

Question:

Can the entire Faculty in a program refuse MWAs?

Answer:

Yes - in a perfect world.

Two-thirds (2/3) of faculty in the "affected group" must agree, and then individual faculty have the right to bow out, and maintain a standard SWF. So what's the problem? After all, if faculty in a department want to do their work differently, and are willing to do more work for the same amount of money, then who are the colleges or the union to stop them?

The 2/3 would have to consent in the first place. Would they really consent to a deal that was bad? Would they really agree to a Modified Workload Agreement that increased their work? Wouldn't they simply be able to inform their manager (as respected, valued, expert employees) that the Modified Workload Agreement was a bad idea?

Practical. ACTUAL example:

Below, I send a letter sent from a contributing professor in South-western Ontario, who suggested that the power difference between employees and managers calls consent into question, especially since managers would have the right to spell out dire consequences if the faculty don't acquiesce.

"In theory you can refuse, but in actual practice YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO. My colleagues and I who were under a certain Chair (who thankfully is no longer at this College) can attest to that.

You are probably familiar with the evaluation factors. At a time when most people had 0.03 across the board, we all had 0.015. It took six years before anyone woke up. No one dared to question it individually. For some courses the evaluation time allotted to us was simply not enough, but everyone was afraid to speak up. Eventually we mustered enough courage to sign a group letter, asking our Union look at our evaluation factors.

When the Chair got wind of this, every person in the department was summoned into his office and pressured to withdraw their signature. One by one, individuals were called into his office and in no uncertain terms were told that their program was on the chopping block and, if this grievance were to go through, they will lose their job. When the day came to meet with our Union Official at that time, only four people (out of over a dozen who had originally signed) were willing to proceed with the grievance."

Hmm. Twelve originally signed on (objecting to the manager's decision). The manager succeeded in getting eight of them to acquiesce to his will, against their own interests, and formally withdraw their objections. That's, umm... two-thirds. Just enough for the manager to ram through a Modified Workload Agreement that would render evaluation factors entirely moot.

Our correspondent continues:

"This actual incident that took place right here serves to illustrate two of the traps that are in this offer. That first is the pretense that you can actually refuse to participate in the MWA, when the reality might actually be not nearly as simple. The second trap is believing that the union could protect you before or even after you entered into one, since the Union's ability to file a grievance on behalf of a group of faculty would be taken away by the offer that is on the table, and because there are very few grounds upon which one could grieve an MWA, in the middle of its course."

He says:

"No limit on the number of hours one can teach in a day or a week; no limit on the number of days one can teach in a week or weeks one can teach in a school year; no credit for class size, course prep; no overtime; no allocation or credit for out-of-class assistance."