah and I have taken a few calls and are preparing for a number of calls and emails (rep.palmeri@legis.wisconsin.gov or call 608-237-9154). If you provide a phone number, I will call you back!

It helps to have details and specify if you are ok with giving your name or if preferred, not to, as we deal with administration or agencies. Currently, we are starting to field "non-renewal" questions with constituents. If you email, please provide detail.

I have been informed that the OASD Oshkosh Area School District, City of Oshkosh, Winnebago County and UW Milwaukee have reached out to the Chancellor's office to invite folks to apply with them if you are impacted. While this may not be the ideal, I share this for information only. I have not independently verified with each of these. I will say that I have substituted with OASD with great satisfaction for a temporary part time period in recent years. If there is interest in this path, please reach out and we will do whatever we can to help.

Lori Palmeri
54th District
WI Assembly



EXCERPT FROM EXPECTATIONS LETTER

We offer these expectations in the hope of rebuilding a basic level of trust between the Administration of UW Oshkosh and its Faculty & Staff. We also hope to prompt a sense of accountability among the upper administration...we expect timely and specific written responses to each of these expectations by October 1, 2023.

1. The Chancellor will prioritize cuts to administrative positions and salaries over instructional/student support positions and salaries.
2. The Chancellor and Provost will recognize that Instructional Academic Staff are indispensably necessary to realize a research-enhanced University.
3. The Chancellor will commit to more meaningful and more widely-recognized shared governance norms.
4. Increasing teaching loads should be recognized by the Chancellor and Provost as a harm to academic quality, and contrary to UW Oshkosh policy.
5. Clarity will be provided by the Chancellor and Provost about workload and working conditions for faculty who remain.
6. A viable part-time option should be available for faculty who wish to go to lower than full-time status to continue voluntary reductions of payroll
7. Probationary and furloughed faculty will have the opportunity to request adjustments to tenure and renewal review periods.
8. The Administration will pledge to provide full and clear budgetary information to faculty and staff leaders from now on