

## **Our Ratified APA Joint Wage & Health Care Agreement**

Serving as co-chief negotiator, the APA's Melanie Waltz lead efforts on behalf of the APA and the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU to negotiate a successor wage and health care agreement with the University. The APA is proud to have played a key leadership role among all campus support staff unions to fend off many University proposals that would have otherwise made a significant shift in health care costs to the employee and functionally scaled back member wages.

Throughout negotiations, updates were provided in newsletter articles, discussions took place during official APA meetings, and conversations were held at the many APA Community Luncheons hosted around campus. After months of bargaining, the Negotiations Team reached a tentative agreement with the University late in the evening of June 27.

APA's leadership in our collective union effort resulted in maintaining fully funded health care for the next four years – through December 31, 2021 - as well as enhanced the annual eligible base wage increases provided to all APA members in October each year.

Additionally, the ratified agreement included an improvement on how we calculate our health care cost increase which may result in greater annual eligible base wage increases and lump sum bonuses for every APA member each year.

The APA Executive Board reviewed and discussed the proposed agreement during their meeting on Monday, July 10, 2017. The APA Executive Board unanimously voted to transmit the tentative agreement to the APA membership with recommendation and the APA membership officially ratified the agreement on August 8, 2017, with 630 (91%) members voting in favor of the agreement.

The APA has posted the complete joint wage and health care agreement, as well as a summary document to explain all the elements of the ratified agreement, on the APA website at <http://www.msuapa.org/apa-2017-health-care-tentative-agreement>.

In conclusion, through the process of collective bargaining the APA and campus unions protected workers from the impact of a major cost shift and benefit reductions proposed by the MSU Administration. Without the hard work of the APA and the other campus unions, and by having an equal voice at the table with MSU, the employees would be paying far more for health care and would have experienced a roll back in real wages.

The strength of our union is contingent on a fully resourced local which is only possible through full membership from each eligible member. It is through that solidarity that we are able to retain the vibrant wages, health care coverage, retirement match 2-1, and other fringe benefits that all APA members enjoy every day.

## **Questions From The Trenches**

### *Common Questions on the Ratified Health Care and Wage Agreement*

#### **Who was involved in bargaining of the ratified health care and wage agreement?**

*The recent negotiations that attained our now ratified joint wage and health care agreement was a collective effort of all support staff unions on campus bargaining with the University at one time at the same table. APA/MEA UniServ Director, Melanie Waltz, served as the co-chief negotiator for all unions.*

#### **What topics were discussed during negotiations?**

*The wage and health care agreement is limited in scope. Therefore, all parties negotiating the agreement only discussed and addressed matters directly related to health care and annual base wages.*

#### **Now that the agreement is ratified, will a fully funded base health care plan continue?**

*Yes. Under the ratified agreement, the MSU base health care plan will remain fully funded, with no premium directly paid by APA members for single, double, and family coverage, through December 31, 2021.*

#### **How does the matrix formula work to determine my annual base wage increase?**

*The matrix in the ratified agreement defines the formula for the annual APA raises commencing with the October 2019 base wage increase. For example using the matrix, if health care costs increase by 4.75% in the first year of the agreement, APA members would maintain fully funded health care with no monthly premium share and be eligible for a 2.2% base wage increase in October 2019, subject to the standard contract provisions of 40% across the board and 60% using the merit pay process.*

#### **What are the APA base wage increases in the coming years?**

*The following annual base wage increases are subject to the standard APA contract provisions of 40% across the board and 60% using the merit pay process:*

*October 2017 – 1.9% base wage increase*

*October 2018 – 2.6% maximum base wage increase to be determined under the current/old matrix formula*

*October 2019 – 2.75% maximum base wage increase through matrix formula*

*October 2020 – 2.75% maximum base wage increase through matrix formula*  
*October 2021 – 2.75% maximum base wage increase through matrix formula*  
*October 2022 – 2.75% maximum base wage increase through matrix formula*

**Who should I call with my additional questions?**

*APA members should feel free to contact the APA office at 517.999.4004 or via email at [msuapa@msu.edu](mailto:msuapa@msu.edu) with any questions or concerns.*

## **Area Representative (AR) Spotlight – Becky Jo Farrington**

**What is your job title?** Assistant Director of Development, College of Natural Science

**What area of campus, building and department do you work in?**

I work on north campus, in the Natural Science Building. I am part of the Advancement Team for the college, so I work for the Dean's office in the College of Natural Science. I am also part of the greater University Advancement 'umbrella' that includes all of the development staff, MSU Alumni Association, communications and support staff.

**How long have you been at MSU?**

Just over four years

**How long have you been an Area Rep?**

More than two years, less than three...

**Why is being a member of the Union important to you?**

Before I worked at MSU part of the draw to come and work on campus were things like great healthcare benefits, matched retirement investments by the university, plenty of paid time off and more. When I was hired in my role and met with the VP of the MSU APA (who is now Dennis Seybert) I learned that many of the 'great benefits' that I valued were in place due to the union! I also grew up in an MEA household as my mother was a teacher in the public schools for over 25 years. Being a member of the APA is more than making sure I have access to great healthcare and am paid a fair salary, it is also about being part of a community that can provide support and information. I've also met amazing colleagues and made new friends! I feel this is very important working at a large institution like MSU.

**What words of advice do you have for the new hires at MSU?**

Get coffee with Dennis! There will be a lot of information when you are first hired, as my supervisor use to say it's like "drinking from a firehose." Joining the APA and attending things like community lunches and other APA events make it easy to utilize the built-in network of support that the union provides.

**What do you love about working at MSU?**

I'm a proud alumna (class of '02) and love being on campus every day. I love my job, I get to work with alumni and donors who are investing in the university, I help them connect to things that are meaningful to them and they feel great about making a positive difference at MSU. I have also met some of the best people ever while working here and have made new friends for life!

**What do you like to do when you are not at work?**

I love to be outside, especially this time of year. I spend a lot of time with family and friends, camping, hiking, biking, on the beach, on a river, seeing live music, or just relaxing with my dog, Jack. I also volunteer for local campaigns and community events in Lansing.

The ARs are appointed by the Executive Board and their role is to assist with distributing APA materials and information and to serve as a resource for members. ARs are assigned to a geographic area of campus, so if there is not an AR in your immediate building, you can find one nearby. For a list of ARs go to <http://www.msuapa.org/about/area-representatives-2/>

## Join us for the MSU Homecoming Parade

Have you always wanted to be in the parade? The MSU Administrative-Professional Association plans to register to be part of the parade on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The parade begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Hannah Community Center, travels down Abbot to Grand River and onto campus at the Farm Lane entrance. If you and your family are interested in walking in the parade with us, please contact Sue Brandt at [brandts@msu.edu](mailto:brandts@msu.edu).

## Know Your Contract – Maternity and Adoption Leave

If you are expecting to expand your family, you have contractual rights that you need to be familiar with. Although the contractual language for maternity and adoption leave are in two different sections of the APA Contract, both families will have essentially the same leave options. You may take up to 12 weeks of leave to care of your newborn or adopted child of any age. This leave can be taken at any time during the first year of birth or adoption.

When considering a maternity or adoption leave, you may use any sick or vacation hours that you have accrued in EBS so that you can continue to be paid during your leave. If you don't have enough paid leave hours, you may take unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks under FMLA. If you have FMLA time available, your insurance will be maintained by MSU at no cost to you.

MSU will require you to use your FMLA leave during your maternity and adoption leave, so it is important to be familiar with [MSU's FMLA Policy](#). MSU's FMLA forms are only available through Human Resources at 517-353-4434 or [SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu](mailto:SolutionsCenter@hr.msu.edu).

Maternity leave and adoption leave can be confusing, especially when also using FMLA, so contact the APA office for additional information and support.

To review Article 20 and Article 26, or any other APA contractual provision, go to:  
<http://www.msuapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2015-2019-Contract.pdf>

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to ask for assistance by contacting the MSU APA office at (517) 999-4004 or email [msuapa@msu.edu](mailto:msuapa@msu.edu).

## Saving Money with your APA Membership!

The collective power of all Michigan Education Association members (including you!) allows MEA to offer discounts in a variety of areas.

Think of the items and services a household regularly purchases — groceries, clothing, meals, oil changes, entertainment, home and auto insurance — it all adds up over time. Thankfully, APA members have access to numerous member-only discounts that can save thousands of dollars each year on the items they buy most.

### Discounts on Everyday Items

- By logging on to the [Members Only](#) section of [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org) members can peruse a wide array of deep discounts on things like dining, eye care, home supplies, vacations, health products, golf and much more.
- APA members can also download the “My Deals” mobile app on their smartphones to find discounts in your neighborhood and around the US.



Android – [My Deals app in Google Play](#)  
Apple – [My Deals app in iTunes](#)

### Auto and Homeowners' Insurance

- APA members can save hundreds of dollars each year on automobile and homeowners' insurance through [MEA Financial Services](#), a full-service insurance agency that provides policies exclusively for APA/MEA members. Because the agency is actually owned by members like you, MEA Financial Services' team of insurance specialists does everything possible to keep costs down and provide high-quality coverage.
- Through MEA Financial Services, members can also take advantage of group discounts on personal umbrella protection and coverage for rental property, boats, RVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles and more.
- To receive a no-obligation quote on auto, home and life insurance from MEA Financial Services, call 1-800-292-1950 or visit [www.meafs.com](http://www.meafs.com).

### NEA Member Benefits



- As an APA member, you are also eligible for member benefits through [NEA](#). You can pursue benefits in [Finance](#), [Insurance](#), [Travel](#), [Professional Resources](#) and other [Discounts](#).
- A favorite benefit for members is the [NEA Auto Buying Program](#) – if you are looking for a new or used car, try it out with no obligation.
- In addition, every MEA member is eligible for [FREE life insurance through NEA](#), all you have to do is select your beneficiary!

You will need your APA/MEA member number to access most member benefits. If you need any assistance, contact the MEA Help Desk at 866-MEA-HELP (866-632-4357) or use the Live Chat option (found in the upper right corner) at [www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org).

## **Meet a Fellow APA Member**

Meet Renee Gagnier, our highlighted APA member from College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR).

### **What is your job title?**

Unit Human Resources Administrator II.

### **How long have you been at MSU?**

Total 19 years. I worked for 10 years, took a hiatus to be a stay-at-home mom for 10 years, and have been back for 9 years now.

### **Have you been a member of the APA the whole time?**

No. APA member just over 7 years.

### **What department do you work in, and can you tell me a little about what you do?**

I work for the Dean's office and review and approve all HR actions in the college. I also assist our academic units with academic and support staff hiring and HR policy and procedures.

### **What brought you to your job at MSU?**

I started my MSU career out in the football office, which was very fun! I then worked in two different academic units in CANR. I've been with the Dean's office for over 7 years now.

### **What do you love about working at MSU?**

I was born and raised a Spartan, so I love everything MSU! I'm also a resident of East Lansing and absolutely love living and working in East Lansing. I thoroughly enjoy what I do, helping and assisting others, and above all else, love the friendships I have formed after all my years on campus.

### **What do you like to do when you are not at work?**

I enjoy going to our cottage and boating with my husband and two boys. I am always in the middle of a book, love to socialize with friends, and am amazed watching the young men my boys have become. I also enjoy rubber stamping and scrapbooking.

## **Testimonials**

"I have always been impressed by the many services and other opportunities afforded to APA members... I did wish to make sure that I took the opportunity to express my appreciation for what you, Maury and the other leaders of APA do on behalf of their members. You have my best wishes for the continued success of APA." - Jim Hensley, APA Member