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May 2007

the WMU  
AAUP



# Advocate

at Western Michigan University

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Paul Wilson

### Vice President

Jo Wiley

### Contract Administrator

Michael G. Miller

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## Notes from Montague House

Paul T. Wilson, President

### The Question of Layoffs

Among the rumors of a salary give back, several faculty reported on administrator speculations (or stronger language) about dire consequences such as layoffs. We must acknowledge that we do have a vulnerable area here: our 88 term-appointed faculty who are spread across almost all colleges and units at every faculty rank and category. Term appointees may not be reappointed after any year of service, and are term limited out, unless their positions are converted, after five years. I am already planning a series of meetings with term appointees in Summer I to initiate more aggressive representation.

However, the chance of layoffs for tenure-track and tenured faculty is remote. Also remote is any declaration of financial exigency — a *bona fide* financial crisis (**Article 25.§2.1.2**) — that might lead to the cancellation of programs and large scale restructuring, and that would have to precede any tenure-track or tenured layoffs. In this unlikely case we would, of course, fight for every individual with every resource at our command.

In the current *Agreement*, **Article 25 LAY-OFF AND RECALL** covers the conditions, the process, and the schedule for layoffs, as well as how faculty can be recalled. I invite you to read this article, not because there is any likelihood of it happening, but so that you will understand your rights. **Article 25.§4 NOTICE**, which establishes the lead time for different faculty groups, might strike you as interesting. However, I think it's also important to have a reality check about layoffs.

What is Western's biggest challenge right now? In a word, **Enrollment** (rather, three words: recruitment and retention).

What would the effect be on Western's future success at recruiting and retaining students (and other high-quality faculty) if a financial crisis of such proportions were publicly announced, which it would have to be, in order for faculty to be let go? (Rats and sinking ships spring to mind.) The administration, the community, and the Michigan legislature have every interest in not letting that happen. None of us, the entire administration included, could afford to entertain that prospect seriously. Financial exigency and layoffs would mean the death knell for Western as we know it.

We must, and we will, find ways to deal with our challenges. I remain optimistic that we, as a faculty and a campus community, will work our way out of this together. I also believe that we, the faculty, are the most important campus constituency to emphasize academic quality—innovative instruction, top quality research, and better outreach to students—as the only viable long-term solution to our challenges. We must be the leaders in the push for academic quality because this is how to build a stronger Western for the future.

### ULP Hearing Productively Postponed

During this past year, we filed a second Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC). The first, you may recall, dealt with the College of Aviation and our preparations for working with the admini-

stration to settle this one are still in progress.

This second ULP includes multiple grievances, such as interfering with our right to represent the faculty, unprofessional conduct by a chair, a tainted tenure review, and an ongoing inordinate workload assignment based on misinterpretations of a letter of appointment. This ULP was filed because of the administration's chronic failure to respond to grievances in a timely manner and to follow the schedule that is stipulated in **Article 12 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**.

With a bit of imagination, one can construe multiple factors related to instability in the central administration that contributed to the delays. However, despite the fact that we followed the schedule, were polite on multiple reminders, and eventually got insistent, we did not get the movement that we needed. At best, this represents a horrible unkindness to our aggrieved members, especially when something could get dragged out over more than a year. The problem with going the ULP route is that it can add months to the time that's already been spent. However, an administrative law judge can issue rulings that will be helpful if all else fails.

The prospect of our hearing, scheduled for March 16 in Lansing, did bring about a flurry of discussions in the preceding several weeks and, as a result, Jon Neill and I, and our attorney, Michael Fayette, met with Jay Wood, and Western's outside attorney, Kurt Sherwood, on March 12. Our approach to scheduling this meeting was that we would attend only if there were remedies to negotiate, rather than just a vague commitment to start working on the grievances. We took this position because we were the ones who had been ready and waiting for so long, and we wanted something specific to bring our grievances to a conclusion that favored our concerns. Otherwise, we wanted to go to before the judge.

The meeting was focused, the discussion was pointed, and we either brought grievances to a satisfactory conclusion,

or got a specific schedule by which remedies would be worked out. The first contingency was that the dean and chair who had interfered with our right to represent would receive a stern letter of notice from the provost that such actions were not sanctioned by the administration's official policies, and any repetition could bring consequences. When we received our copy of the letter on March 15, we postponed the ULP hearing but notified the judge that if the rest of the issues were not resolved within 60 days (by May 15) we would reinstate our claims. Since then, there have been definite steps forward in at least three more of the grievances. We have reminded the administration that May 15 is approaching.

### **Tainted Tenure Review Letters, or Fruit of the Poisonous Tree**

Embedded in one of the grievances from the ULP is a particularly vexing problem related to **Article 17 TENURE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**.

**Article 17.§12 GRIEVANCE** says, "Final decisions made by Western shall be subject to the grievance procedures in this *Agreement* as stipulated in Article 12, Grievance Procedure."

At present, the administration reads this language to mean that only (a) the final tenure decision in year six, or (b) a Negative with Termination decision at an earlier year, can be grieved.

We disagree with this interpretation because of a fundamental issue that has become obvious from one of the grievances still to be worked out before May 15. In this case, an administrator's review letter was written in such a way that it violates part of the *Agreement*. Once such a letter is in a faculty member's tenure review process, another administrator can be influenced by it when writing a subsequent review.

This is the classic case of fruit of the

poisonous tree. We have no alternative but to assert, most aggressively, that we have the right to grieve this as soon as it happens. To allow a letter like this to go forward is irrational and unfair, and just as bad for Western as for the aggrieved faculty member. We cannot enshrine a review that violates our *Agreement*, and then allow other reviews to follow from it.

At the moment, we are dealing with this on an individual basis, but it will need to be addressed explicitly during the 2008 negotiations. We will negotiate contractually-mandated procedures for dealing with this circumstance.

### **News from Other Chapters**

The WMU-AAUP is not the only collective bargaining chapter to have filed Unfair Labor Practice charges against their administration. At Michigan Technological University, which has been in a struggle to get their administration even to turn up at the bargaining table since they unionized two years ago, their AAUP Chapter did get a ruling in their favor, that the Michigan Tech administration had violated Michigan's Fair Labor laws in multiple respects. As a result, their administration has been forced to recognize the Chapter and enter into negotiations.

The EMU-AAUP seems on the verge of victory in an epic struggle with their administration. They failed to reach an agreement on a new contract during their regular negotiations last summer; those negotiations included several ULPs and a failed mediation (a process that did work for us in 2005). The EMU faculty engaged in a job action, and then a return to work without a contract in order to sup-

**WMU-AAUP  
Summer Office Hours**

**May—August  
9:00am—4:00pm**

port their students.

The return to work came about after an agreement to enter into Fact Finding, another formal process, in which both sides must lay out the basis for their negotiating claims. Their administration agreed to participate in fact finding, but asserted up front that they refused to be bound by the findings. However, the Fact Finding Report, released on April 2, 2007, ruled in favor of most of the EMU-AAUP's claims. You can find the details on their website at [emu-aaup.org/news](http://emu-aaup.org/news) but what is more important, the EMU administration accepted the Report on April 6.

A flurry of negotiations followed, and on April 10, the two sides reached a tentative agreement that will go to the faculty for a vote on April 20. Some key components of the tentative agreement include salary, healthcare, and retirement:

The fact finding report recommended that the administration should meet professors' proposed salary increases of 3.50%, 4.06%, 3.75% and 3.88% over the next four years. Faculty will also receive an additional 1% contribution to their retirement plans, with the 1% increase spread out over the last three years of the contract. The report also recommended that the administration's proposal of implementing a premium for professors on health insurance premiums should be accepted. The premiums would cost professors on average about \$1,000, depending on their individual health plan. ([emu-aaup.org/node/275](http://emu-aaup.org/node/275)).

Our congratulations go out to our faculty colleagues; we look forward also to their support in the coming years.

Please feel free to email ([paul.t.wilson@wmich.edu](mailto:paul.t.wilson@wmich.edu)) or call me (269-345-0151) with comments and ideas about these or any other issues that concern you. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Lunch Tables Are Back

Jo Wiley  
Vice President

The return of faculty Lunch Table Discussions has been met with enthusiasm.

The group that met on March 22 to discuss diversity on campus left the Bernhard Cafeteria with a list of questions in need of answers, possible collaborative opportunities, and suggested readings. E-mail addresses were shared with a commitment to each other to keep the issue alive and work together inside and outside of the University.

The next lunch table topic, **Plagiarism: Promoting Academic Honesty**, is shaping up to be equally successful. Many faculty have indicated that they will be in attendance at this discussion scheduled for 12:30 at the Bernhard Cafeteria on April 17 (after the writing of this article, but prior to distribution of the *Advocate*). Librarian and Associate Professor Barbara Cockrell agreed to lead the discussion, as plagiarism is an area of great interest for her.

I am pleased that my goal of providing opportunities for faculty to share concerns, interests, and information collegially has gotten off to a good start. Watch for additional lunch table announcements during Summer I, and please share ideas for Lunch Table Discussions either via e-mail ([jowiley@wmuaaup.net](mailto:jowiley@wmuaaup.net)) or call the Chapter office at 269-345-0151 to speak with me.

## Faculty and Emeriti Healthcare: Now and In The Future

C. Dennis Simpson  
WMU-AAUP Healthcare Advocate

Since we began the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) a little over three years ago, there has been a major shift in responsibility. Faculty and emeriti need to read and understand their **Healthcare Benefits Summary** and **Healthcare Benefits Guide**.

With the previous indemnity plan, almost every healthcare need and every healthcare provider was a covered benefit. The only requirement for faculty was to have their BCBSM card with them at all times. With the advent of the PPO, and increased deductible, faculty need to better understand their benefits. It is essential for all faculty and emeriti covered by the BCBSM PPO to have read and understand the **Healthcare Benefits Summary** and **Healthcare Benefits Guide**. They can be easily accessed at the WMU-AAUP Website ([wmuaaup.net](http://wmuaaup.net)) under the heading "Health Care."

Faculty and emeriti need to have personal knowledge of this information and to understand the network of providers, benefits, limits of benefits, and listing of co-pays and deductibles. Without this knowledge, faculty can expose themselves to *significant costs of co-pays and balance billings*.

### Issues Facing Us Today

Some of these costs have come about because of certain issues. These are not all-inclusive, but tend to be the most prevalent:

1. Provider miscoding
2. Provider shifting in and out of network

### WMU-AAUP

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**Website Address:**  
[WMUAAUP.NET](http://WMUAAUP.NET)

3. High co-pays for mental health and substance abuse services
4. Medicare Part D
5. MPSERS

Let's cover each briefly.

#### **Provider Miscoding**

Provider miscoding currently is the most frequent problem in healthcare for faculty. BCBSM will only approve payment for bills that contain the current code for services provided. If your healthcare provider does not code the services accurately, BCBSM cannot, by policy and contract, pay the bill. The issue of miscoding by providers causes frustration, and multiple visits to the BCBSM representative, by faculty as well as a loss of productive time to the academy. Faculty should always ask the healthcare provider's billing clerk to double check for accurate coding that reflects the provided services.

#### **Provider Shift**

Based upon contracts with BCBSM and healthcare practice decisions, there is a continual shifting of providers in and out of the PPO network. The administration committed to increase the number of in-network providers in all categories and this commitment has been met. All categories of healthcare providers have increased since WMU joined the PPO and additional providers continue to be added.

Unfortunately, there have been occasions where providers have elected to leave the PPO network. On occasion, providers have left the network without informing their patients of this change. This can result in unexplained increases in co-pays and balance bills for faculty and emeriti.

It is strongly suggested all faculty and emeriti chose only BCBSM In-Network providers and also ask, when making an appointment, if the provider will still be in-network at the time of the actual appointment. Only by doing this can faculty and emeriti be assured of avoiding unexpected healthcare costs. The list of

In-network providers can be viewed at the WMU-AAUP website (wmuaaup.net) under the heading "Health Care."

#### **High Co-Pays**

It is important to note that there are currently high co-pays and NO maximum out of pocket limits for in-patient mental health and substance abuse services. The Chapter does not agree with this position. Still the administration and BCBSM are taking this stance. Future contract, and possible grievance actions, will address this issue.

#### **MSPERS and Medicare Part D**

Emeriti receive a supplemental health care benefit from either WMU or MPSERS. Unfortunately, some emeriti have been sold a "Bill of Goods" from Medicare Part D pharmacy-for-profit providers. Emeriti should retain their WMU or MPSERS pharmacy benefit. **Shifting to another Medicare Part D provider will negate your WMU or MPSERS Pharmacy coverage.**

MPSERS is a constantly changing target. In recent times, many emeriti have received audits/surveys as to their pharmacy coverage. It is important to complete the audit/survey and return it by the deadline. Failing to do so may eliminate pharmacy coverage by MPSERS. While the WMU Retirement Services Director has been very helpful in assisting emeriti with this audit/survey, please note the healthcare relationship is exclusively between MPSERS and the Emeriti, not WMU.

#### **Personal Cost Mandates Greater Understanding**

Personal costly mistakes in electing specific providers or specific healthcare services are actually increasing in both the faculty and emeriti populations. It is very important each faculty member read both the **Health Benefits Summary** and **Health Benefits Guide** to determine coverage and covered providers. Each of those documents is available online at the WMU-AAUP website wmuaaup.net under the heading "Health Care."

In cases where the service or provider is not addressed by those documents, your WMU-AAUP Healthcare Advocate can help you. You only need to contact the Chapter (269-345-0151) for assistance.

#### **Looking to the Future**

While no "crystal ball" exists, there appears to be trends happening in healthcare that may be attempted at WMU. Please note there exists a current contract that covers your healthcare benefits. *The following is only what is being presented in the literature and is currently happening to others.*

#### **Supplement Shift to Medicare**

MPSERS-like systems in other states are shifting to minimal supplements to Medicare. These programs are also increasing pharmacy co-pays by 50 percent or more and eliminating coverage for spouse or family as a supplement.

#### **Segmentation of Contribution Costs**

For retirees in the general population, companies are segmenting the contribution costs of healthcare to the actual cost of retiree healthcare. What this means is the actual cost of retiree healthcare, on a year to year basis, will determine the retiree contribution. As retirees have significantly higher utilization rates of healthcare services than those under 65, retiree contributions for healthcare in organizations taking this stance have doubled or tripled.

#### **Elimination of Retiree Healthcare Supplements**

Many organizations are totally eliminating retiree healthcare supplements to Medicare and replacing them with Health Saving Accounts (HSA). In this case, the retiree is allocated a specific amount of money each year to use either to pay ALL healthcare costs not covered by Medicare or to individually purchase a Medicare supplemental policy. The problem with this is the HSAs seldom amount to even 50 percent of what an individual healthcare supplemental policy would cost and most retirees would be rejected for coverage due to pre-existing conditions.

### Global Healthcare

Healthcare is going global. Already one state BCBS system is sending elective surgeries to India and Southeast Asia where cost of these surgeries are 10% of the cost in the United States, even when travel costs are part of the coverage. Issues with this type of coverage include almost non-existent malpractice laws in these countries and the lack of post-surgical care.

Drugs by mail from foreign countries are now gaining momentum. While some states, and specific federal laws, prohibit this, many organizations are actually requiring this. Organizations gain pharmacy cost savings of up to 75%. However, there is almost no enforcement of the state and federal laws.

Medical laboratory test specimens are being sent overseas for analysis and results. Overseas cost can be up to 90% lower than those in America. This results in delays in reporting of results and raises the issue of qualitative standards in laboratories located in some third world countries.

### Increased Co-Pays

In organizations not having unions, and for management in most organizations, co-pays to individuals are being increased by about 10% each year, maximum out-of-pocket is unlimited and deductibles are being assigned to every healthcare benefit instead of an overall deductible. These organizations are also eliminating coverage on such services as massage, acupuncture, and dental implants. Further, such organizations are eliminating spousal or family coverage as an option where the spouse has available coverage through his/her employer.

### Universal Healthcare

The leadership of Fortune 500 companies is now supporting universal healthcare. The reason for this support is such a plan would be minimal healthcare, such as Medicare Parts A and B. Also under the current proposals, the cost of this would be totally the responsibility of the individual, state, or federal government. Em-

ployers would be exempt from paying for universal healthcare of their employees. Fortune 500 companies have been quite direct in stating if universal healthcare is enacted they will strongly resist offering any supplemental healthcare packages to employees.

### **The Chapter is Here for You**

The above are some national trends, and many are only occurring to those not represented by a union. You are currently covered by an existing contract between the AAUP and WMU. Undoubtedly, healthcare will be a significant issue in the 2008 negotiations. While acknowledging healthcare costs are increasing in double digits each year, your Chapter will be vigorously negotiating for your healthcare during the 2008 negotiations.

If you have healthcare questions or concerns, your WMU-AAUP Healthcare Advocate can help you. You only need to contact the Chapter (269-345-0151) for this assistance.

### **WMU-AAUP Officers' Summer Hours**

#### **Paul Wilson, President**

Tues. & Thurs.  
11:00-4:00  
Fri. 11:00-2:00

#### **Jo Wiley, Vice President**

Wed 9:30-3:00  
\*Fri 12:00-2:00  
(\*Every other Friday)

#### **Jon Neill, Grievance Officer**

Tues. & Thurs.  
9:00-11:00  
Wed. 10:00-12:00

**Michael G. Miller**  
**Contract Administrator**  
By Appointment

## **CAGO Update**

Michael G. Miller  
Contract Administrator  
&  
Jon Neill  
Grievance Officer

### **Grievances**

#### Unfair Labor Practices

As you may remember, the Chapter filed charges of unfair labor practices against Western. A hearing of the charges was scheduled for March 16. However, at the end of February, the administration asked if the Chapter was willing to meet before the hearing in hopes of resolving the disputes behind our allegations. We agreed and on March 12, the Chapter's President, its attorney, and the Grievance Officer met with members of the administration and the university's attorney.

At that meeting, our grievance over the administration's failure to provide the Chapter with a copy of the health benefits guide was resolved. The administration also agreed to meet to resolve two other grievances that it had ignored, and to send the equivalent of a letter of notice to two administrators who we allege interfered with the Chapter's attempts to enforce the *Agreement* between WMU and the WMU-AAUP. In return, we agreed to postpone the hearing for 60 days.

We are happy to report that the letter has been sent, and that meetings to resolve the aforementioned grievances have been held. We are optimistic that these grievances will be settled to the Chapter's satisfaction. However, this is not to say that we expect the administration to give us every remedy asked for in these grievances.

#### Four Grievances Scheduled for Arbitration

At present, four grievances are going to arbitration. One involves a tenure review, two involve compensation for summer teaching, and the fourth relates to professional misconduct by an administrator.

The arbitration of the tenure review grievance is scheduled for May 1. One of the grievances over compensation for summer teaching will be heard in June and the other in July. The grievance over misconduct will be arbitrated on August 6. There is the possibility that another grievance will be taken to arbitration. This is a grievance over workload that was recently denied at Step Two.

### New Grievances

Since the beginning of the spring semester only one grievance has been filed. This grievance concerns workload. This is an interesting case for two reasons. First, in rejecting the faculty member's appeal, the provost acceded that department policy statements are to be followed in calculating an individual's workload. This is a very positive development since at least one dean has maintained that the formula in department policy statements do not have to be applied to convert work assignments into workload credits.

Second, the provost's reason for rejecting the appeal is that the chair did not give some of the individual's work assignments to him. Specifically, she contends that the faculty should not be given credit for supervising graduate students since the faculty member's chair did not officially assign him those students. However, the provost's position is very much debatable, and we are hopeful that the administration will agree that the department chair, in fact, approved supervision of some of these students.

In any case, this grievance brings home the wisdom of obtaining a chair's approval for research projects, mentoring, and committee work. Without that approval, you may be denied workload credit for these work assignments. Thus, department policy statements should include a procedure for getting the chair's approval for these work assignments.

### **Contract Administration**

During the spring semester, the Chapter's Contract Administrator has dealt with a

variety of issues. The following is a list of the problems and issues that our office has been asked to advise or act on, in many instances, more than once:

- Attendance at tenure review and workload appeals
- Departmental Policy Statements, review and approvals
- Early promotion inquiries
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Instructional development grant funding
- Issues of reporting to administrators, specifically deans and assistant deans.
- Questions on tenure and promotion review process
- Requests to resubmit forms for re-approval of travel funds
- Retirement benefits for faculty
- Retirement contribution to TIAA-CREF
- Reviewed adjunctive file materials
- Supplemental Retirement Benefits (SRB)
- Stopping the tenure clock (for child-care)
- Tenure and promotion letters from deans
- Terminology used in tenure letters

If you have questions regarding contract language, or possible violations of the contract, please contact the WMU-AAUP office staff who will forward the information to either Jon Neill or Michael G. Miller. You may also contact either of us directly via email ([michael.g.miller@wmich.edu](mailto:michael.g.miller@wmich.edu); [jonneill@ameritech.net](mailto:jonneill@ameritech.net)) or call the Chapter office at 269-345-0151.

### **Reminders**

#### Out-of-Network Coverage

Please remember that if you receive medical services from a provider who is out-of-network, you will be reimbursed **100% of the charge approved by BCBSM if an in-network provider**

**has referred you, and 80% of the charge approved by BCBSM if not.** Keep in mind that most often, the reason a provider has not joined the BCBS network is his or her unwillingness to provide services at those approved rates. At times, the difference between the approved charge and the out-of-network provider's charge is substantial and you will be responsible for paying the difference (referred to as "balance billing"). Thus, we advise you to inquire about these two amounts before taking treatment from an out-of-network provider.

You can find out what the approved charge is by calling BCBSM. However, you will need your provider to give you the service code. Keep in mind that coding errors are not at all uncommon, and so you should double check the code.

Also, be advised that providers are added to the network all the time. Likewise, providers often choose to leave the network. It is, therefore, advisable for you to ask your provider—the individual, not the practice—if he or she is in-network before taking treatment. Some providers inform their patients when they leave or join the network, but some do not. You can also check the list of approved providers from a link at the WMU-AAUP website ([wmuaaup.net](http://wmuaaup.net)) under “**Health Care.**”

#### Workload

**Once again, we heartily encourage every department to review and revise the workload section of its policy statement.** As you know, the workload article (**Article 42**) was significantly changed during the last round of negotiations. Each department needs to reconsider its workload policies in light of those changes. CAGO is ready and willing to help departments craft new workload policies. Please contact us if you feel that your department needs some guidance in revising these policies. Remember, the workload section of your department policy statement is **the only protection members of your department have against overly burdensome work assignments.**

### Evaluation of Chairs

Faculty in all departments—except those in the College of Arts and Sciences—have evaluated their chairs this semester. The results have been distributed to the chairs, deans, provost, and WMU-AAUP Association Council Representatives. Council Representatives have been encouraged to share this information with their departmental colleagues.

## Should the WMU-AAUP Participate in Presidential Searches?

Paul T. Wilson, President

As most of you know, a Presidential Search Advisory Committee (PSAC) has been doing much of the daily work during our search for a new president. The first two faculty on PSAC, Mary Lagerwey and I, were asked because you, the faculty, had voted for us as Presidents of the Faculty Senate and the WMU-AAUP in campus-wide elections.

From the beginning, we both advocated for more faculty on the committee; it was certainly an advantage to be arguing from our elected positions in this regard. The Trustees and the committee agreed, as a result, to add Nora Berrah, Professor of Physics, and Katherine Joslin, Professor of English, so that there would be a broader faculty voice that extended beyond the formally established faculty organizations. While I would like even more faculty directly involved, this was a good step forward.

The last issue of the *Advocate* published a letter from one of our esteemed past presidents, Lynwood Bartley, whose eloquence and fierce commitment to the AAUP have been an inspiration for many of us over the years. Lynn hoped, in his letter, that the AAUP would recuse itself from participation in PSAC. He suggested, in his inimitable way, that to as-

sociate with the administration in closed meetings invites being corrupted, and possibly sanctions their actions when we know that their motives are fundamentally different from ours, and their willingness to be forthright about their decisions is always compromised.

Though I agree with Lynn's perspective on some administration actions, in this instance of the presidential search, I disagree. While there are quite a few philosophical and pragmatic grounds that could be discussed, I will address just three key points here: trust and credibility, political tactics, and the role of the committee in the final choice.

### Trust and Credibility

Without quibbling over semantics, PSAC is a committee formed by the Board of Trustees, not the administration. We need to be committed to making that distinction meaningful.

Especially in recent years, many faculty have been concerned about the Board being kept at a distance from the rest of the university. Distrust infected every area of the university's operations. One former Trustee said to me last year, before we changed administrations, that we need the Board to be Trustees for the whole university, and not just the administration. I view participation in PSAC as part of the process of opening up lines of communication between the WMU-AAUP and the Board of Trustees, so that when the WMU-AAUP, as one important voice of the faculty, needs to speak with the Board, the Board knows that we are serious, credible, and committed to Western's best interests. That can happen only through finding ways to work together where we make clear our areas of agreement and disagreement, understand why we think differently about particular issues, and discover our common commitments and goals.

In terms of the credibility and effectiveness of the broader faculty voice, the three other faculty members on PSAC

have acquitted themselves in remarkably positive and effective ways; I'll leave it to them to speak of me however they wish. But I would also say exactly the same about every other member of the committee; everyone turned out to be invaluable, and committed to collaborative problem solving. There were areas of significant disagreement, and distrust, at the beginning of the process. Without resolving every disagreement, we talked through issues in a way that brought us to some mutual understanding and respect. It remains to be seen how this will work itself out in the coming years, but certainly first steps have been taken towards establishing a positive level of trust and credibility.

### Political Tactics

A pragmatic consideration about the committee is that someone with a sound knowledge of collective bargaining at Western can be particularly effective at discovering candidates' experiences and attitudes about working in a collective bargaining setting. It would be better to be alert to these issues early in the process.

But I think there is also an important tactical reason for participating in PSAC: If there were violations in the process that went significantly against the faculty's interests, one or more of the faculty on the committee could publicly resign and explain why. AAUP involvement gives a unique window on issues that could be problematic, and thus adds to the committee's screening capabilities. This is a safeguard that, I believe, cannot be ignored in deciding whether to participate.

Another way to look at tactics is this: There are three ways to find things out on our campus: by being there, by being told of it by someone else, and by inference. All, at one time or another, are important sources of information, and I do not write off any of them. However, I'm somewhat nervous about tale-telling, whispering, and insider tips as the sole source. If it's possible to be there, or there are clear data about which one can

make warranted inferences, I believe that we are on more solid ground.

By participating in PSAC, while knowing about the concerns and wishes of the faculty from a variety of perspectives, in other words by being there, the faculty have that final option of well-informed public dissent. If we don't participate, we're reduced to "after the fact" reactivity, without being clear why things happened as they did.

### **The Role of the Committee**

Finally, PSAC looked at its task not as picking **the** next president of Western Michigan University, but of bringing to the campus community a set of candidates who would stimulate your thinking about Western's future. Once they arrive, what's most important is who will be able to speak to your sense of priorities:

about re-establishing trust for our campus community, about Western's academic and research missions, about recruitment and retention, and about the challenges of state funding. At this point, when the candidates are on campus, it is your input that becomes one of the most important factors in the final decision by the Board of Trustees.

### **A Final Note**

I imagine most of us hope that Western's next president will be a success, and that we will not need to embark too soon on another search. Thus, we will have plenty of time to rethink the issues involved in participation by the WMU-AAUP. If you have other thoughts and concerns about the process, or the perspective I've just provided, please give me a call (269-345-0151), or drop me a line (paul.t.wilson@wmich.edu). I'm eager to hear what you're thinking.

### **Mark Your Calendar Fall Semester**

**Annual BBQ  
September 4th**

**Association Council Meeting  
September 20, 2007**

4:00pm  
Room 105  
Bernhard Center

**Chapter Meeting  
October 18, 2007**

4:00pm  
Room 105  
Bernhard Center



WMU-AAUP Chapter  
814 Oakland Drive  
Kalamazoo MI 49008

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED