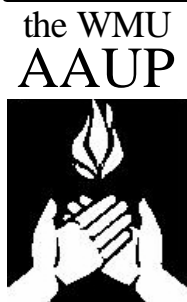


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October, 2002



Advocate

At Western Michigan University

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Contract Issues Continue to Percolate and Brew

Gary Mathews
WMU-AAUP President

THE CHAPTER RESPONDS TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Recently, I received a letter signed by many of the faculty from a department in the University which shall remain anonymous. They raised questions about tenure for faculty specialists, the fact that only 60% of voting faculty voted yes in the recent ratification vote and how we interpreted that vote, the need for a survey of the entire membership regarding their views on faculty specialists, external reviews, early promotion and early tenure, and the possibility of reopening all terms of the contract for renegotiation next year. Reprinted here are my thoughts on these important matters, with some additional information that has become available.

Dear Department Colleagues:

Thank you for your letter of September 16, 2002. We appreciate the depth of your concerns and the direct and forthright manner in which they have been communicated. Here are my thoughts on the issues about which you have written.

The process of negotiating tenure for faculty specialists

There is no current issue facing faculty that has been discussed, debated, and dissected more than that of the faculty specialist. There have been task forces, committees, and special study groups

meeting about this group of workers for years. In the last two years, there have been at least three Association Council and Chapter meetings devoted to a full public airing of the issue. The negotiation team discussed the faculty specialist issue repeatedly with the Executive Committee as the article was being negotiated. It has been written about in the *Advocate* and it has been the subject of a special union publication called an *Inbetween* in February, 2001. I quote from that publication:

“ACADEMIC CAREER SPECIALISTS ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN FACULTY GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING PARTICIPATION IN TENURE AND PROMOTION COMMITTEES

This is true. Academic career specialists may vote on tenure decisions. The department tenure committee reviews them for continuing status. They are eligible to participate and vote on department tenure committees if they have achieved continuing status. They are eligible to participate on promotion committees if they are at or above rank...We may need to change some of the rules regarding academic career specialists in the next *Agreement*. For example, since continuing status is worded just like tenure, we may want to call it tenure. Also...we may want to have...different categories of ACS...By identifying specialized teaching as a possible category, we could once and for all decide whether we want to share classroom teaching as a dominant responsibility

ity with academic career specialists. The alternative may be more part-timers...If we are to consolidate, grow, and expand our position as a graduate extensive research university, the role of the academic career specialist may enhance such a move."

Faculty specialists have been employees of the University since 1996. They have been part of the Chapter membership and have had de facto tenure since 1999. [Note: From 1996 to 2002 Faculty Specialists were called Academic Career Specialists.]

Our interpretation of the 60% yes vote for ratification

I think that an interpretation of the vote will vary by individual. Some look at it as a victory for all union members, and some view it as an indication of weakness or divisiveness among the membership. There are, no doubt, persons in our union who were very unhappy with the outcome of negotiations. This became very clear at the Chapter meeting held just prior to the ratification vote. The leadership wants to know how people feel, and wants to be responsive to disagreements about the issues you raise in your letter. We devoted our most recent Association Council meeting to an open discussion of the *Agreement*, and I think that we had a very productive meeting.

The need for a survey of the entire membership.

We have received a large number of responses to the exit poll which occurred in conjunction with the ratification vote. An independent research firm conducted a content analysis of that survey. The exit poll provides us with sufficient information about the reaction of the faculty to the contract. Many faculty have found aspects of the current contract that they like. Seventy-seven persons expressed positive comments about the four percent salary increase. Thirty-two

persons liked the change from academic career specialists to faculty specialists. Many had concerns, usually expressed as negative comments, including sixty-three persons objecting to the one year salary increase, as opposed to having a three year set of increases. Fifty-nine have objections to the changes with faculty specialists. Fifty-seven mentioned the problem of having to renegotiate health care next year. Thirty-nine respondents mentioned their displeasure with having no cap on the hiring of faculty specialists. Thirty-one respon-

External reviews originally became a part of the 1999 Contract at the request of several faculty members.

dents objected to the provision of tenure to faculty specialists. Thirteen persons objected to the absence of merit pay in the contract.

The possibility of opening all terms of the contract for negotiation in 2003.

We will not ask the administration to open all terms of the contract for next year. The administration has assured us that there are no plans on their part to inundate the University with faculty specialists. They are as aware as we are of the strong opposition to the lifting of the cap for limiting the number of faculty specialists. When we negotiate the next contract, we can consider asking for release time for traditional tenure track faculty whenever faculty specialists are hired. If the administration abuses

the use of faculty specialists, we can reinstitute the cap in the next negotiation, although I believe that the only real concern for a cap has to do with the lecturer position. Last academic year, the administration was over the 10% cap for faculty specialists. The specialists now are at about 8% of the total bargaining unit. President Elson Floyd spoke to the issue of faculty specialists at the October, 2002 Faculty Senate meeting. He stated that the administration has no intent to augment the number of faculty specialists to level that will compromise our strides in research and scholarship. If there are problems with faculty specialists voting on promotion and tenure, they will emerge during the course of this contract. It may be reassuring to learn that faculty specialists (previously known as academic career specialists) have been voting on tenure and promotion decisions since 1999 at Western, and there have been no complaints yet.

External reviews were an issue raised by the administration. We totally agree that there is not a clear consensus as to the value of external reviews. On the other hand, they are widely accepted as a routine aspect of tenure and promotion reviews by research universities. External reviews originally became a part of the 1999 Contract at the request of several faculty members. This contract includes many safeguards negotiated in this area. For tenure, this only applies to the final review, and may only occur in the area of professional recognition. Faculty will only be subject to external review if there is some question regarding their professional recognition. It is limited to two reviewers, one of which may be from Western and external to the department. The faculty member has greater control of selection of the reviewer. I will not review the entire process here, but this is not a process hostile to the candidate by any stretch of the imagination.

Once again, the early date for requesting application for early promotion or tenure was an administration proposal. Your Chapter negotiation team argued long and hard for a more reasonable time frame. We cannot expect to win every point in negotiation. And this is a living document. It can change. The contract can change the process for early promotion in three years if experience shows problems with the process as it now stands. Please consider communicating with the administration as well as the Chapter about these issues. They are a party to the contract as well as the Chapter. Our team pointed out the changing fortunes of publication and grant writing over the course of time, but the administration remained unconvinced. Their argument was that a person could always apply and then withdraw at a later date. This is not a persuasive argument to us, but negotiation is a process of give and take, and we gave on this point. On the other hand, we were able to win the point that the tenure and promotion committees needed to see the candidate's vita before making a decision. In the last contract, as you will recall, the committees had to make a decision in the dark.

We want to thank you for communicating your concerns to us. If you would like, representatives of the negotiation team will come to meet with you or you are always welcome to come here. We value the participation of all of the faculty members in our union. We want to continue to serve your interests and reflect your opinions in our decisions.

Best regards,

Gary Mathews, Ph.D.
WMU-AAUP President

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION STUDY COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce that the Evaluation Study Committee has been appointed, and is holding a first meeting on Friday, October 18. Committee members are: DeWayne Anderson, Teaching, Learning and Leadership; Satish Deshpande, Management; Ashlyn Kuersten, Political Science; Jerry Nowak, University Counseling and Testing Center; and Daniel Mihalko, Chair, Statistics. Dr. Mihalko is the administration's appointee to the committee.

This committee shall meet for the rest of this academic year. Their charge is to select a valid and reliable student rating instrument, with faculty input, for trial implementation. The committee will submit to the Chapter and Western a recommendation for a single student rating system. The instrument must allow for customization by both the department and the individual faculty member. The committee shall develop standardized procedures for administration of the selected instrument.

Faculty Specialists by College

Arts & Sciences	6
Aviation	26
Business	11
CELCIS	8
Engineering & Applied Sciences	9
Fine Arts	1
Health & Human Services	<u>24</u>
Total	85

Total Bargaining Unit: 932

*Elections
2003-2004*

The following slate for the 2003-2004 WMU-AAUP Executive Committee was nominated at the Chapter meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2002:

President

Joseph Belonax, Jr.
Gary Mathews

Vice President

Dennis Simpson
Ralph Tanner

Executive Committee Representatives

Association of Language Specialists

Joel Boyd, Jr.

Arts & Sciences—Humanities

Mary Anne Loewe

Business

Leo Stevenson

Education

Barbara Harris
Paul Wilson

Health & Human Services

Richard Cooper
Sandra Glista

All terms of office are two years in duration. Ballots will be mailed on Monday, October 28, 2002 and will be due back at the AAUP office by Monday, November 11, 2002. All dues-paying members will receive ballots for the election of the president and vice president. The dues-paying members of each constituency that is electing a representative this year shall elect the representative for their constituency. This is a constitutional change from university-wide election of representatives which occurred in 2000. The change was initiated by the Executive Committee and approved by a full vote of the membership.

Call for 2003 Chief Negotiator & Team Members

The WMU-AAUP is calling for a Chief Negotiator and Team Members for 2003 Negotiations. The AAUP Leadership will be interviewing candidates in the early part of 2003. Stipends are provided. Those with expertise in budget and finance and health care will be given special consideration.

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 Thursday, December 12, 2002.



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