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October, 2001



Advocate

At Western Michigan University

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Planning for a Changing Future

Gary Mathews
WMU-AAUP President

The first few weeks of the fall semester have gone by, and the workload seems reasonable. This isn't bad at all! Why was I always tired last year? Then about the third or fourth week, the assignments start pouring in, the committees begin their work in earnest, promotion and tenure reviews come due....you get the picture. But it is still a great profession.

September 11th is now more than a month in the past. The perturbations in the system are like the ripples made by dropping a pebble in a pond. More than four thousand people have died. Faculty members with friends and family in New York suddenly need to take a quick trip back east. Experiencing a future-oriented fear of the unknown, and thinking that there are people out there trying to get you, suddenly seems to be a sign of mental *health*. Faculty and staff are called to volunteer at Ground Zero by the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. The East Indian family operating a gas station on West Michigan Avenue has their plate glass window broken by a rock thrower. The planes owned by our College of Aviation are grounded for a significant period of time by the FAA. Western's football game with the University of Michigan is postponed for a week. More than a hundred thousand people are laid off by the airlines. It is estimated that as many as half of the airlines will be bankrupt in the next ninety days. We can no longer park within three hundred feet of the terminal at the Kalamazoo International Airport. A Grand Rapids radio host

asks his listeners not "Why are so many Americans flying the flag?" but "Why isn't *everyone* displaying a flag on their house, their car, or on their lapel?" He never received an answer that satisfied him in the time it took me to traverse US 131 on the way to my class on Monday evening. Sadness, anxiety, uncertainty; these are some of the feelings that are evident on campus as a result of the events of September 11th.

PLANNING FOR SPRING AND SUMMER COURSES — There are rumors that spring and summer courses may eventually come under the jurisdiction of the Division of Continuing Education. This would result in more control of these classes by the central administration. Deans of colleges would no longer be in the peculiar position of, on the one hand, having to pay the cost of spring and summer teaching, but on the other hand, not receiving any financial benefit for their investment.

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The removal of this financial road-block could generate an increase in the number of courses offered. However, it does seem simpler to just give the deans a cut of the income generated by spring/summer teaching. Central control may well mean less curricular control by the faculty, the departments, and the colleges. Let's hope that the Faculty Senate has a chance to debate the pros and cons of this potential shift in policy before it becomes a *fait accompli*.

CONFERENCE SUPPORT? — A fellow faculty member recently decided to attend a conference and to ask her department for the \$100 per faculty member being allocated for travel each year. She filled out the form, which included the fact that she had made reservations using her frequent flier miles to save money. Registration, meals, and lodging cost more than \$500, so she was investing more than \$400 of her own salary to attend this conference. In the wake of the events of September 11th, obtaining airline reservations required that our colleague drive out to the airport and speak to the ticket agent in person. The toll-free number was unavailable. The department refused to process her application unless she canceled her airline reservations and let Western make them. She chose to withdraw her application for funds.

From Your Grievance Officer...

Elaine Phillips

The terrorist attacks of September 11th have left most of us in stunned disbelief. As the initial shock wears off, a fairly predictable cycle of grief and/or trauma reactions may be observed in our students, our colleagues, and, perhaps, even in ourselves. This is a time when many people will report temporary sleep disturbances, irritability, distraction, anger, recurring thoughts and images of the attacks, and generalized fear. For most people this will pass. For a small number of people, students and faculty alike, the symptoms will persist and perhaps even worsen.

Understandably, those most deeply impacted by the events through the loss of a friend or loved one, through the deployment of loved ones in the military, or through being present at one of the sites at the time of the attack, are at greatest risk for severe reactions. However, even in these cases, there will not be a one-to-one correlation with the trauma and the need for mental health treatment. As a general rule of thumb, after a traumatic experience, if symptoms exist that are severe enough to disrupt

occupational or social functioning, and these symptoms persist for thirty days or more, consultation with a mental health professional is in order.

It is important to remember that upon the initial experience of a trauma, disruptive symptoms of a temporary nature are common. Steady, supportive friends, family members, and good listeners are what most individuals need as the symptoms abate. Only a relatively small number of people on our campus will actually be diagnosed with and need professional treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

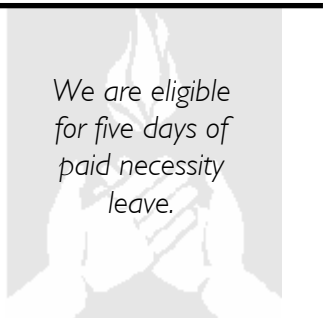
I very much appreciate and applaud the memo sent by Provost Dobney and Associate Provost Allen which states that we do not have to be trained psychologists to help most of our students cope during these difficult times; we just need to be present and supportive. I wholeheartedly agree. The only thing I might add is that the same is true in supporting our colleagues—as much as possible be present, and be supportive of those who are having difficulty. With this said, the following is a review of assistance and leaves available to faculty members.

ASSISTANCE FOR FACULTY —

Faculty members whose friends, or family members were killed, injured, missing, or displaced from their homes by the attacks in New York and Washington, or those faculty members who find they are not coping well, are eligible for support and assistance through the Employees' Assistance Program, or, for brief interventions, through the University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC). Typically, the UCTC faculty and staff work exclusively with our student population. "However, in the event of an emergency only, the University Counseling and Testing Center may provide, if the schedule allows, for brief immediate interven-

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We are eligible
for five days of
paid necessity
leave.

tion for faculty by referral from the Employee Assistance Program" (page 110, *Agreement*). The UCTC has not offered ongoing mental health care for bargaining unit members for several years. Mental health services are part of the bargaining unit faculty's medical insurance program. Our coverage is quite good (please see pages 101-102 of the contract), and the options for mental health treatment in our community are extensive.

SICK LEAVE — If your mental health is such that you need time away from your duties at the University due to difficulty coping or to receive extensive mental health treatment, your sick leave is available. The administration may require that you provide a physician's statement or sworn affidavit that you did, indeed, need to be absent. If you are on a medical leave for more than ten consecutive days, you may also be asked to provide a physician's statement indicating that you are able to return to your duties. This is only required if the administration has grounds to believe you may still have a medical problem (Article 27. §7.2.10). Also, please be aware that if you return mid-semester, and someone else has already taken over your teaching duties, you can be temporarily assigned to an alternative position. This most typically occurs when one is absent for several consecutive weeks of the

semester, and returning to the classroom for the conclusion of the semester is viewed as disruptive.

FUNERAL AND NECESSITY LEAVES — In the case of faculty members who need to be absent from the University due to funerals, please be aware that we have two kinds of leave available. All bargaining unit members are entitled to five consecutive working days with pay for funeral leave. Our current contract provides for funeral leave for immediate family members, defined as "current spouse and the faculty member's and his/her current spouse's children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers or sisters." Requests for this leave should go through the chair (*Agreement*, page 79).

In the case of personal necessity, we are eligible for five days of paid necessity leave (*Agreement*, page 84). The department chair must approve this leave. When one has requested such leave to attend the funerals of extended family members or friends, I have not heard of necessity leave being denied.

If you need to take a leave from your duties at the University, the best way to proceed is to consult your contract, the AAUP, and your chair. The AAUP officers will be glad to meet with you.

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From Your Contract Administrator...

Ariel L.H. Anderson

As I write this, I am keenly aware that one month ago today, life for *all* of us was dramatically altered as a result of the terrorist attacks on our nation. For many, it has been difficult to go on with "life as usual." I have found that, for me, the best way that I can cope is to normalize, and to continue with my day-to-day life, all the while recognizing that each day is a gift, and that I am extremely fortunate in many, many ways. My colleagues have chosen to center their writing for this month's *Advocate* on "9-11," so I will depart from that pattern and attend to some matters that are certainly less *critical* in a sense, but which are still important in terms of our every-day work lives. I think this focus is important, as we (the faculty) need to provide at least a measure of stability in the lives of our students, who are certainly disturbed, confused, and even somewhat mystified by current world events. And so my focus turns...

PROMOTION AND TENURE

REVIEWS — By the time you read this, tenure and promotion dossiers will have been submitted to depart-

WMU-AAUP SERVICES SURVEY

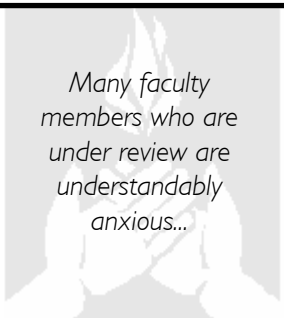
Please take a few minutes to give us feedback on how you believe your union is serving you. Are the services and publications offered useful to you? Do you have any comments or suggestions on how they are beneficial or can be improved?

Examples of services and publications: 1) answers to contract questions; 2) help with grievances; 3) retirement seminar; 4) *Advocate*, monthly newsletter; 5) *Indepth*, report on a specific topic, published occasionally; and 6) *Negotiation Update*, published during negotiations.

Please, remove this page, write your comments and suggestions in the space provided, fold, staple, and return it to the WMU-AAUP through the campus mail. Thank you.

CAMPUS MAIL

WMU-AAUP Chapter
Montague House



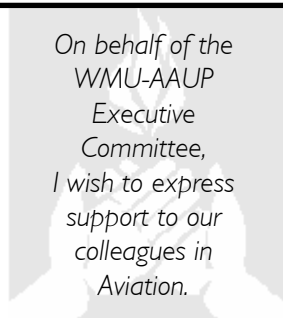
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mental committees for the first level of review. Many faculty members who are under review are understandably anxious about the process, as well as the outcome. In particular, there are quite a few faculty who reside in departments where there are not enough tenured faculty, or faculty of the appropriate rank, to constitute a reasonable review committee. The AAUP office has had many contacts from individual faculty members who are at a loss as to how to constitute a review committee that will be appropriate, fit the requirements of the contract, and that will be comprised of a group of colleagues the candidate feels comfortable with. The Chapter leadership has tried to deal with these situations on a case-by-case basis. Much confusion surrounds the constitution of review committees to deal with the review of Academic Career Specialists. ACSs are entitled to be reviewed by a group of colleagues who are tenured and/or who have earned continuing ACS status. We have had to go outside of departments, and, in some cases, outside of colleges, to constitute committees. In some cases committees are yet to be constituted. I want to encourage all faculty to be sensitive to the emotionality that can accompany a serious performance review. In particular, I want to encourage senior faculty (those

who are tenured and who have been promoted through the ranks) to be generous in agreeing to serve on performance review committees. Where ACS participation is called for, please be welcoming of committee members who may have to be drawn from other departments and colleges to serve. We certainly have quite a few glitches to iron out with regard to the ACS employment category. Both the administration and the Chapter leadership are aware of this fact, and it is certain that we will work to improve the situation through upcoming contract negotiations.

COLLEGE OF AVIATION — This is also a time when our colleagues in the College of Aviation are certainly wondering about an uncertain future, due to recent world events. The Chapter leadership has been working to sort out the short- and long-term implications for our Aviation colleagues. We have tried to arrange meetings involving the affected faculty, as well as with members of the administration and the Chapter leadership. So far, we have been unsuccessful in “making things happen,” but it is our understanding that President Floyd is currently devoting considerable attention to sorting out the future of the College of Aviation. We anticipate that we will soon have more information and direction from the administration, and we look forward to working with the administration to stabilize conditions in the College of Aviation. Meanwhile, on behalf of the WMU-AAUP Executive Committee, I wish to express support to our colleagues in Aviation, and I encourage other faculty to do the same. In this time of uncertainty it is especially important that we remain warm and collegial, and that we do whatever is within our power to comfort one another in the face of very troubling and unexpected events.

SPIRIT DAY — On a more mundane level, I must note that many faculty are still confused about Spirit Day. I imagine this will never sort out well, but let me try once again to explain the circumstances we are in. Spirit Day is a holiday for all members of the bargaining unit. Members of the administration are not supposed to convene any meetings or other “goings-on” that faculty might wish to be involved in on this particular day! We still get reports of meetings being called, and one-by-one we continue to “work it out” by communicating with the administration...and then the meetings get canceled. It is a headache, for sure, but one that we just don’t seem able to avoid at present. Currently, Spirit Day is conceptualized as a day to show spirit for WMU, but it is *not* to be held on the Friday of Homecoming. We tried that at one point, and the result was that many folks took off for the long weekend rather than choosing to stick around for the Homecoming festivities. Prior to 1993, Spirit Day did not exist. Instead, we had Good Friday as a contractually negotiated holiday. Since this practice raised issues of religious discrimination, Good Friday was eliminated as an official holiday, and Spirit Day took its place. What next? Who knows! I’m sure we’ll look at this as we review the calendar during negotiations, and we’ll see what seems reasonable



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at the time. Meanwhile, another Spirit Day is behind us, and I hope that you enjoyed this day off!

FACULTY GOVERNANCE — Faculty governance is critical in institutions of higher learning. At WMU one of the primary mechanisms that we have in place for faculty participation in governance resides in the Departmental Policy Statements. Departmental policy documents should be considered living documents, and changes are bound to be necessary from time to time. Every time we renegotiate the contract it is likely that portions of existing departmental policies become null and void. Following the signing of each new contract, every department should expect to engage in an internal review of departmental policies to determine what changes are needed to bring the document into full compliance with the collective bargaining *Agreement*. Article 23 explicates the review process for gaining approval of new/revised policies. This article may be revised as a result of the 2002 contract negotiations, and the Chapter leadership will make sure that information about any such changes is disseminated. One principle that will remain in effect has to do with the right of the faculty to engage in deliberations about, and development of, policies *without* interference on the part of the administration. Department faculty have the right to hold meetings that are not open to members of the administration (e.g., department chairs) in order to discuss, reflect, and develop departmental policies. After all, our Departmental Policy Statements explicate the means by which a group of faculty will make *recommendations* to the administration on a wide range of matters. They do *not* constitute a means by which actual *decisions* will be made; decision-making power does reside with the administration on most matters. That's just the way it is! Thus, it seems particu-

larly important for faculty to hang onto the right to convene and deliberate without administrative influence or interference. Chairs and deans are routinely consulted by the administration before policy documents are approved, and the contract calls for a review by the chair, with feedback to the faculty, which they may or may not choose to incorporate into their policy recommendations. Members of the Chapter leadership are willing to consult with faculty to enable the process and to move things along. If you require assistance, please contact the Chapter office. And please, do plan for a review of your policies following the Summer 2002 contract negotiations – you can safely assume that some policy revisions may be necessary to ensure compliance with the new *Agreement*.

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HEALTH CARE CLAIMS — While I am certainly not looking for more work, I do want to remind you that I will help you to sort out problematic claims within the University Health Plan (administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan). I am usually quite successful in achieving quick resolution by working with Diane Van Eck, labor representative for “the Blues.” Just contact the Chapter office if you need assistance, and it will be forthcoming.

2002 NEGOTIATIONS — We are certainly preparing for the next round of contract negotiations. At present, members of the Chapter leadership are in the process of meeting with all departments/units to listen to the concerns of the faculty. We have asked Association Council representatives to arrange for meeting times, and to make sure that a brief written summary of the discussion is delivered to the Chapter office following the meeting. Please make every effort to attend the bargaining unit meeting that is arranged for your department. We want to hear what you have to say, and we promise to give serious consideration to all concerns/issues that are raised. At the same time, we ask for your understanding about the fact that we will not be able to address all concerns in the upcoming negotiations. We have to make careful choices about which articles to open, and where to focus our energy. The written summaries of the department meetings will help us to get a sense of how wide-spread each concern is, and how much support the AAUP negotiation team will have in pursuing various goals. It is critical for the faculty to realize that we are only as strong as we stand together in solidarity! If the administration perceives that the faculty is not united on an issue, we are unlikely to make gains in that particular arena. Please show support for your leadership by making your voices heard. If you are unable to attend the bargaining unit meeting scheduled in your department, please feel free to contact members of the leadership directly, on an individual basis, to voice your concerns. You may email us, call us, submit your concerns in writing, or arrange to stop by Montague House to talk with a representative of the Chapter leadership. We promise to be responsive, and we look forward to your involvement in the negotiation process. The AAUP negotiation team will be

selected early in the Winter 2002 semester. From then on, we will make every effort to have at least one member of the negotiation team present at the departmental meetings. Meanwhile, rest assured that we are actively planning for negotiations, and we expect to bring in an outstanding contract for Western's faculty.

And that's the news from your Contract Administrator for now. Best wishes for a great rest of the semester!

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Call for 2002 Chief Negotiator and Team Members

The WMU-AAUP is calling for a Chief Negotiator and Team Members for 2002 Negotiations. The AAUP Leadership will be interviewing candidates in the early part of 2002.

If you believe you are qualified to serve as Chief Negotiator, or as a team member, please apply by calling the AAUP office (345.0151) or by sending a letter of interest to the AAUP Executive Committee at the Montague House. Your notification must be received in the AAUP office by 4:30pm on Monday, December 3, 2001.

Let's build the best team we can to serve in 2002 negotiations!



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