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the WMU
AAUP



Advocate

at Western Michigan University

September, 2004

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Starting The New Year

C. Dennis Simpson, Ed.D.

WMU-AAUP President

Looking forward to the 2004-2005 school year produces the same feelings of excitement and fear that have existed in me for the last 27 years. For the AAUP the year began with the new faculty reception which included over 35 new faculty, their hosts, as well as Chapter officers, Executive Committee and Association Council members. The enthusiasm of our new colleagues is contagious and just being with them gave all of us a new sense of energy and resolve to face our challenges. This reception was successful due to the hard work of Executive Committee member Joel Boyd and his reception planning committee.

The annual BBQ is always the fall "kick-off" for the AAUP. This year the Chapter served over 550 of our colleagues. While records are not kept on attendance, Chapter staff indicate this is the largest turnout for the BBQ in recent Chapter history. The BBQ requires weeks of planning and preparation — all done by our Chapter staff. They put in untold overtime hours to assure you and your families have an enjoyable time each year. I suggest you let them know you value their efforts.

(Continued on column 1, page 2)

Task Force on Chapter Issues = Review & Renew Task Force

Barbara Speas Havira, Associate Professor

Department of History

In addition to continuing its day to day work in Spring and Summer 2004, the WMU-AAUP Executive Committee "bloomed" with ideas for projects. Most focused on ways to improve chapter operations and to enhance communications from and to the membership. Establishing an AAUP Lunch Table in the Bernhard Center is one Executive Committee project. On Wednesdays and Thursdays between 11:30 and 1:30, chapter officers and others welcome your company and conversation of all kinds. Another Executive Committee initiative is the ad hoc "Task Force on Chapter Concerns," now renamed the "Review and Renew Task Force."

The task force was charged "to explore the current state of the chapter, identify issues of concern, and propose action and/or policy and/or organizational changes." The end of August was the target date for reporting its recommendations to the Executive Committee. To form the task force, Dennis Simpson recruited retired chapter presidents and negotiators, and current chapter members, including members of the Executive Committee. The work of the Task Force was divided into four subcommittees: Mission and Vision; Operations; Contract; and Services. At its first meeting, on July 9th,

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(Starting the New Year— from page 1)

The “Task Force,” first mentioned in the July/August *Advocate*, has been moving forward. You can review their work in this *Advocate* as reported by Barbara Havira, core subcommittee chairperson. The Task Force will be presenting its work to date to the Association Council on September 16 and is on time to have its report approved by the Chapter by the end of the fall semester. Remember, this is your Task Force and I encourage all faculty to become involved in its activities to the greatest extent possible.

The enthusiasm
of our new
colleagues is
contagious...

At the September 16 Association Council meeting all unit representatives will be asked to set up unit meetings for the fall semester at which officers and Executive Committee members will attend. Please be thinking about concerns you have regarding the Chapter as well as the issues you want the negotiation team to focus on during the 2005 negotiations. Additionally, your Executive Committee has heard you in that you prefer to be surveyed via electronic mediums. The Executive Committee is field testing an electronic survey modality this month. Using the expertise of learned emeriti and active faculty, electronic surveys regarding faculty activities and pre-negotiation foci will be submitted to you during this fall semester. The results of the

unit meetings and surveys will be conveyed to the leadership you will elect for 2005-2006.

While I was vice-president of the Chapter I served as the overall Task Force chairperson. You have just elected Arthur Falk vice-president to fill the term which ends in December. Arthur has assumed the position of Task Force chairperson along with his other vice-presidential duties.

As you are aware, Eastern Michigan University recently engaged in a short strike and obtained a tentative agreement on a contract. Your leadership will be meeting with the Eastern Chapter leadership and has linked the Eastern contract on our Chapter web page. I strongly suggest you review what Eastern “achieved”, and compare their contract to our contract when thinking about your concerns and developing negotiation issues.

The majority of the Chapter members have been to Montague House, your *Town Hall*, for the new faculty reception and/or the BBQ. I suggest you continue to come to your *Town Hall*, participate in Chapter committees, and continue to strengthen your union through your involvement. ■

(Task Force — from page 1)

the Task Force discussed its overall charge and the charges of each subcommittee, and received individual subcommittee assignments. Each group was to explore the current state of the chapter in its respective area and make recommendations.

Meetings of the full task force and of the subcommittees, supplemented with numerous individual conversations, phone calls, and email, brought the Task Force to a reporting stage two weeks earlier than the “deadline.” At its August 12 meeting, the full Task Force discussed, approved and forwarded subcommittee recommendations and proposals to the Executive Committee. The next day, the WMU-AAUP Executive Committee approved the recommendations as presented. Subcommittees will continue working either to implement their proposals or to continue their deliberations, bringing additional recommendations during the fall semester. Contact the Chapter office if you have suggestions for the Task Force or if you wish to join our discussions.

Some Task Force recommendations will take effect immediately, others are still under development. Early this fall, Association Council Representatives for each department will be asked to hold unit faculty meetings to contribute to developing a WMU-AAUP chapter “Mission and Vision Statement.” The Association Council will combine these department ideas and formulate a common statement that is inclusive and representative. Following the plan outlined by the “Mission and Vision” subcommittee, department faculty and the Association Council will hold another review before adopting the final wording. The “Operations” subcommittee is drafting changes to the Chapter constitution and/or bylaws. Some changes will be ready to present at the October Chapter meeting.

**WMU-AAUP
website:**

WMICH.EDU/AAUP

The "Contract" subcommittee is exploring the organization and operation of the negotiation process itself. The "Services" subcommittee seeks to enhance communication and discussion among various components of the Chapter, including within departments and between faculty in different departments.

The members of the "Review and Renew" Task Force are enthusiastic about our proposals, and confident that our colleagues will work with us to form a more effective Chapter. A strong chapter has members who believe that vigilance is the price of maintaining professional and economic well-being. In a strong chapter, members are knowledgeable about

*Most focused
on ways to
improve chapter
operations and
to enhance
communications...*

the contract; they implement their department policy statements; they develop faculty contacts outside their department; they hold regular unit meetings. Its well-informed members know and value the Red Book, which contains the foundation principles of the national AAUP. Members of a strong chapter know that they are its strength and make it a priority to participate in chapter events and support chapter initiatives.

Watch the *Advocate*, email, the Chapter web site, and communications from Association Council representatives for additional information on Chapter activities. ■

From Your Contract Administrator...

Karen Blaisure, Ph.D.

MERIT PAY

Administrative merit pay once again becomes a reality this fall. Given its contentious history at Western, merit pay has the potential to distance faculty from one another as some apply for merit, some are denied, and some refuse to participate. As the months tick by until the 2005 negotiations, it becomes more and more vital that we do not misplace our growing frustration on one another, as faculty respond differently to the merit pay scenario or other administrative situations.

According to Article 32, re-opened as part of the summer 2003 negotiations, the opportunity for administrative merit pay is available to bargaining unit faculty members who are in their second or subsequent full consecutive year at Western and who have a term, tenure-track, or tenured appointment, including faculty on grant appointments or who are on less than full time term, tenure track, or tenured appointments. All faculty who wish to apply for administrative merit pay are strongly encouraged to review Article 32 in the 2003 Supplement to the 2002-2005 Agreement (available on the AAUP website) for further details.

The purpose of merit pay is to "encourage, recognize and reward significant achievements" in research, teaching, and service for traditionally ranked faculty and in teaching and service for faculty specialists. Merit pay recommendations should be made for the combination of "extraordinary achievements" in these categories, although department chairs may consider recom-

mending merit pay based on one or two of these categories.

According to Article 32. §1 of the 2003 Supplement to the Agreement, 0.25% of the total of faculty salaries shall be awarded in merit, and the minimum merit award is to be \$700. The Administration has confirmed the intention to distribute merit pay so that each college and department is represented.

Should you apply for merit pay, please note the timetable and the process.

Timetable

October 15

If you wish to be considered for merit pay, you must submit the following to your department chair or director by October 15: A supporting letter of application that details your rationale for merit pay (you can use the letter to communicate activities and accomplishments not covered in the PARs), and PARs from 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004 (covering the years since the last time merit pay was awarded). If you are beginning your second year at Western, you would submit the PAR for 2003-2004.

November 1

The department chair or director will forward ranked merit pay evaluations and recommendations to the dean of the college by November 1.

November 15

College deans will forward ranked recommendations to the Provost's Office by November 15.

December 1

The Provost makes final merit pay decisions by December 1.

Process

Department chairs shall evaluate applicants, issuing a merit score within the range of 0 to 100. Traditionally ranked faculty shall be assigned up to 10 points in each of the three areas: research, teaching, and service. The

points awarded for the first two categories will then be multiplied by 4 and the score for the last category multiplied by 2. Faculty specialists shall be assigned up to 10 points each in teaching and service. The points awarded in each category will then be multiplied by 5. Under “exceptional circumstances,” Chairs may modify the multipliers in order to highlight “outstanding accomplishments in one or two categories” (Article 32.§5.2.1 in the Supplement). In the supporting letter, you may wish to directly address activities and accomplishments according to these categories.

The points assigned are to convey the following significance:

10 points — accomplishments extraordinary in every way, only awarded in very productive years

8-9 points — accomplishments significantly better than average in comparison with others in the department

6-7 points — above average work

4-5 points — satisfactory work

These criteria for assigning points reveal some of the trouble faculty may have with the merit pay system. Faculty are pitted against one another as they are compared and ranked within their departments and colleges. Hard working faculty, producing high quality work, and going not only the extra mile but the extra 10 could nevertheless be denied merit pay. The understandable consequences of such a scenario can be lowered morale and erosion of loyalty.

PAR TIME

Professional Activity Reports are due by October 15th. If they haven't already, Deans should be making a template available. The AAUP hopes that the template provides opportunity for faculty from across campus

(e.g., academic departments, CELCIS, counseling center, library) to report fully the variety of activities that they do. Faculty are greatly encouraged to report all activities in all areas of academic life. In the rush of semester, it is easy to overlook work carried out over the past year. It is to our individual and collective detriment to overlook and under-report accomplishments and activities. Part of the challenge is reducing our work only to what is quantifiable. For example, even though some faculty officially or “formally” may not have assigned advisees, it is astonishing to assume then that these faculty do not advise students (e.g., prior students, students new to the department, graduates), mentor them, or spend hours helping them each week. Make sure these and other activities (e.g., mentoring new faculty, accomplishing university tasks not part of a committee) are reported.

Contrary to what many faculty have been told in the early days of the semester, and I hope that you have been alerted accordingly by chairs and deans, faculty may choose the method by which PARs are submitted: by paper, electronic attachment to an email, or iwebfolio. Also, faculty are NOT required to attend iwebfolio training. Please contact the AAUP office if you are continuing to be directed to use iwebfolio as the method of submission or are being ordered to attend iwebfolio training. If you are ordered to go to training or to use iwebfolio, make sure you do so, unless that order is rescinded. However, **make sure you also alert the AAUP to the situation so that appropriate measures can be taken on behalf of the bargaining unit.**

Finally, it is understood, at least at the time of this writing, that faculty using iwebfolio as the means to submit a PAR, are being directed to release their PAR to the chair, dean, provost, associate vice-president for academic affairs, and vice-provost for institutional effectiveness. Many fac-

ulty and the Chapter have expressed grave concern over the release of individual data such as a PAR to a position that is outside the traditional line of review and that is concerned with institutional assessment and related initiatives. ■

Grievance Officer Update

Pam Rooney, Ph.D.

HEALTHCARE

Although progress has been made in some areas outlined in the original Healthcare Grievance, it is in truth slow going. A major issue is Administration's apparent willingness to “pass the buck” to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) rather than actively advocate for the faculty as required by the Agreement and its unwillingness to engage in discussions with individuals within BCBSM who can make binding decisions regarding administration of our plan.

The issue of Advocacy is a critical one as it is indeed time consuming, whether you are trying to resolve issues on your own or working with me or Bill Fenn. We have anecdotal evidence, in fact, that some faculty are simply “giving up” and “paying up” rather than trying to resolve disputed claims. If you have been advocating on your own, please let us know. We want to keep track of the “hours” faculty are burning on healthcare at a time when workloads are approaching overload status for many of us. And we certainly want to hear from you if you have paid something rather than go through the “wringer.” We will help you straighten things out if possible, but under no circumstances should any of us be assuming extra costs for your

healthcare. Doing so merely lets the Administration “off the hook” one more time.

Key items to remember as you access your healthcare:

If you are submitting your own claims, do not send them to Detroit/Southfield. There is a single address in Grand Rapids for processing our claims; new envelopes will be available in Human Resources soon and the new address will also be posted on the HR website. Using the Grand Rapids P.O. Box is particularly critical for those of you seeking reimbursement for such things as massage, acupuncture, and mental health expenses. Getting your claims to the right place will also cut down on system rejections for provider specialty. For example, massage therapy provided by physical therapists and chiropractors should now go through.

If you are enrolled in the Community Blue PPO and are denied reimbursement for services that may not be routine but were covered under the Indemnity plan, it may be that the service requires documentation that it is “medically” necessary. Since the Benefits Summary is all we will have for a few more weeks, you should check the Summary wording carefully and compare it to your Explanation of Benefits (EOB). If you find yourself being denied for such things as age, location or diagnosis requirements you should work through resources on campus first rather than trying to deal with Detroit or Southfield.

These resources include AAUP healthcare Advocates Pam Rooney (pam.rooney@wmich.edu) and Bill Fenn (bill.fenn@wmich.edu), and WMU’s Group Representative from BCBSM, Steve Tomasko (steve.tomasko@bcbsm.com). Steve is on campus every Thursday morning to consult with faculty at the Human Resources office. Appointments are necessary.

If you are experiencing difficulty with Dental or Vision, please refer to the Benefits Summary. These coverages are called “cut outs” and are not impacted by BCBSM. Your dental and vision providers do not have to participate in the PPO (PAR), and it doesn’t matter if they accept BCBSM or not. Despite the fact that our cards have BCBSM on them, *BCBSM only administers our plan*. You are, therefore, entitled to reimbursement and services at the levels provided in the Benefits Summary. If you experience difficulties with either Dental or Vision, please let Bill Fenn or me know.

A major issue is administration's apparent willingness to "pass the buck" to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan...

Finally, BCBSM has identified individuals who were overcharged for prescription drugs and was to have issued reimbursement checks. If you were forced to pay more than the established co-pays for a brand drug and have not received reimbursement, please let us know.

Though time consuming and seemingly never ending, this process has several of us on a fast track learning curve and it should stand us in good stead when negotiations begin next year. Bet on it: healthcare will remain a major topic.

CHAPTER GRIEVANCES ON WORKLOAD AND GOVERNANCE

On 16 August 2004, we held a Step One hearing on the three Chapter

Grievances filed over issues of shared governance and workload. Tom Amos, President of the Faculty Senate, and William Wiener, Dean of the Graduate College, were present for discussion of the Grievance related to the Senate Memorandum of Action (MOA) requiring annual review of all masters and doctoral students. Of concern to the Executive Committee was the directive’s potential negative impact on faculty workloads, particularly faculty who have many more than the contractually stipulated 20 advisees. We also wanted confirmation that faculty with existing processes could simply build on or use those.

Dean Wiener and Dr. Amos drafted a memorandum of understanding regarding implementation of the Annual Review Policy (available on the AAUP website). In this directive, Dean Wiener makes clear that procedures for annual review are to be faculty driven, that departments with procedures already in place do not need to create new ones; and that given the large numbers of advisees some faculty carry that the review policy must be carried out in a manner that is sensitive to workload provisions in Article 42 and with input from departmental policy statements. Having received these stipulations, we will withdraw this grievance. If, however, any of you find yourselves with inequitable workloads as a result of this process, contact me immediately.

The other two grievances dealing with workload and SIS (available on the AAUP website) remain open even as other issues related to them continue to surface. I imagine that like healthcare, we will continue to experience delays in responses, some of them to be expected. As with healthcare, I will soldier on. And in case any of you are wondering why I’m still here, I have agreed to continue as “interim” grievance officer through December. ■

Nominations Are Needed

The Chapter's Nomination/Election Committee is seeking candidates for the 2004 election of **President** and **Vice President**, as well as **Executive Committee Representatives** from the following constituencies:

- Association of Language Specialists
- College of Arts & Sciences — Humanities
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Health & Human Services

Please contact the AAUP office (345.0151 or wmuaaup@ameritech.net) if you wish to nominate someone or would like to be a candidate yourself. We would like to hear from you no later than Friday, October 15th. Nominations officially close at the Chapter Meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 21st at 4:00pm in Rooms 157-158, Bernhard Center.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED