

# Rider University Chapter American Association of University Professors

Phone: (609) 896-0092 • Fax: 894-1837 • [www.rideraaup.org](http://www.rideraaup.org)



## Q & A in the event of a strike

While we all hope a strike can be averted, it is possible that one will be necessary. In that event, it will be important for everyone to know the answers to questions such as these, which are on the minds of our bargaining-unit members and our students

### **How do I know what's going on?**

The best place for news is our web site, [www.rideraaup.org](http://www.rideraaup.org). A telephone chain will be used for urgent news, and written bulletins will be circulated periodically.

### **What do I tell students now?**

Don't use extensive class time to discuss the bargaining process. Tell the students that, if a walkout occurs, you will not be in class, but they should continue to follow the syllabus and keep up with assigned reading. If students want further information, refer them to the AAUP Web site, [www.rideraaup.org](http://www.rideraaup.org), which will have the latest news on the negotiation process.

If you choose to speak with students outside of class, you can draw on the talking points on pages 2-3 of this document.

### **Students are worried that they will lose this semester's credits and face delayed graduation.**

Invariably, strike settlements in higher education include an agreement to complete the current term. In extreme cases at other institutions, semesters have been completed by extending the term or lengthening individual class meetings. Our last strike, which lasted about a week, did not affect the academic calendar.

### **What work stops during a strike?**

All work that you do as a bargaining-unit member: teaching, coaching, library service, tutoring, instrumental and voice lessons, choral directing, conducting reading clinics, advising individual students and student organizations, committee work, supervision of student teaching, etc. Please note that "virtual teaching" — communicating with students online, grading or sending assignments, also must be suspended.

### **I am not tenured. Could I face retaliation for picketing or otherwise supporting the union?**

No. You are protected by law from retaliation.

### **I am an adjunct, teaching just one course. Should I meet the class?**

No. We hope that, as a bargaining unit member, you will be out on the picket lines as much as your schedule permits.

### **What happens to athletic teams?**

They will have to do without the service of bargaining-unit members for the duration of the strike. Some teams might continue to practice, led by team captains or administrators. Whether some intercollegiate matches are forfeited or played without coaches and trainers will be up to the administration. Home games would probably have to be forfeited if trainers are on strike.

### **I serve as a volunteer adviser to an extracurricular student activity, and we have an off-campus event planned. What do I do?**

Since this is a responsibility directly related to your position as a faculty member, you should suspend your generous service in this role.

### **If we strike, will I lose pay?**

In most strikes in higher education, salaried employees do not lose annual pay if they complete their yearly workload obligation. Should you need a short-term loan during the course of the strike, you can borrow from our credit union, ABCO Public Employee Federal, and the AAUP will cover the cost of the interest. ABCO has a number of branches in the area, including one at 621 E. Ridge Shopping Center, Willingboro, (609) 877-1911.

### **What will happen to other benefits?**

In the initial days of a strike, health benefits generally continue. Your health coverage can be stopped only if you are advised in writing and offered the opportunity to pay for it yourself. Other benefits, such as tuition remission checks, are likely to be suspended.

### **Can I get into my office?**

No. Since one cannot get on campus without crossing a picket line, you should plan ahead of time to remove from your office any materials you need. Back up computer files if you plan to work at home; bring home whatever you think you will need during the strike. University property should be left in the office.

### **I'm scheduled to go to a conference. Should I go? Will I be reimbursed?**

Go. We have no expectation that travel expenses would not be reimbursed, more or less comparably with the terms of the current contract, after the settlement of a strike.

### **Will my email service be interrupted?**

The administration may choose to disconnect members' Internet service and block access to email accounts. While this move is unlikely, you should be aware of the possibility and figure out an alternative way to stay connected.

### **A reporter wants to interview me on the picket line. What do I do?**

You should refer him/her to Chief Negotiating Officer **Jeff Halpern** or chapter President **Joel Phillips**, who will contact the media as soon as any developments occur. If you are on the picket line and don't want to look like you're stonewalling, or if you are discussing the strike with students, family or friends, tell them:

- We are fighting for a fair and equitable contract that protects the faculty voice in academic matters.
- Our collaborative system for making decisions has worked great for students for more than 30 years, and it is vital that it be maintained.
- We are fighting to maintain our competitive position in salary and benefits. The faculty has fought and won important advances in both these areas over the last 30 years and does not intend to see those victories eroded. It is only by having competitive salaries and benefits that we can attract and keep the kind of faculty and

professional staff that has made Rider the quality, student-centered institution that it presently is. Rider's salary and benefits package is median in the region.

In all discussions, it is more accurate to describe the dispute as being between "administrators" and "faculty" or "professional staff" than as being between "the university" and "the union." While "faculty" is OK as shorthand for "professional staff," remember our chapter includes 244 fulltime and 270 part-time professors, librarians, coaches, trainers and reading clinicians.

### **Will other staff members/outside vendors cross our picket lines?**

This will be a matter of individual decision. We will only inform, not intimidate, anyone who approaches, and hope they choose to respect the line. Some delivery truck drivers are likely to respect the lines.

### **What arrangements are being made for security during a strike? Will classroom, lab, practice room equipment be safe?**

The administration basically has three paths it can try to follow: (1) In the "business as usual" ploy, it will maintain that the strike is having little effect, that education is continuing and that X percent of the faculty are meeting their classes despite the strike. In this case, classrooms and labs may be accessible to students, so you may want to take precautions. Be aware that there is a small possibility that a "scab" or administrator will be brought in to teach your course. You may wish to safeguard teaching materials and computer files in your office and lab. (2) In the "We'll settle this quickly" ploy, classroom buildings will probably be locked with no pretense of education continuing. (3) In the "We're closing the college" ploy, the administration will tire of feeding and housing thousands of restive students and send them home. In this event, all campus buildings are likely to be quite heavily secured.

In all cases, you should make arrangements to maintain in your absence the health of any laboratory animals or plants under your care.

## **Picketing**

**Picket Coordinators: Harvey Kornberg and Joe Gowaskie**

We will have 24 people picketing during each shift (12 people on the Lawrenceville campus with 6 people at each entrance; 12 people on the Princeton campus with 6 people at the main gate and 6 people at the student center entrance gate). Each of the 4 picket shifts lasts for about 3 hours (from 7-10 a.m., 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 1:30-4:30 p.m., 4:30-7:30 p.m.). In the event of a job action, picket coordinators will phone those on the picket shifts. While we have reached our goal for an effective job action, we would like to have the full support of the faculty for this effort. **Both full time and part-time (adjunct) faculty are requested to picket.** To sign up, contact Dorothy Warner ([warner@rider.edu](mailto:warner@rider.edu)).

Everyone who pickets will be given clear directions by the picket shift captains about strike etiquette and to whom to refer the media for communications about the strike. Beyond the talking points provided in this Q&A, faculty and picket shift captains will refer the media to **Jeff Halpern** first, then **Joel Phillips**, the current AAUP President, if Jeff is not available. The job of the picket shift captain will be to serve as a contact between the picketers and the picket coordinators (**Joe Gowaskie** and **Harvey Kornberg**) and Dorothy Warner or the communications officers. The picket shift captain will be responsible for ensuring that the picketers are properly referring the media to the picket shift captain and that the picketers are conforming to the strike etiquette.

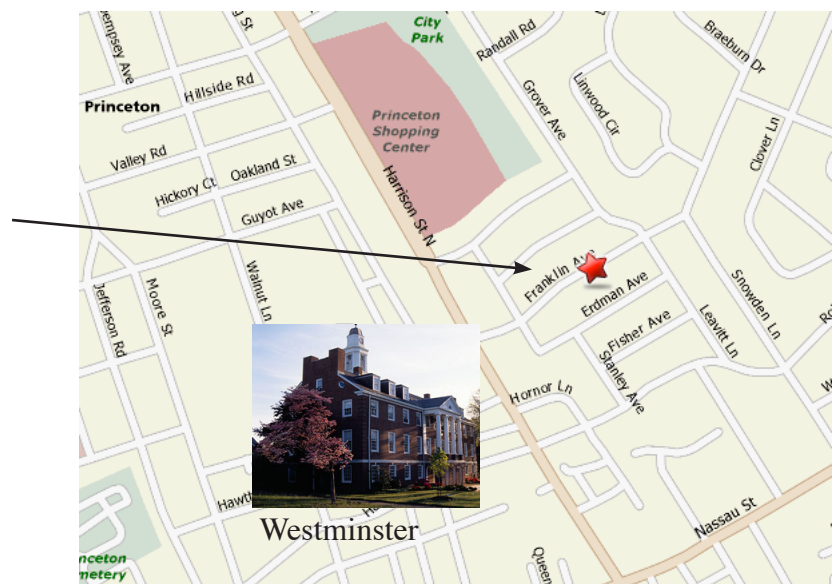
NOTE: Members of the Sciences faculty may need to cross the picket lines to care for live animals and plants in the labs.

The purpose of our picket line is to inform the public that the Rider AAUP is on strike and to discourage as many people as possible from crossing the line and coming on campus. At best, we could shut Rider down.

**Please read and follow these instructions:**

1. Dress as professionals (as you would for teaching; we recommend neckties and jackets), especially during the first few days of the strike, as this is when the press will likely be there.
2. Please park appropriately. Do not block driveways. We must be careful and do as little as possible to annoy local residents.
3. General Guidelines include:
  - i. Picket signs will be provided. Carry them so they are readable. When your shift ends, turn them in to your captain.
  - ii. Picket ONLY on the sidewalk on the campus side of Route 206 (Lawrenceville) and, in Princeton, only in front of the designated gates (main and student center entrances). Keep the lines moving. Do not go farther than the campus boundaries. Do not picket in front of the gates and do not block any roadways. Do not stand in front of any trucks. Ask those who may try to cross the picket line to respect the strike by not crossing the picket line. There should be no physical blocks and no physical abuse. Avoid arrest. Act professionally.
  - iii. Do NOT stop traffic.
  - iv. Please do not go on campus when your shift ends. All professional activities must be conducted off campus.
  - v. Please refer to the talking points on page 3 of this document in communicating with the media or anyone who asks questions. Do NOT answer questions from anyone beyond the talking points. ALWAYS refer people to the picket shift captain, who will refer the media to the **Jeff Halpern** or **Joel Phillips**, the current AAUP President.
  - vi. Strike Headquarters will be the home of Nancy and Charles Richardson, 5 Twin Oaks Drive, Lawrenceville (right across from the main gate).

- vii. The relief station for Princeton picketers will be the home of E. Graham McKinley, 391 Franklin Ave., Princeton (683-4060).



If you have any questions, please contact Dorothy Warner, Joe Gowaskie or Harvey Kornberg.