

Union representing WSU faculty votes to strike; strike to begin January 22



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(File photo: WKEF/WRGT)

FAIRBORN, Ohio (WRGT/WKEF) Wright State University faculty is set to strike next week.

The union representing faculty at WSU voted to hit the picket line starting January 22nd.

They accuse the university of imposing an unfair labor contract.

Students returned to class Monday only to find out that next week there's a good chance their professors may soon be on strike.

"It's more real now, and students are becoming a little more nervous," said Daniel Palmer, WSU Student Body President.

He said says there's uncertainty after the union representing WSU faculty voted to strike starting next Tuesday.

"What I see is neither side is really making a valiant effort to sit down with one another, to solve this issue," said Palmer.

Faculty said the university imposed a new contract on them January 4th.

The union represents about 560 out of the more than 1,700 faculty members. It already filed its intent-to-strike notice with the State Employment Relations Board, but the final decision was made following a vote, which was completed on Sunday, January 13.

The union reports that 95 percent of its members voted and 85 percent of voters authorized the strike. The strike will begin at 8 a.m. on January 22.

"We accepted we would have less, we will not accept less education," said Noeleen Noeleen McIlvenna.

As a history professor and union spokeswoman, McIlvenna said the contract dispute is not a fight for a pay raise but instead the quality of education they can provide.

She said the imposed contract gives the university the right to change teaching workload and assign more classes per faculty member.

"That has two major impacts, each student gets much less time, gets less attention and research gets less attention," she said

In a statement Wright State University responded and said in part "We have done everything in our power to avoid a strike and provide students with high quality education."

The university goes on to say, "These employment terms keep our faculty salaries higher than comparable universities and provide faculty with access to high quality comprehensive healthcare coverage."

"Hopefully our school can come together and get past this," said WSU Engineering student, Jacob Perkins.

Students say the university has informed them about plans to have replacements for the faculty should they plan to strike.

Students have until next Friday, January 25th, to withdrawal from classes and receive a full refund.

February 8th is the last day students can drop a course and will not receive a grade.

March 22 is the last day to drop a course with a "W" grade which stands for withdrawal. It will show up on your transcript, but won't impact your GPA.