

# ACE contracts not set just yet

---

By: Bill Rodgers

NEWS EDITOR

---

For the Association of Classified employees union at Youngstown State University, the contract negotiations of the summer aren't quite over yet. ACE and university negotiators met yesterday to discuss their tentative agreement and how it relates to — or differs from — a draft for an Early Retirement Incentive Plan a trustee committee approved on Friday.

At the center of the debate is the union's claim that the

university negotiators unilaterally changed the terms of the agreement. In a joint meeting on Friday, the Internal Affairs and Finance and Facilities committees ratified an ERIP draft document which the unions say alters the original language of the tentative agreement regarding unused sick leave payout and the date an employee can set to retire.

The proposed ERIP draft states that a classified employee who is a member of the Ohio Public

---

please see **CONTRACT**, Page 4

**CONTRACT**, continued from page 1

Employees Retirement System can apply for early retirement. If an employee has enough years of service to the university, the university will buy two years of service from the employee and that person may retire. The university can then fill the empty position with an entry-level employee at less cost to the university.

The ERIP will be available to as many as 131 employees from March 1, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2007. John Habat, YSU's vice-president of administration, said the plan would give the university a permanent base savings of \$2.7 million by 2009.

The union said the ERIP draft left out key provisions

the union and administration had agreed upon. Under the tentative agreement, ACE members can be reimbursed for accumulated sick leave; 25 percent of the first 500 hours, 40 percent of the second 500 hours and 50 percent of the third 500 hours upon retirement.

However, under Friday's

ERIP draft, employees would only be eligible to receive compensation for unused sick leave paid at 25 percent to a maximum of 30 days.

The draft calls for a mutually agreeable date for an employee's retirement. The union pointed out that in their tentative agreement, there was no mention of the

university needing to agree with the retirement date set by an employee. The agreement says an employee must only give six months advanced notice.

Also cited by the union as deviating from the language of the original agreement was the draft's treatment of a grievance procedure and the provision that an employee who participates in ERIP would not be eligible for reemployment at the university.

ACE President Christine Domhoff said the differences between the two documents were unacceptable to her union. She stood up and objected to the draft proposal before the trustees voted on it.

"If they had tried to put those provisions in when we negotiated, we never would have agreed to the contract," Domhoff said

after the meeting.

Habat said the disagreements "would not stand in the way of a mutually acceptable resolution."

Domhoff said after yesterday's meeting with Hugh Chatman, YSU's executive director of human resources, and Jim Wilkins, the attorney handling ACE negotiations for the university, that the provisions in the draft her union had objected to were removed. She said that a future meeting would focus on making the draft reflect what was agreed to in the tentative agreement.

"The meeting was a success," Domhoff said.

Wilkins and Chatman could not be reached for comment at press time.

Call Bill Rodgers at (330) 941-1989.