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Advocate

At Western Michigan University

April, 2000

Editorial Board

Ariel L.H. Anderson
Gary Mathews
Elaine L. Phillips
Robert J. Ricci

Spring Ahead! AAUP Business Continues...

Ariel L.H. Anderson, WMU-AAUP President

The semester is quickly drawing to a close, and for many of us our work and personal lives will undergo some adjustments as we move into the Spring and Summer sessions. Things have been pretty quiet at the AAUP with regard to **assignments for Spring and Summer teaching**. We hope this means that preference rights as guaranteed in the contract are being observed by the administration. If you are experiencing difficulties in this regard, please let us know. One point of information you might find interesting: We have been informed by the administration that *there is no university-wide policy regarding cancellation of Spring and Summer classes due to low enrollments*. It appears that some sections are "run" even with very low enrollment (under ten students) if it is the case that cancellation of the course would result in an inability of some students to graduate on time. Over the years, many colleagues have reported that classes with low enrollment have been cancelled in their department. It appears that the deans have considerable latitude in determining if and when classes are cancelled due to low enrollment – they have budgetary constraints to adhere to, and reportedly the provost's office is *not* where the decisions regarding cancellation are generated. Western does have ultimate management rights with regard to scheduling and staffing of classes. We will do what we can to protect your preference rights, within the constraints levied by the contract.

We have had a number of inquiries from faculty members regarding **"evaluation of faculty" provisions in the contract**. Some

tenured faculty members are being evaluated by their relevant administrators, for a variety of reasons. The contract does allow for such evaluations: "Western may evaluate the performance of bargaining unit faculty at other times than those specified in this Agreement, if it needs additional information in order to make personnel decisions" (16.§5, p. 30). *However*, the contract also states: "Such evaluations shall reflect the principles and intent of evaluations described in the articles of this Agreement on reappointment, and performance evaluations such as promotion and tenure" (16.§5, p. 30). If you and/or your colleagues are experiencing difficulty or have concerns regarding "additional evaluations by Western," please contact the Chapter office for assistance.

The **study committees established as a result of the 1999 contract negotiations** have been meeting and working with diligence to complete their charges within

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Ariel L.H. Anderson
AAUP President

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the defined time frames. I wish to thank all those who have toiled on behalf of their Chapter colleagues – the workload in terms of service on these committees has been substantial, and the issues are extremely complex.

The **Salary Compression Committee** should complete its charge soon, and the results will be disseminated to the Chapter membership prior to commencement of the Fall 2000 semester. While I am certain there will be those who think the results should have been different, I can assure you that there is no perfect solution to the compression issues, and the money set aside to deal with salary compression in the second year of the current Agreement is minimal. I believe that both the Chapter leadership and President Floyd see this pool of funds as only a first step in addressing serious salary compression issues. The leadership will work diligently to garner funding to further address compression issues in the future.

The **Academic Career Specialist Committee** has been making good progress in terms of fulfilling its charge, and we hope to soon see relatively smooth implementation of provisions in Article 20 as fleshed out by this study committee.

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The **CELCIS Committee** has had a bit more difficulty in moving forward, but we remain optimistic that the integration of our CELCIS colleagues into the bargaining unit will come about with minimal conflict, prior to the Fall 2000 semester. President Floyd has given his assurance that those elements of the implementation process stipulated in the current Agreement (Article 20) will be adhered to. It remains the task of the study committee to iron out issues that are not clearly delineated in the contract; progress has been slow, but we expect resolution prior to the Fall.

A number of faculty members have contacted the leadership with questions about **joint appointments and/or transfers to other departments**. Please be aware that Article 48 in the current Agreement includes specific instructions on how the transfer process is to occur. If you are in need of our assistance in this arena, let us know. We have successfully facilitated a number of such interdepartmental transfers over the years.

We have also experienced a number of inquiries over the years regarding **“market adjustments”** in compensation. Please be aware that the Chapter will do all it can to assist members who are seeking market adjustments. There is no well-defined process in our contract for obtaining such adjustments, but we have worked successfully with a number of faculty members over the years to obtain such compensation improvements. It is up to the individual faculty member to build his/her own case, but we do have information regarding faculty salaries at Western that may prove helpful. At times, the Chapter has received word from a bargaining unit member that s/he has been told the AAUP stands in the way of such individual “bargains.” Not true. We have never stood in the way of any of our members improving their financial standing. We don’t have a great deal of clout in this arena, but we do have experience and information that could prove helpful. As with all matters that

As you select new colleagues, please remember that an important part of their adjustment to Western includes familiarity with the Chapter and what the WMU-AAUP has to offer.

benefit our members, we are “all for it!” Let us know if you think we can be helpful in this regard. And remember – the best time to bargain is when one first accepts a position at Western. As you complete searches and select candidates to join you, counsel these incoming colleagues to do what they can to negotiate the best entering “package” available! This is the *easiest* time to make gains. Once “on board,” it is much more difficult to negotiate outside the contract for individual increases in compensation. Still, we’ll do all we can to assist you in this regard.

As you select **new colleagues**, please remember that an important part of their adjustment to Western includes familiarity with the Chapter and what the WMU-AAUP has to offer. Make plans to **provide mentors** for your incoming colleagues, and take it upon yourself to make sure they have a copy of the current Agreement, as well as your current Department Policy Statement. I invite you to drop by the Chapter office with your new colleagues – *those of us in the Chapter leadership are ready and willing to sit down and talk about what the Chapter offers its members*. This is an important aspect of socialization into the faculty role at Western.

This has been a very busy year for the Chapter leadership, and a major reason

for this busyness involves the appointment of study committees to complete, or flesh out, negotiations from Summer 1999. **Members of the leadership are deeply appreciative of the support of colleagues throughout the University.** We have made great gains through the current Agreement, and we are further securing those gains via the study committees. I would like to express my own personal gratitude to all who have shown undying support to the Chapter. I am keenly aware that *we are only as strong as we stand together.* The Spring and Summer sessions typically bring a bit of relief to our workload over here at Montague House. However, things will remain busy enough, *and we will continue to offer full services throughout Spring and Summer.* If you are "on" during this time, I wish you the very best for a productive and satisfying few months. If you are "off," I hope you will find ways to rejuvenate and to enjoy the wonderful Michigan Summer! As is typical, we will move to a bi-monthly publication schedule with May-June and July-August issues of the Advocate. **Mark your calendars now for the AAUP Bar-B-Que scheduled for Monday, August 28th, 5:00-7:00pm. Please plan to bring your new colleagues with you!** Between now and then, stay in touch, and let us know how we can best serve you.

**WMU-AAUP
Email
Address:**

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From the Desk of Your Contract Administrator...

Gary Mathews

Professional Service is Service That is at Least 70 Miles From Home

Remember the old saying that a consultant is someone who lives at least 100 miles from where you are? Perhaps a version of that is true for professional service. The contract says that professional service is "...to the community, region, state, and nation in the name of the University" (Agreement, pp. 33 and 43) as well as "service to academic units, colleges, the Faculty Senate, the University, and the Chapter." This has always puzzled me. How much service should be inside the University, and how much should be outside? I suppose that balance is good. So there needs to be some within the University, and some outside. But how far outside does one need to go? How much service needs to be local, versus state, versus national, versus international? I know of several colleagues doing truly important work in southwestern Michigan. They have state and national and international service as well, but their recent work has been in the Kalamazoo community and surrounding areas. In every case, the message has come from administrators and faculty review committees as well. Do *less* locally. Do more nationally. If your most recent work is local, there is a problem.

Town/Gown Relationships Improve Under the Administration of President Floyd

President Elson S. Floyd is emphasizing the importance of enhancing the

interaction between WMU and Kalamazoo. We applaud the initiatives to bring the local community and the University together. The Education for the Fine Arts program of the local school systems is one such example. This program brings local high school students onto campus in dance, writing, the visual arts, and other fine arts to perform, practice, and present their achievements. Some faculty are contributing their time and energy to this synergistic enterprise.

The Baruch Conference on Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, March 20-21, New York, NY

I had the privilege of attending the Baruch Conference. This is a small gathering of administrators and unionists. There were about one hundred and fifty of us. We heard presentations by John McCormack, Group President of TIAA-CREF Enterprises, John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, and Robert Chase, President of the National Education Association.

One of the most important pieces of information naturally came from an off-hand remark by an unknown member of the audience. He pointed out that with the pending social security legislation, faculty members who are 65 years of age or older would be able to collect their full social security, and still collect a full salary until age 70. Would this have an impact on the decisions older faculty make about when to retire? I bet that it would.

Is Anyone Having Problems With Faculty Governance and the Selection and Retention of Faculty?

Faculty governance is essential to the well-being of the university. For better or worse, what distinguishes the academy from business and government service is our right as faculty members to participate in the decision-making process of our departments.

This participation is important in the admissions process, curriculum planning, and the selection and retention of faculty and administrators. Some faculty are reporting a sense of a diminished role. Chairs seem to be taking a more active role in the initial interviewing and screening of applicants for faculty and administrative positions. In one department a faculty committee was meeting to decide which of several applicants to recommend to the Chair for hiring. The Chair attended the meeting and instructed the committee on which applicant to recommend to him. Faculty in several departments on campus have evaluated their chairs, with clearly negative results. The response of the administration is often to ignore the faculty evaluation altogether, or in some extreme cases to turn the results into a negative comment on the faculty, saying that a negative evaluation of a Chair indicates serious problems with the *faculty*. This appears to me to be a case of blaming the victims.

Spring/Summer AAUP Office Hours:

Monday — Friday

9:00 am — 4:00 pm

Long-Term Care Insurance: Who Needs It!

Peter Krawutschke
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Western is now offering the faculty Long-Term Care (LTC) insurance through TIAA-CREF. This has generated a number of inquiries to the Chapter requesting more information about this program.

Because I suggested during the preparations for last year's negotiations that a group LTC insurance option be made available to us by Western, I would like to describe why I suggested this insurance option, and how I tailored my LTC insurance to my family's perceived needs.

Let me start by describing how I learned about LTC. When I became President of the American Translators Association in 1995, my task was to "grow" the Association's membership base. One service our members, mostly self-employed freelancers, had not received from their association was a range of insurance packages that an association can obtain more cost-effectively for its members. Among the many insurance products offered to us was LTC insurance.

It was during this selection process that I recalled how my brother, in Germany, and I, here in the US, had almost suffered financial disaster when my mother's heart attacks were followed by a massive, incapacitating stroke which required around-the-clock nursing home care. As a free-lance artist, she had purchased her own excellent health insurance, but it did not cover the nursing home costs, and she not been part of the government-covered LTC system. Fortunately, after

some stressful months, a sufficient work history was reconstructed to allow the German government to assume these costs. Of course, her two sons would have given their last "mark or dollar" to keep her alive in dignity as long as she wished. And she did hang on "for dear life" a good number of years, and I could afford to visit her often.

With this in mind, it surprised me that Western had not offered this new type of insurance product proactively, and I was pleased that my colleagues on the AAUP Negotiation Team allowed LTC to come to the table. It was a good thing that Western's attorney had heard of LTC, and we agreed to offer it later, outside the contract.

While the AAUP was neither involved nor consulted in the selection of the LTC group insurance carrier, I assume WMU's working relationship with TIAA-CREF made its selection an easy choice. However, I would have preferred a contract that allowed group members to be accepted without medical screening.

Personally, my decision to purchase LTC insurance for my family predates Western's group policy, because I could not wait for Western:

- I was confronted by my own imminent demise - later found to be greatly exaggerated - and among the many things not done yet was the purchase of LTC insurance for my spouse and me (actually for our daughter) should she be confronted by her mother's need for LTC later in life; a study reports that 13% of women spent five years or more in nursing home care, versus 4% of the males, in the study).
- We had a net worth of over \$100,000 (a number of advisors recommend insurance if net worth is between \$100,000 and \$1.5 million).

After reading the available literature and the material TIAA-CREF sent, we tailored the least expensive insurance package should a LTC need arise in the family.

- We selected the highest deductible in LTC insurance. It is called the "Elimination Period," i.e., the period of LTC time we would have to cover out of our own available funds.
- We selected an unlimited benefit period since we both believe in "hanging on," at least at this point in time.

Western is now offering the faculty Long-Term Care insurance through TIAA-CREF.

- We selected an optional inflation adjustment in order to keep up with actual LTC costs.

At a relatively modest cost - compared to some other insurance premiums we are paying - I can rest assured that we will not become a financial burden on our child or on each other, and that the need for LTC will not eat up our savings and force us to get on Medicaid.

As you consider and evaluate this type of insurance for your own personal situation, please feel free to visit the Montague House and consult our reference collection of articles on LTC and the materials furnished by various LTC vendors. I found "A Shopper's Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance," published by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, particularly useful.

Privatization of Food Services Halted!

*Ariel L.H. Anderson
WMU-AAUP President*

I applaud President Floyd's swift decision to *not* privatize food services at Western! Members of the AFSCME group approached me in dismay when they received word from Vice President Bob Beam that food services would be privatized by next Fall. This would have been a devastating move for food service employees, to say nothing of what this would have meant for our students! Privatization would have meant the elimination of benefits, transfer in assignments, and/or loss of employment for many loyal Western employees. *Every* Western employee deserves to earn a living wage, and good employers take care of their workers in terms of providing reasonable benefits, particularly in the health care arena. My AFSCME friends have informed me that in 14 years, from 1986 to the present, the rate of pay for F-1 food service employees has risen *less than \$2 per hour!* In other words, employees have actually experienced a *loss* of income, when one considers cost-of-living increases. Some of you may recall that logistical services were privatized a couple of years back. This resulted in considerable confusion regarding mail service for many members of the University community, and while most of the glitches seem to have been worked out by now, I still with some frequency receive mail at my Sangren Hall office that should have been delivered to Montague House. I'm not sure what savings Western actually realized by this privatization, but I do know that the effects were negative for many AFSCME employees, and I have heard plenty of complaints about problems with mail service on

campus. I think it is critical that we all realize how interdependent we are on one another. The faculty depends on members of other employee groups at Western to "get the job done." Thus, I consider it faculty (AAUP) business when our co-workers in other employee groups find themselves in threatening situations with regard to their employment and working conditions. The leadership of the AAUP meets periodically with leaders from other employee groups on campus, and we do this because we are truly committed to the well-being of our co-workers. Privatization issues threaten not only the non-faculty workers - such efforts and decisions threaten the quality of life for *all* members of the University community. Loyalty is built through decent treatment of employees, and *all* of Western's employees are important to the overall well-being of Western. ***Thank you, President Floyd, for doing the right thing!*** You have, once again, proven yourself to be an outstanding institutional leader and a compassionate person. We look to you to continue to do what's right with regard to the employment conditions and overall well-being of *all* members of Western's community.

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Baruch College 28th Conference: Visions for the Future: Academic Collective Bargaining in 2020

Robert J. Ricci
WMU-AAUP Vice President

This conference, held March 20-21 in New York City, New York, proved to be more diverse in its offerings than previous gatherings. Furthermore, the emphasis was more focused on the side of labor than management, despite the fact that both constituencies are represented at the conference.

John McCormack, Group President of TIAA-CREF Enterprises, was the keynote speaker, sharing the results of a recent survey that addressed current attitudes and priorities of the professorate with implications for the 21st Century. A total of 1,511 full time faculty from both public and private two- and four-year higher education institutions

Paramount in this list ... was poor student preparation and commitment for their academic work.

were polled. Some of the key topics covered work related issues, choice of career, institutional policies, tenure, and the future of higher education in America. The summary findings were as follows:

1. 87% of faculty are very satisfied in general with their career choice, and, in all likelihood, most of them would pursue an academic career again. On the other hand, 41% of faculty note that they, at one time or another, had seriously considered switching to a career outside of higher education.

2. Faculty commented at length regarding the factors that interfered with their academic duties. Paramount in this list, which included interdepartmental strains, inability to obtain research grants, insufficient personal finances, lack of institutional support for professional work, and workload, was poor student preparation and commitment for their academic work. This latter element stood out, by far, as the most problematic element confronting faculty. I'm sure that every faculty member reading this report can relate to this issue as well. I raised the point from the floor of the meeting that perhaps those of us in higher education should think about this dilemma as an extremely important issue in upcoming meetings of this body.

3. Concerning issues that are of great importance in their professional lives, faculty listed teaching courses that interested them, the reputation of their institution, job security and the opportunity to work independently, opportunities for professional recognition, and physical working conditions. Working in an intellectually challenging environment and having time for family were also considered extremely important for faculty. There was great concern expressed that teaching loads seemed to be escalating, concerns about the negative ramifications of post-tenure review, and that faculty specialization had hindered collegial dialogue.

Most faculty agree that intrusions on academic freedom by the administration are rare.

4. Most faculty agree that intrusions on academic freedom by the administration are rare. Furthermore, most white faculty members feel that affirmative action programs have made their institution a better place. Minority faculty, by a slightly lesser percent factor, agree.

5. The top four items most faculty members feel receive too low a priority are inadequate financial resources for academic needs, a lack of minority faculty on their campus, not enough attention given to developing a sense of community at their institution, and concerns about the future of tenure and the importance of its retention. Concerning part-time faculty, the interesting notion was put forth that while many faculty are distressed regarding the increasing number of colleagues in this category, many part-time faculty do not wish to become full-time faculty, with all the baggage that currently surrounds that status.

Copies of the full report are available upon request. For more information, please contact Dr. Voon Chin Phua, TIAA-CREF, Fax: (212) 916-6088, Email: vcphua@tiaa-cref.org.

In the session on the future of labor movements in the 21st century, John Sweeney, AFL/CIO President, put forth the notion that labor must rejuvenate itself in order to face new challenges from management. Corporate mergers,

such as those in the aviation industry and in health care, have resulted in “coordinated bargaining” by diverse labor factions. Yet, Sweeney pointed out that an infusion of youth is needed in the labor movement in order to move ahead productively, and that unions need to become bigger, stronger, and smarter in order to deal constructively with new management strategies. He stressed that it should be communicated to younger workers that nobody ever joined a union to be able to go on strike. Almost always, he claimed, labor/management struggles revolve around issues of respect as a paramount issue.

All members of society will have to function in a global economy and become perpetual learners in order to compete.

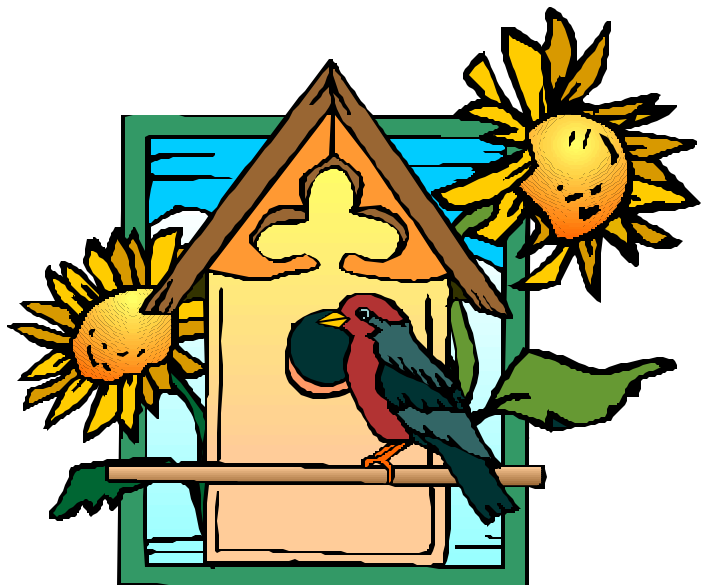
In the session on the role of higher education in the 21st century, Robert Chase, President of the NEA, made observations that revolved around the fact that most workers will often have more than one career in a lifetime. This may be a combination of academic life along with other venues. He claimed that the “real world” was encroaching more and more on the ivory tower, and that the professorate is in danger of becoming more of a commodity in the face of technological developments. He stated that we must have the courage to examine the heart and soul of our academic institutions in order not to see them become irrelevant in the future. Academic quality must be strengthened, and educators must take a more pronounced role in affecting change in society, rather than letting outside change dictate the course of

the future. He stressed that positive collective bargaining must start to become involved in these kinds of matters, and that academic unions should be in the vanguard of enforcing higher standards, implementing technological tools, and, in general, becoming the standard-bearer of change in the future. Universities should be pro-active in preparing students to be able to function interactively with those of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and prepare them, as well, for a world in which a constant retraining of the workforce will become common. All members of society will have to function in a global economy and become perpetual learners in order to compete. Like it or not, he claimed that the “virtual” (electronic) university will become more significant in the future, and that employers will become more interested in competency than in diplomas. Faculty should start to think in terms of more team-taught courses and having students work in teams to solve problems. The professor may no longer be the total content expert in this new world.

All in all, this was a provocative conference. Many questions were raised and few clear answers were given. Those of us in the academic profession should be able to appreciate this scenario.

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Mark Your Calendar
WMU-AAUP Faculty BBQ
Monday, August 28, 2000
5:00 – 7:00 pm
The Montague House



WMU-AAUP Chapter
814 Oakland Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED