



Community, a Union Principle

Allen Zagarell, President

Community for the union has always been an important concept. The basic underlying principle of our union is one of community. It is based on our joining together, supporting one another, subordinating our individual interest to our collective good. Literally, it is us caring about one another. This concept was expanded and reformulated in 2008 during our negotiations. The union articulated a consistent position that we are part of a larger community, and it is in our collective interest to advocate for that community to a university taken up with its authority and bottom line.

The context for that struggle is that Higher Education is undergoing a major transformation. State universities were radically transformed by lack of funds and state support. They were being forced to operate more like businesses, more and more interested in profit margins, and less like collegial educational institutions. Student tuition has been raised at an alarming rate, faculty salaries have fallen in real terms, more and more part-timers, with no or only limited benefits have been hired in lieu of full-time faculty, and faculty and staff health benefits have been curtailed among other symptoms of this transformation. At our university there was and is a tendency to concentrate more and more authority in the higher administration in contrast to our departments and faculty. They have tried to turn some faculty positions into staff positions, and tried to disregard departmental policy statements. All this has been accelerated by the legislative attack on public workers and public unions, effectively targeting public universities, students, faculty and staff. This has forced us to become the defenders of our academic community. We are not against the administration. We are ready to cooperate with the administration whenever it takes steps which we see as community

building. However, we are consistently committed to community building whatever the current policy of any administrator.

Our union has expanded the concept of community during these most recent negotiations and extended discussions. We believe, even given the economic distress in Michigan, we can help transform the Western Michigan University scene into a friendlier, more accommodating community. We believe a university that is faculty friendly, not to mention student and staff friendly, will be a better place to work, and will be more competitive despite our lower than average salaries. For example, given the new judicial limits on academic freedom (the Garcetti case) we are negotiating for contractual protections of our academic freedoms, which will guarantee us those protections. Similarly, we are working for a more family friendly university, to make the institution more accommodative to young families with children, and families dealing with pregnancy and adoption. We support a realistic maternity leave policy, for example, that doesn't penalize families. We are for expansion of faculty governance and the respect for departmental policy statements, and faculty initiatives. Putting greater faith in our faculty, rather than the obsession with top-down dictates, unleashes the creative energies of our people. We encourage greater faculty intellectual and social interaction. In this regard we support some positive initiatives on the part of the administration. We support the Tim Green initiative to promote greater faculty interaction with regular social get togethers. This is the kind of thing we try to do with our WMU-AAUP BBQ, although more opportunities are needed. We encourage the broader involvement of our university in goodwill programs like the CITA aviation program at WMU.

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Our union believes we are part of a broader community. We care about our students. We believe the state budget cuts and the shifting of costs onto the backs of our students is wrong. Education should be a state priority. Support for education and our youth is a way out of the economic morass we are in, an investment rather than a cost. We care about our fellow employees. We oppose the new economic burdens and threats to employment our co-workers are facing. We also identify with our Kalamazoo community. We know the threats to education and the well-being of our university endangers our entire region. We also know our faculty have been engaged in this community in a myriad of constructive

ways. We hope soon to begin highlighting some of the contributions our faculty have made to our larger community, making this area a better place to live and raise a family.

We will be stressing our commitment to a faculty and family friendly university over the next period of time. We are committed to a more attentive, and caring community. We will be doing our best to convince this university that would be a policy that will pay for itself. We hope they are listening. As always, we are asking for your participation and your ideas.

Building a Caring Community: Faculty at Work in our Communities

Stan Pelkey, Vice President

Current legislative decisions in statehouses across the country regarding school funding, teacher / faculty compensation and tenure, and public service employees generally have brought the competing social, economic, and political perspectives of the members of our local, state, and national communities into sharp relief. These decisions, the legislative debates that have preceded them, and the broader public conversation demonstrate that while many people recognize the importance of higher education, others either do not value what we do collectively as an institution of higher education or individually as faculty members, or they have mistaken ideas about the professoriate.

During the 2010--2011 academic year, the WMU-AAUP leadership has been pursuing a multi-pronged approach to address such attitudes and misconceptions in the statehouse and in the local community. The Community Relations Committee (CRC) was formed to assist in this process.

In May, the CRC issued a survey to the membership to gather data regarding faculty members' social, educational, and economic contributions to our communities. The goal of this first CRC project was not to defend the value of individual faculty research or other professional activities, but rather to demonstrate some of the ways that faculty contribute to their local communities beyond their teaching and scholarship. I would like to spend a few moments sharing some of the information that was provided that highlights some of the ways our faculty are "at work" in the community, helping to build a better city, county, and state. Of those faculty members who participated in the survey, 74% indicated that they are involved in local community, civic, or charitable organizations, such as Rotary, VFW, United Way, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, religious institutions, and alumni associations; 48%

had volunteered in some capacity as a parent or community member in area public or private schools and 35% indicated that they are involved in local recreational, craft, or hobbyist clubs of various types. Thirty-five percent those faculty who responded affirmed that they have served as consultants to local, state, or national governments or boards, while 22% have served as consultants to local, state, or national businesses or business associations. Some WMU faculty members are active in area schools as presenters and workshop leaders and as mentors for WMU students who are completing pre-practicum, practicum, or other types of mentoring experiences. Other faculty noted that they work with the home schooling community, help to connect WMU students and graduates with businesses seeking their services, host area students or entire classes that visit WMU and use its facilities, complete various speaking engagements in the community, or are active in local arts or community sports organizations.

While the data that was obtained does not support sweeping generalizations about what all WMU faculty members contribute to our local communities in Southwest Michigan, "snap shots" of faculty involvement and faculty activities do emerge from our data. Those "snap shots" are useful reminders that faculty are not simply members of an educational ivory tower. They are neighbors, teammates, speakers, volunteers, and activists. In short, as citizen-faculty, they help to make our public and private institutions better.

On behalf of the CRC, I thank all those who participated in our first survey. More importantly, I offer a hearty "thank you" to every WMU faculty member who is "at work" in the community—in whatever capacity—trying to make our local communities better places to live and work.

Some Family Friendly Policies

Paul T. Wilson, Chief Negotiator

It may not be immediately obvious to any one department, but Western has experienced quite a turnover in the faculty during the last 10 years. Many of our more senior colleagues have retired, and new faculty have been joining us. Here at the WMU-AAUP, we have been hearing for several years about an increased interest in more realistic policies related to bringing new children into families, whether through childbirth, or through adoption. As a result, this summer during our discussions of mutual interest with Western's administration, we have been making proposals about maternity leave and other policies that would somewhat ease the burden on new parents.

We have asked, for example, for temporary designated parking spots that would allow expectant mothers to get to their buildings more easily in the late stages of pregnancy so that they can continue to teach and do departmental service for as long as they are able. We have also, at members' requests, asked for a similar arrangement so that women who are able to have a child with them at appropriate times can lug all their supplies with them. So far, the administration has opined that current policies are adequate, but we are continuing to explore this possibility.

We have also been pursuing better leave arrangements so that women who bear children do not use up their sick leave, and then are left at a disadvantage when it comes to having sick leave available for genuine health problems. The administration believes that all such diffi-

culties can be resolved through the modified duties option in Article 27. Our understanding is that modified duties are not always available in every department, so if you have concerns about the implementation or availability of modified duties, we are eager to hear from you. In addition, if we are going to be left with the "pregnancy as illness" model that presently exists, we are proposing a Sick Leave Bank, into which those who already have a significant accumulation of sick leave can donate some days each year so that others who have greater immediate needs will not have to draw down all of their own days.

Please let us know your ideas for how to help make Western a more family friendly environment for our faculty.

SAVE THE DATE!!

WMU-AAUP FACULTY BBQ

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

A Report on the 2011 A. Robert Kleiner Scholarship

Stan Pelkey, Vice President

One of the many things that the WMU-AAUP and its members do to contribute to our university and community is to sponsor the A. Robert Kleiner Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship honors the memory of A. Robert Kleiner, a labor attorney who provided exceptional counsel and assistance to our chapter for many years, and it supports a current WMU student who is interested or experienced in collective bargaining and / or labor relations.

The WMU-AAUP recently awarded a \$1,500 stipend to Trever Walters, a WMU undergraduate pursuing triple majors in Public Law, Philosophy, and German. On campus Walters is a Resident Assistant and is involved with

Drive Safe Kalamazoo. He has also been active in our community through work with the Kalamazoo Peace Center and the 2010 Cooney Congressional Campaign, and he has served as an intern for Rep. Sander Levin. Walters made several trips to Lansing this past spring with others from WMU, including members of the AAUP, to participate in some of the rallies in support of Michigan workers, their families, and our schools.

Walters plans to pursue a career in law, working to defend citizens' rights and working in support of social justice issues. Proceeds from the A. Robert Kleiner Scholarship will assist him in his ongoing preparations for law school.

Designated Eligible Individual (DEI) Benefits and WMU

Sharon Carlson, Secretary

The WMU Chapter of the AAUP fought for and obtained DEI benefits three years ago after many years of bringing up the topic with the University's administration. Through the continued efforts of WMU Chapter of the AAUP and commitment of President Dunn, DEI benefits continue to enrich the entire University community. When AAUP officers met with departments over the last year, faculty frequently identified this issue as one that is important to the entire University community.

DEI benefits are part of a larger egalitarian worldview supporting the concept of equal pay for equal work which extends to benefits coverage. When one considers some of the inequities built into our health care system, the need for DEI benefits becomes more compelling. The US healthcare system is largely based on private insurance provided through employers. The problem is further compounded as marriages between same sex couples have no federal recognition and are only recognized in a handful of states. Similarly, the legal rights of individuals in domestic partnerships vary widely from state to state.

The movement for partner benefits dates back to the 1980s when the first private businesses and municipalities began providing benefits. In 1982, the *Village Voice* newspaper and the Canadian Province of Quebec began providing partner benefits. The City of Berkley, California followed in 1984. Today the majority of Fortune 500 companies offer health care benefits to same-sex domestic partners. For the private sector, the argument for partner benefits is one of competition in a global environment. Partner benefits, as well as spousal benefits, are a necessary cost of doing business to attract the best employees. For additional information, see http://www.hrc.org/issues/domestic_partner_benefits.htm

At Western Michigan University, the issue of DEI is one of attracting and retaining the best faculty and also of building a community where all are recognized as equals and the personal relationships of faculty are also recognized and valued. The WMU-AAUP applauds the University administration for supporting an environment that ultimately makes the campus a friendlier place. I'm glad to be part of this community.

2011 Association Council and Chapter Meetings

Association Council and Chapter meetings are held the **3rd Friday** of the month at **1:30pm**. All bargaining-unit members are invited to the Chapter meetings and may also attend Association Council meetings.

Association Council	Friday, September 16	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Chapter Meeting	Friday, October 21	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Association Council	Friday, November 18	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Association Council	Friday, January 20	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Association Council	Friday, February 17	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Association Council	Friday, March 16	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center
Chapter Meeting	Friday, April 20t	1:30pm	Room 157, Bernhard Center