

Monday, October 7, 2024  
12:00-4:30PM  
NTT Bargaining Session

**Attendees**

Mike Paulmeno  
Will Kennerly  
Ruth McAdams  
Jeremy Sloane  
Sean Collins  
Greg Spinner  
Eileen Sperry  
Patrice Malastinic  
Evan Halstead  
Johanna Mackay  
Erika Schielke  
Diana Barnes  
Megan DiMaio  
Ann Showalter  
Olivia Dunn (zoom)  
Beatrice Kendall (zoom)  
Beck Krefting (zoom, TT)  
Kim Frederick (TT)

Sarah Delaney Vero  
Rob Manfredo  
Julie Delay

12:00 Tech-related delay.

12:08 Admin calls an initial caucus. No notes during caucus.

12:24 Return from caucus. Rob says thanks for the time. They have a new proposal, but first a housekeeping item. He knows we've asked for info costing our proposal, and so they have provided it. They distribute hard copies of "SEIU Comp Proposal Cost Estimate 8.21.24 V2." Julie explains how they calculated it, with rows linked to specific sections of our compensation proposal and some sections of our benefits proposal.

- Pete asks about Rows 15 and 17: are those the past actual FY24 and the current FY25 salaries?
- Julie answers yes.
- Jeremy asks why Full-time excludes music. Julie says that might be a mistake but needs to check.
- Lots of questions trying to wrap our heads around this document.

- Ruth asks about HELIOS: are they assuming that a bunch of people will cash out a bunch of credits after the rate goes up?
- Julie: Not really. We're using the number of HELIOS credits cashed in spring 2024 as a rough estimate for the number of credits that will be cashed out in any given year.
- Evan: so, on average it's a \$2.2 million increase per year?
- Julie: Yes
- Sean: in cells 33G, 34G, and 35G, how are they coming up with the estimate of the number of people who would get these benefits?
- Julie: we used current/past trends?
- Pete: If I understand this correctly, this document is a response to our information request from 08/28/2024. This is the first of the four items that we requested. Are the other three items forthcoming? For example, item #2 was a cost-out of the college's initial proposal.
- Sarah: We don't have that. We didn't cost it. What we're currently spending on your salaries etc are represented in the document we gave you.
- Julie: Just want to note that this isn't fully inclusive of all benefits. We included just some big ticket items that impact costs.
- Sean: We also submitted an info request re the GSA and the "equity adjustment" unilaterally implemented in June 2024. Has that been provided?
- Sarah: it's in the Box folder.
- Sean: Okay, I'll double-check.

12:50 Rob distributes new proposals on Professional Development and Compensation. In keeping with their package proposal approach, the packet includes their prior proposals on inclusion, academic rank, appointments/assignments. This compensation proposal is updated to align with their recently revised academic rank proposal. They do want to keep things moving forward toward a contract.

#### Article XX Compensation

Section 1. This is unchanged.

Section 2A. Minimum starting salaries. They've included a third tier. They've raised the floor for the short-term tier. For renewable tiers, there is an increase to 70k-ish for first tier (85% of MM for Assistant Prof). Second tier: \$78,270. Third tier: \$86,967. Librarian tiers: \$68.5k, \$70k, and \$78k. Accompanist: \$58k.

Ruth asks why visiting faculty are paid \$6k less than the renewable first tiers? Sarah responds that renewables are expected to do service. Also Sarah references market rates for visiting faculty that \$64k is competitive.

Ruth asks about accompanists: why is the pay so low? Rob says that College proposal for accompanists at \$58k is actually about \$10k above market rate.

Sean: There are 4 VAPs hired this year, and all of them are already being paid above what the college is now proposing to pay VAPs. That is, the college is proposing 64k but is already paying \$68k. Why?

Johanna: your initial compensation counter had librarians being paid the same as other faculty, which was good, except that the level was low. Now, we've been separated out from other faculty and the pay is lower. Why?

Rob: It is higher than what we previously proposed and is in alignment with market medians.

Sarah: Librarians have always had very clear benchmarks in the AAUP data, whereas other NTTs haven't really.

Johanna: Librarians are underpaid in general, so using market medians is perpetuating a problem.

Sean: Wrt librarians, why are the assistant and the associate ranks so close together?

Julie: Market data is not in lock step.

Sean: Nothing prohibits the college from hiring at a higher rank. Wrt accompanists, there are three of them. On the low end, a hire from 1997 is making 53k. On the high end, there is making 67k. So again what the college is proposing seems lower than what it's already doing in practice.

Patrice: Accompanists here also have teaching duties, so there isn't a direct comparison when using market data.

Pete: You've noted several times that these are just minimums, not what you'll actually offer people. But this isn't solace to us, given the presentations we get from the VP for finance. When push comes to shove, cuts are made, and if it's possible to offer the minimum salary, you'll offer it. You'll feel consistent pressure from us to set the minimum at a real minimum, rather than an imaginary level that is lower than what you actually plan to use.

Sean: Exactly. We see this as basically doing "direct dealing" in spirit though not technically. When I first met with faculty at Skidmore, there were huge discrepancies between them, notably reflecting gender.

Sarah: I have to disagree; we do extensive research to make sure there is no gender difference in salaries.

Julie: Can you provide us that info about VAP salaries?

Sean: I'm looking at the spreadsheet that you provided us, the Employee 2024 data spreadsheet. One VAP hired 09/01/2024 at 64, 68, 66, 66, 76, 66, etc.

Pete: Wrt the second and third renewable tiers, how do these numbers relate to market medians?

Rob: second tier is 90% of skidmore starting salary for associate prof; the third tier is 90% of the market median for associate profs per the AAUP.

Pete: Why, in formulating and justifying its proposal, does the admin use the two different methodologies, one that is indexed to market medians per AAUP and another that is indexed to *other* Skidmore salaries?

Sarah: It's built off the methodologies from from the 2022 compensation study.

Johanna: From which librarians were excluded.

Sarah: Yes, because we already had data.

Rob: Now on to the end of 2A (top of page 6). We're now proposing a 2% minimum annual raise, *or* the GSA, whichever is higher.

Section 2C and 2D: No changes.

Section 2E: A new section dealing with postdocs, to accommodate that their compensation is sometimes dictated by the grant.

Section 3: Unchanged except for the thing about annual increases, top of page 7.

Section 4 on music ensemble instructions. No changes except for annual increases.

- Ruth: Our proposal tied the compensation rate for these ensembles/lessons to a credit hour equivalent instead of a dollar amount, because there are some FT faculty whose FT teaching load is partially comprised of these ensembles/lessons. So, why don't you have a credit-hour equivalent? And second, where are your numbers coming from? They are low.
- Rob: This reflects the current structure.
- Ruth: We know that. From a strictly housekeeping perspective you need to have a credit-hour equivalent. But also, these numbers are very low in comparison to what people could make on their own, in their garages.
- Sean: This will not go over well with the affected faculty. Please reconsider. These people need to teach at multiple institutions.
- Rob: do you have data regarding market rates for these lessons?

- Sean: It's a little anecdotal, but for example, one community college, SUNY Schenectady pays \$864 for a 45-min private lesson. Skidmore is paying \$805.
- Greg: What kind of data do you want?
- Ruth: Evan Mack will absolutely have this information. He's not here today, but when he's back, he will know.
- Sean: even St Rose was paying more at the end. Obviously not the best example, but was outperforming what Skidmore pays its faculty.

Section 5. Updated.

Sections 6 and 7. We're agreed.

Section 8 on accompanists is updated.

Section 9. We'e agreed.

Section 10 on multi-section lab courses. Reduced from a requirement of six sections to five.

Section 11: removed a SW course from the list of courses.

Section 12 unchanged

Section 13 unchanged with a little more detail. Sean asks clarifying question: if the compensation for TT faculty goes up, will this number also go up? Rob says yes.

Section 14 and 15: unchanged.

Section 16. They're agreeable, but would want the CBA ratified by Dec 31, 2024.

Section 17. Agreed.

Section 18 has been updated. They are willing to include it to some extent but want a revision.

1:47 Rob presents their updated counterproposal on professional development, article XXIV. It's largely a maintain except for section 2. Those prof development funds are not happening universally across the college, but they can make it standard at \$500. They include a short description re what the funds can be used for. They think their proposal largely mirrors our language.

- Eileen: why have you excluded terminal appointments from eligibility for these funds?
- Rob: Something about recognizing service requirements of those on renewable appointments

- Eileen: But this isn't about supporting service, it's about supporting professional development.
- Ruth: Professional development may be even more important for VAPs, whose future prospects depend on scholarly work. The shorter the contract, the greater the college's responsibility to support the person's ongoing professional development so that the person can move on from Skidmore toward their next job.
- Sarah: Some depts don't have this as a line-item (English does but many don't).
- Pete: Regardless of whether individual departments do or don't have these funds as a specific line item, are there depts that aren't giving this money?
- Diana: What's the range? Our dept offers more.
- Sarah: from a budgeting perspective, it's not allocated.
- Jeremy: when you say "immediately eligible to apply" that's different from being "eligible" for it. What's at stake there? Is there going to be a competitive application?
- Rob and Sarah: It isn't an actual application, but more of a reflection of current practice in that there has to be a stated reason.
- Patrice: My understanding is that PT faculty have also received this benefit but that it is inconsistent.
- Ruth: Yes, English has offered the full \$500 to part-time faculty.
- Pete, Jeremy: Wrt "eligible to apply," this is concerning bc there's no guaranteed funding.
- Diana: this language would immediately reduce the funding available to me. World Languages offers more.
- Ruth: leaving it up to the discretion of the chair is exactly the problem that we are trying to avoid.
- Evan: Where did the \$100 for "disciplinary specific materials" come from?
- Rob/Sarah: does this exist at present?
- Ruth/Will, etc: No.
- Eileen: There is existing flexibility in how the \$500 is spent, and that's important for equity. If someone has just had a child, for example, they will likely not use the funds for travel and would instead benefit from using the money on other things like books.
- Rob: Section 6: asks for clarification on what scholarly leaves of absence could be used for
- Ruth: if you are offered a prestigious fellowship, we want to allow for the opportunity to accept it.
- Julie: And they would no longer be paid by Skidmore?
- Ruth: Correct. These fellowships are super competitive and the award is that it replaces your salary.
- Rob: Asks about counting that year of service; would they still be eligible for benefits?
- Ruth: Probably not, it depends on the award. We're just trying to make sure that that year would count as a year working for Skidmore for the purposes of employee benefits and retirement eligibility.
- Sean: The budget proposal you passed out estimated 4 sabbaticals per year. How many people who are currently eligible for sabbaticals have done so in the past two years?
- Sarah: I don't have that information. But we assume that when people are eligible, they take it.

- Sean: We're not sure that's true.
- Mike: I was eligible and didn't take it.
- Sean: Asks why admin wants to limit sabbaticals to those who already have them?
- Sarah/Rob: Because there is no expectation of scholarship for the VAP/TP/STP line.
- Diana: Keeping up to date on scholarship is important for pedagogy.
- Ruth: Our TT colleagues already use sabbaticals for pedagogical development. That's an approved use of a sabbatical and it already happens. Also, the word "sabbatical" comes from same root as "sabbath" - the day of rest.
- Eileen: In our proposal, we've included that we'll apply for sabbaticals through the existing channels. We fully expect that NTTs applying for sabbatical would have to propose what they plan to do and it would be subject to scrutiny in the same way that it is already for our colleagues who have sabbaticals.
- Diana: Burnout is real. I work all summer to supplement my Skidmore salary so that I can pay my mortgage..

2:20 Brief break.

2:26 Reconvene from break. Sean presents our revised proposals on evaluations and inclusion. Sean starts with inclusion.

- Most distance is in 1b for union service counting as College service. We are maintaining that this should be counted, have added some details here to explain. Interfacing with the college on safety committee, LMC, disciplinary matters furthers the mission of the College, is plainly service. Ruth also emphasizes that the College's latest compensation proposal indicates that they do not want to pay for this work/service, so what exactly is this?
- Sean relates that we are maintaining on 2B that all FT renewable unit members may serve on all departmental committees. In some depts, NTT faculty make up a majority of a department or subgroup, and this would put a disproportionate impact on the small number of TT faculty—music is a big example, the library too. Perhaps the College has not considered that? Greg confirms: in religious studies it just would not be feasible to exclude NTTs from these committees.
- Section 5 (on compensation for service): we made a small revision here. Hopefully it's amenable.

2:33 Sean moves on to Article XXIV on Observations and Evaluations. He introduces Kim Frederick (tenured, chemistry) and Beck Krefting (tenured, American Studies and CLTL, via zoom) to speak on this issue.

Kim introduces her experience on serving on CAPT and ACT and working on the HHMI inclusive excellence in teaching group. Through this work she has been studying Skidmore's current practices in teaching evaluations, including analysis of all current handbooks (college + departmental) and all instruments such as evaluations forms from students and faculty.

They have identified there is widespread inconsistency in policies and application of policies, especially when evaluations and observations fell entirely to a Chair. These were particularly egregious for NTT faculty who were usually not a focus of the department policies. The union's proposed policies would create consistency and help decentralize evaluations from the Chair. This change will be good for all faculty, not just NTTs.

The working group has also identified that faculty often do not receive developmental mentorship or feedback on their teaching. We need to have truly developmental evaluations, especially for short-term faculty.

Lastly we need to have a reduced reliance on student evaluations. The current student rating system is not able to be characterized as 'fair' as needed by the Handbook. Often there is no correlation between student ratings and teaching effectiveness. There are various ways in which students ratings are biased, including student interest in course and gender/racial biases. Sometimes the student comments are just cruel. Currently NTT faculty are almost exclusively evaluated on these materials. The system proposed by the union brings in a more robust system that has support across Departments.

There is interest in standardization in evaluating with rubrics, and as HHMI leader, these proposals are a strong step in the right direction. Unit members can get regular developmental feedback, and a standardized rubric, and reduces emphasis on student ratings. These proposals do not interfere with the HHMI work and will result in improvements.

Sarah asks Kim how far along the HHMI group is. Kim responds they are currently in progress, meeting with constituency groups (including the NTT negotiating committee) and plan to bring results to the full faculty in January. They look forward to seeing how the union's proposals get implemented and will inform their work going forward.

2:42 Beck Krefting introduces herself, director of CLTL, co/pi on Mellon grant, member of HHMI group, on middle states commission, and formerly PC chair.

She speaks to how the NTT proposals are important improvements. They reflect best practices for evaluative feedback and map onto the Dean's directives on their website. Beck endorses the proposal for the ability to request developmental observations. The most obvious discrepancies in evaluations come from lack of transparency and discrepancies across departments. These have legal implications, which we know the College recognizes, since they have moved to uniform evaluation standards for academic staff. She feels that it would

be great to do this for short-term faculty for their professional growth as they get jobs elsewhere.

2:47 Eileen walks us through our revised Evaluations proposal. We have reframed this in response to the admin's acceptance of three tiers. We have adopted the idea that the third tier is a merit-based system, not (as in our original proposal) automatically linked to renewal.

- Section 1A. We are maintaining that FT terminal unit members get developmental observations.
- Section 1B. We are maintaining the spirit. Throughout we are maintaining that observation/evaluation be done collectively not just by chair.
- Section 1C. This is a new section. This reflects the idea that people might be going up for renewal without there being a promotion. Ruth mentions that we need this section to handle circumstances where a unit member is up for renewal but not promotion. ← Whoops, this comment was actually about a later section, Please disregard.
- Section 1D. As Kim indicated, most PTers don't receive observations at all. We think that should happen, actually!
- Sections 1E and 1F same.

2:51 Ruth talks about section 2A for early-career reappointments and promotion to 3rd tier. Section 2B represents a simplified process where you are after two appointments and seeking renewal but NOT seeking promotion, OR if you have already been promoted to third tier already and up for your regular renewal. Eileen states the dates and steps are built to mirror those already in practice. Initially (long ago!), we had proposed an evaluative committee, but the admin didn't like it. They proposed instead something else, so now we have revised to propose a new section 9 that suggests who would be eligible to serve for evaluations.

2:54 Eileen on 2C - consistent with our prior proposal. Sean says we still believe in promotion for part-time unit members. There is no cost for this. Our appointments proposal will include this in mind with little change.

2:55 Johanna mentions wrt to librarian-specific comments in 2B, there is a discussion of a probationary contract in the Handbook currently, and some of our wording here reflects that.

2:56 Eileen on Section 3 Fair and Honest evaluations - a rephrase in the same spirit as original proposal, and with analogs in the FHB.

- Rob: my recollection of that part of the FHB is that that is in reference specifically to student evaluations.
- Ruth: we are consciously broadening it slightly to discuss evaluation wholistcly

2:58 Eileen - maintaining on Section 4 on not using student ratings. Section 5 We are agreed on this annual report policy, using same terms as tenure-track faculty. Agreed on Sections 6, 7, 8.

3:00 Eileen introduces new proposal Section 10 criteria for evidence for evaluation and promotion. We have lifted some language from the Handbook. The proposal delineates how each type of unit member engages with Pedagogy, Service, and Professional Development. In section 11, we made a very small rephrase to clarify that rank is assigned according to Article XXIII.

3:04 Eileen introduces Observation Rubric (Appendix 1). This was included in our original proposal. We still like it.

3:05 Caucus is called. No notes during caucus.

4:18 Return from caucus. Ruth: we have some broad strokes. We'll obviously need more time to go through the details. Scheduling future sessions. Rob proposes the following:

- Nov 8, 12-4:30
- Nov 15, 12-4:30
- Nov 22, 1-4

Sean: Those look good.

Greg: Thanks for giving us some figures to look at. We just want to point out a few things. We're going to start with PT pay:

- a) Section 4: From a strictly recordkeeping perspective, we need to know the credit-hour equivalent of this teaching. Also, it's just too low.
- b) Section 3: In our proposal, we had this logic - we calculated PT per-credit hour pay as 1/18th the lowest FT salary. We don't see any reason why that logic is unsound. This still seems fair to us.

Rob: we haven't been looking at it that way.

Greg: we're just making explicit the methodology behind our proposal.

Will: Wrt XX.2A. We're prepared to accept the pay for FT renewable first tier at \$70,455. This is a compromise from our original proposal, which was about 2k higher. But accepting it is *contingent* on FT terminal, accompanist, and librarians also making that. That is, it should be the lowest FT pay for unit members. Wrt accompanists, there are few of them, so doing the right thing by these people will cost little.

Sean: Wrt XX.2B, for the first year, you've offered us the unilateral illegal 3% that was implemented in June 2024 without bargaining. We will not be coerced into accepting that. All other campus CBAs include a 4% raise for AY25 and AY26. We'll review, but we're probably maintaining. We see the first year as a catch-up for where folks should be.

Rob: wrt to the increases in the other CBAs, there was movement in that regard bc they had taken lower percentage raises during COVID.

Ruth: What was the GSA in 2020?

Sarah: It was 0%.

Ruth: So, we also took lower pay raises at that time.

Rob: The economics of their contracts are very different from what we're dealing with here.

Ruth: Wrt XX.16: We also have every intention of ratifying the CBA by Dec 31 and in fact ASAP. Our unionization effort began in early 2018, which is long after some of these still-unresolved issues first arose. But we are not willing to budge further on the date of retroactivity under any circumstances, having waited for the administration's compensation counterproposal for seven months. We are not going to be rushed into something. This process will continue until both parties are satisfied. We look forward to future frequent and productive meetings.

Eileen: We appreciate the counter on professional development.

- 1) Re Section 2 on professional development: We don't anticipate changing our position on this. We think it's important that no one is getting a cut to their funds. Professional development funding actually has gone down over time due to inflation—the current \$500 has been unchanged for almost 20 years. The fact that the money has come from different pots in the past is irrelevant to us. This is a great opportunity for the college to clean up the inconsistency in how this issue is apparently being handled at present. Also, it's essentially that this funding be available to terminal appointments.
- 2) Section 6 on sabbaticals: We don't anticipate making changes here. Particularly given the pathways for promotion that we've laid out, we think it's important that there are opportunities to meet these expectations.

4:38 Sean: Follow-up on May information request on GSA and equity adjustments. I looked, and the info was not in that Box folder. That information request deals with the market equity adjustments that are designed to address gender disparities in salaries.

Sarah: Those "market equity adjustments" are to address disparities of compression, not gender. Gender disparities do not exist.

Sean: If I had the information, I could verify that statement.

Next bargaining session October 25, 1PM, in the library on the fourth floor.

Meeting adjourned, 4:40PM.