



Your Responsibility to Your Union

Your 2008 negotiation team is committed and excited to represent you in the upcoming negotiations. The amount of power they will have at the table, however, will be a direct corollary of Chapter membership interest and involvement. Unions negotiate for and protect members' rights, but this can only happen if the membership fulfills its responsibilities.

Last February you received an AAUP Bulletin titled *Your Union's Responsibility to You*. In it President Paul Wilson wrote about administrators' misinterpretations or misrepresentations of your union's roles and positions—basically claiming that “The ‘Union’ won't let them do [many things—such as give merit raises].” The point of Paul's article was to remind members that our *Agreement* was ratified by the WMU-AAUP members and Western Michigan University's Board of Trustees. Thus, both the administration and the WMU-AAUP are obligated to uphold the language of the *Agreement*. It's your union's responsibility to insure that the *Agreement* is upheld and to take action when it is not. Given the e-mails, telephone calls, and members coming into Montague House, Paul's Bulletin evidently succeeded at reminding members that the WMU-AAUP works in support of the membership.

This Bulletin, on the other hand, is a reminder to members regarding their responsibilities to their union.

It is your responsibility to insist on full, fair, and inclusive representation as a member of this Chapter. Speak up and speak out so that your positions, interests, and needs are heard and understood. Insist that your Association Council representative represents you and your views at Association Council meetings. Expect your representative to share information on a regular basis by engaging you in informal discussions; through the distribution of Executive Committee minutes s/he regularly receives and post-Association Council Meeting communications or unit meetings; and by participation in College Council meetings. If you are not getting updates on Council meetings, check to make sure that your representative has been able to regularly attend them.

If a quorum is called for at an Association Council meeting, 50% plus 1 of elected Association Council representatives must be present for business to continue. This past year, your Council has been unable to complete your business at two of the past four meetings due to the low number of representatives in attendance. A proposal to lower quorum requirements was brought to the Council last fall but, after comprehensive discussions the Council determined that lowering the requirements for quorum would erode members' rights to representation. However, if your

Association Council rep is limiting the ability of the Chapter to conduct your business because she or he cannot attend meetings (for whatever reasons), then it is your responsibility to seek a change. If your Association Council representative is unable to attend, please offer to go as her/his substitute or to help find someone else to sub, so that your unit is represented. If your AC rep's schedule has changed and, therefore, knows s/he can no longer make the meetings, ask for a new representative to be appointed. If your unit truly does not want to be represented by the Association Council, then notify the Chapter office (345-0151) so that quorum numbers can be adjusted.

It is also members' responsibility to bring contract violations or attempted "union busting" to the Chapter leadership's attention. The WMU-AAUP does not have a "chain of command" policy. If you are aware of or concerned about a possible problem in your unit or anywhere on campus, you do not have to ask your Association Council representative to "do something about it." Call (345-0151) or e-mail (staff@wmuaaup.net) the Chapter office, or communicate directly with an officer or Executive Committee member. Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are on the Chapter's website (www.wmuaaup.net).

Let us know if you've been told

- the union won't allow such things as increased overload pay or merit raises
- the union won't let the administration pay new faculty a salary higher than the minimum established by our *Agreement*
- the union determines individual faculty members' workload

Inform us

- if you have heard an administrator make a statement made about a Chapter position on a matter that seems nonsensical to you
- if your chair or dean, or any other level of administrator, is refusing to allow for shared governance
- if administrators seem to be imposing their will and their interpretations on your *Agreement*

But especially take responsibility for upholding your rights as spelled out in our *Agreement*

- According to the *Agreement*, **Article 14.§2.1**, "When a term position has been renewed for a fourth consecutive year, the position shall be evaluated and considered for conversion to a tenure-track position." Demand that administration, during the fourth continuous year of a term position, review that position for conversion to tenure-track.
- Participate in the dean and chairperson review process
- Serve as a liaison to university committees and make reports to the Chapter
- Get involved in contract negotiations—lead or assist action committees
- Show your solidarity!