

From: [Leah D Nixon](#)
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Subject: Ferris Ratifies AFSCME Contract
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Included below is a press release regarding a contract agreement between the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union at Ferris State University and the University's bargaining team. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Leah Nixon
Ferris State University
Assistant Director of News Services
leahnixon@ferris.edu, (231) 591-5604

Ferris, AFSCME Union agree on contract

BIG RAPIDS – The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union at Ferris State University and the University's bargaining team have reached a nearly 5-year agreement – effective Nov. 22, 2007, through June 30, 2012. The union's current contract expires on Nov. 21.

The contract, which surpasses the average life-span of three to four years for a typical agreement, includes an increase in wages and healthcare compensation.

“Actions speak louder than words and the University has spoken with this contract,” said Union President Tom Weaver. “This agreement proves the University and the Union are committed to attracting and retaining quality employees.”

Ferris Director of Labor Relations Steve Stratton agreed. “This is a fair and reasonable contract that allowed the University to address the union's needs while being fiscally responsible,” he said. The University's Board of Trustees ratified the agreement on Sept. 14.

Going into contract negotiations two key points that AFSCME leadership indicated were important for its members were those central issues of health insurance contributions by the University and reasonable, across-the-board wage increases. Both sides in the negotiations expressed satisfaction that these goals were met.

In addition to increased wages, the contract also stipulates the University's major contribution toward employee health insurance premiums for the Michigan University Coalition on Health No. 1 Plan. The bulk of union membership participates in MUCH No. 1, which is a group purchasing coalition for health insurance.

Employees also have access to a “cafeteria” style plan to which the University contributes on a per-pay-period basis for each employee to use for health-related costs.

“Through their strong efforts AFSCME employees provide essential services critical for the success of Ferris State University. We are very pleased with the positive, collaborative spirit that prevailed throughout these negotiations,” said University President David Eisler. “This is

a wonderful example of how labor and management can work together for our University.”

The 215 member union affected by the contract includes grounds and trades employees, coordinators, food service workers and custodial staff.

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Leah Nixon
Assistant Director of News Services
University Advancement & Marketing
420 Oak Street, PRK 101
Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2031
(231) 591-5604 / fax (231) 591-2985