



Representing Wayne State Faculty and Academic Staff

NEWSBRIEFS

577-1750 aaupaft@wayne.edu
<http://members.aol.com/wsuaaup>

May, 2001

Thanks: Now for the Hard Part Charles J. Parrish President Elect

Most members got my email message thanking them for their support for me, my opponent, Professor Mary Cay Sengstock, and the other candidates for union office. However, I again want to offer my gratitude for members involving themselves in the election. I want to thank Marlyne Kilbey too for her diligent service as President for the last four years and to wish her luck on her sabbatical at the University of Salamanca.

I am also pleased to be able to announce that Mary Cay has agreed to allow me to submit her name to the Executive Committee for continuation as Grievance Officer. Professor Anca Vlasopolos, our Contract Implementation Officer, has also agreed to stay on in that post. I am pleased that an experienced leadership team for the coming year is in place and that we can proceed with a high degree of continuity in facing the challenges of the coming year. The tasks the union faces are formidable.

The principal problem confronting us next year will be to prepare early for the collective bargain-

ing negotiations that will take place a year from now. It is my hope that the negotiation team can be organized during the Fall Semester, so that work can begin early in developing our positions in consultation with our membership. There will be a number of issues on which proposals must be developed. The joint union-administration committees that were set up to examine key issues after the last bargaining round are providing some useful groundwork for the next negotiations. There were committees on distance education, the number of part-time instructors, academic governance issues related to those with appointments in more than one unit (particularly in centers and institutes), review of benefits, and the anti-union environment promoted by administrators in a significant number of units.

Each committee has developed, or is developing, a report that will be helpful to both the union and the administration in developing our positions. These reports will be on the WSU-AAUP-AFT website as soon as we get them and can get them

con't from pg. 1

posted (two are already there). We would like to hear the reaction of members to the work of these committees.

A key matter for the union will be the devising of a reasonable Fair Share proposal. Despite the existence of conventional agency fee provisions in the contracts of all other WSU unions, the administration refused to consider even the mild Fair Share proposal we proposed in the last negotiations. President Reid responded to union leaders who wrote to him about the administration's position on this issue by calling our proposal "coercive."

We, members of the AAUP-AFT Executive Board and the overwhelming majority of union members, know very well that President Reid had it the wrong way around. It is eminently unfair for union members to have to bear the costs of representing the entire bargaining unit, securing rights and benefits that all faculty and academic staff gain by. We will therefore be fighting for a reasonable Fair Share provision to be included in the next contract.

We will also be addressing other important matters, including the question of an appropriate union organizational structure for the clinical departments of the Medical School. The importance of practice plan issues in these units gives rise to problems that do not occur in other departments.

In the fall, we will get to work promptly on these and other negotiation issues. We want to hear from our members about their concerns. We will be scheduling a retreat to discuss union concerns in the fall and we hope that it will be well attended. My email address is c.j.parrish@wayne.edu and the union's is aupaft@wayne.edu. Keep in touch.



Election Results

President: Charlie Parrish
Joint Observer: M.L. Liebler
Secretary: Susan Ward

Thanks to all who ran for office and who voted. Because Marlyne Kilbey is leaving this month for her sabbatical in Spain at the University of Salamanca, the Executive Board has voted to install Charlie Parrish and M.L. Liebler in their new positions as of May 22.

Memo

To: Faculty and Academic Staff,
College of Lifelong Learning

Re: Review of CLL

From: Marlyne Kilbey, President, AAUP-AFT

As a member of the academic staff or faculty of the College of Lifelong Learning, you are aware most likely that the college has been undergoing review in conjunction with the preparation of a strategic plan for the university. The review has focused on mission and organization, administration, research program, and academic programs of the college. A draft report has been presented to President Reid.

In conjunction with the postponement of a search for a Dean of the college, this review has raised concerns about job stability and conditions of employment in the face of possible changes in the structure of the college.

The AAUP-AFT Executive Committee and I want to assure you that if any changes are to be considered in the make-up of the college, the collective bargaining agreement and the structure of university governance both stipulate that the rationale for such proposals has to first be presented to various collegial bodies for consideration. The AAUP/AFT will continue to monitor the process of the CLL review and any actions that emerge from it. If at any point proper procedure is not being followed or the faculty and academic staff's rights are being compromised, we will take appropriate action.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions and or information about this issue that you want to bring to our attention, please call Jan Thompson, Executive Director, at 577-9992. Either Charles Parrish, who takes office as President on May 22, or I will get back to you as soon as possible.

"Outsourcing" Our Work: A New Twist for Academic Staff at WSU

Prospective students who call Wayne State for basic information on financial aid may think they are talking to a university employee located on campus. They are not. Since the fall of 2000, the person at the other end of the line has actually been in Texas—that's right, low-wage, anti-union Texas. These telemarketers posing as university employees work for a private corporation contracted by the university to perform work previously done by WSU's Financial Aid Officers (FAOs).

Dictionary.com gives the following definition to the term outsourcing: "to farm out (work, for example) to an outside provider or manufacturer in order to cut costs." And we thought this only happened to factory workers.

The following report gives some background on this latest twist to the managerial problems we highlighted in a previous issue of Newsbriefs (Sept. 2000) focusing on understaffing, improper assignment of duties, and arbitrary and unprofessional practices.

Background

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) has long been understaffed, overworked, and subject to the foibles of inadequate technologies. The response of the university administration has been to "blame the victims," that is, to fault Financial Aid Officers for being too few in number and not having access to state-of-the-art technology, which is available at similarly situated institutions, that would tremendously decrease the workload.

In 1998 OSFA was removed from the then Division of Student Affairs and placed with the Division of Marketing and Communications (DMAC). Ostensibly, the move was to position the office to participate in student recruitment. OSFA's traditional role in recruitment has been to make financial aid presentations on and off campus and individual counseling with parents and prospective students. OSFA received no additional "gift" financial aid, which is requisite to competing with other institutions to attract students. High turnover in the

Financial Aid Officer ranks and understaffing have continued. In May 2001, OSFA was removed from DMAC and placed in the Division of Student Development and Campus Life, formerly the Division of Student Affairs.

While OSFA was part of DMAC (specifically, in fall 2000), a new element was introduced into OSFA: outsourcing.

What we know about outsourcing in OSFA

1. On August 10, 2000, 29 individuals from College Answer, a division of SLM Holding Corporation (Sallie Mae - NYSE: SLM) began answering telephone calls to OSFA. (Employees in OSFA received an e-mail notice from the interim director not to tell students that the College Answer employees are not physically located within OSFA, but in Texas. The Office of the General Counsel indicates that because Sallie Mae/College Answer was the only company in the U.S. that provided trained staff to answer general financial aid questions "at a reasonable price," the contract was not submitted for a competitive bid.
2. Financial Aid Services (FAS), an Atlanta, Georgia based firm as signed five employees to work in main campus OSFA and the satellite financial aid office in School of Medicine effective September 8, 2000. The FAS staff performs Financial Aid Officer duties, including document review, correspondence with students, advising/counseling students, and processing financial aid awards. One FAS staff member also supervises full-time Financial Aid Officers, and one supervises OSFA clerical staff. Here too, the Office of the General Counsel indicates that the contract was not submitted for a competitive bid.
3. Anne Watson, former financial aid director at the University of Detroit Mercy and current part-time Marygrove College financial aid administrator, was hired on November 16, 2000 to train new Financial Aid Officers. Previously, senior FAOs would train new hires. The Office of the General Counsel claims that "based on Anne Watson's locality, flexibility, qualifications, and price, it was not felt that a better 'deal' could be found and a 'bid waiver' was sought from and approved by [WSU Chief of Staff] Meredith Gibbs."

4. Compuware, a Farmington Hills based-company, provides technical support to main campus OSFA and the satellite office in the Law School and School of Medicine. The Office of the General Counsel claims that "minimal investigation was done with regard to the Compuware agreement as Compuware was already a WSU Certified Temporary Agency."
5. Positions represented by the AAUP-AFT were outsourced without consultation with the union. The AAUP-AFT does not support outsourcing academic jobs.

What we do not know about outsourcing in OSFA

1. The goals and measurable criteria of success for Anne Watson are unknown. How is Ms. Watson being held accountable for "training?" What written training curriculum has she developed and implemented within OSFA?
2. How are College Answer, Financial Aid Services, and Compuware employees being held accountable?
3. In what condition will OSFA's academic staff find themselves when the outside hired help departs?

Outsourcing is not a panacea for systemic problems within any WSU academic unit. Academic staff members are not pawns to be moved around or moved out of positions while administrators try to figure out how to hire, train, promote, retain, and adequately compensate competent staff. Academic staff members are not "fall guys" who will meekly accept denigration of their professionalism to mask inadequacies of administrators and/or poor administrative decisions. OSFA is not a troubled unit. OSFA is an academic unit troubled by poor leadership.