

**PROPOSAL: Michigan State Employees Association (MSEA) Labor Agreement**

Background

The current four-year contract between Western Michigan University and the Michigan State Employees Association (MSEA) expires on June 30, 2026.

The MSEA represents 17 trades employees working at the Robert M. Beam Power Plant. All employees must follow a structured training and apprenticeship pathway from foundational job performance measures to advanced certifications in powerhouse operations. The required apprenticeship program is approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and includes on-the-job training and coursework requirements that must be completed within eight (8) years.

On May 13, 2026, WMU and MSEA reached a tentative agreement on a three-year labor contract. The MSEA membership ratified the tentative agreement on June 2nd. The agreement would be effective from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029.

The tentative agreement provides the MSEA bargaining unit with a market-based wage increase in each year of the contract so that we can continue to employ highly skilled tradespeople at the Beam Power Plant. Additional tiers and labor grades were added to better incentivize employees progressing through the apprenticeship training program and retain employees at the journeyman level. Further changes were made to incentivize employees to gain additional skills at the highest level and provide economic recognition for those in supervisory roles.

In the first year, increases vary due to the changes in the pay structure with an approximate increase of 2.5% to the compensation pool as of first full pay period of July 2026. A 2.5% increase would occur starting first full pay period of July 2027; and a 2.25% increase would be effective first full pay period of July 2028.

Other changes include an increase to the annual shoe allowance, increased annual leave time to align with amounts already being provided to other university staff and changes to the health care premium contribution rates aligning with AAUP starting in January 2027.

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees authorizes administration to implement the 2026-2029 agreement between Western Michigan University and the Michigan State Employees Association.