



Representing Wayne State Faculty and Academic Staff

NEWSBRIEFS

Office: 577-1750 Fax: 313-577-8159

October, 2004

aaupaft@wayne.edu

http://mywebpages.comcast.net/aaup_aft/

Engineering and Science Faculty Votes Union at Michigan Technological University

By a margin of 152 to 134, faculty members have voted in favor of union representation at Michigan Technological University (MTU). The balloting, conducted on September 28-29 by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC), established the American Association of University Professors as the collective bargaining agent for MTU's tenured and tenure-track faculty, most of them concentrated in the College of Engineering and the College of Sciences and Art.

"The faculty have made their decision and we respect that," said Glen Mroz, the recently appointed President of MTU. "We will work with the AAUP local to reach a fair and equitable contract from both the university's standpoint

and from the employee's standpoint." While the university administration opposed unionization of the faculty, AAUP supporters agreed that both sides conducted their campaigns with a degree of civility and respect that bodes well for future relations between the union and the administration.

MTU joins other local AAUP collective bargaining chapters at Eastern Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Oakland University, Northern Michigan University, and Wayne State. At WSU, where the faculty and academic staff voted by an 85% margin for union representation in 1972, the local union has been affiliated with the AAUP and (since 1998) the American Federation of Teachers.

The Issues

"The last decade has been marked by a diminishing faculty role in academic, professional, and fiscal policies that affect them," said Bruce Barna, a chemical engineering professor and local president of the MTU union. "We believe the vote indicates the faculty's desire to have a voice in these matters."

Organizing for the September vote began over a year ago with supporters collecting signed authorization cards designating the AAUP as their collective bargaining agent. The union's first letter to faculty noted that while MTU had until

recently enjoyed rising income, "little of the increases in [state] appropriations and tuition revenue trickled down to the faculty." The union's website provided a table (partly reproduced on page 2 of this newsletter) comparing the increases to an MTU salary of \$50,000 over the last five years to the growth in the same salary at universities with collective bargaining— after subtracting the cost of union dues, WSU's unionized faculty are ahead by \$7,405. "Other data in our possession," the Michigan Tech union states, "show MTU lowest in the state in percentage of general fund revenues expended on instruction, so it's not just salaries being short-changed."

INSIDE:

Salary Increases at MTU vs WSU, Page 2

*Letter from Dan Cowl,
Chemical Engineering, Page 3*

con't on page 2

Salary Comparison: Michigan Tech. (non-union) vs. Wayne State (union)

If you were making \$50,000 in 1998, here's how it would compare over the next 5 years:

**SEE CHART IN
OCTOBER NEWSBRIEFS**

**Five year salary gain at WSU
(after union dues) = \$7,405**

Note: The collective bargaining agreement does not prohibit you from seeking individual adjustments above the minimum increase negotiated by the union.

Source: www.mtuaaup.org

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Save up to 50 percent on your favorite magazines and on gift subscriptions. Choose from more than 1,000 titles including *Business Week*, *Good House-keeping*, *Newsweek*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Smithsonian*.

Call your local union office for more information.

AFT PLUS
The Benefits of Belonging

con't from page 1

MTU - Engineering & Science Vote

Recent declines in state appropriations gave further impetus to the organizing effort. "In a time of scarce resources," as one union communication put it, "it will be increasingly important for faculty to have a say in resource allocation." Supporters also noted that union representation could strengthen the University Senate by making its role in shared governance a part of a legally binding collective bargaining agreement. Citing a list of recent cases [also on the web at www.mtuaaup.org] where administrators simply ignored Senate resolutions, the union argued that collective bargaining would give faculty "A Seat at the Table."

"Our colleagues at other universities with a history of collective bargaining ... don't spend their time worrying about whether or not they will have health benefits next year," as a letter from union supporters put it shortly before the election. "They don't find positions being created in their departments without their knowledge so that a failed administrator can have an academic home."

The union's website currently features a long list of letters that focus on these and other benefits of collective bargaining from MTU faculty—including a former member of WSU's Engineering faculty, Dan Crowl, currently a chaired professor in Chemical Engineering at MTU. [See Dan's letter describing his experience at WSU on page 3.]

Among opponents of the union, some argued that unionizing would negate top professor's ability to negotiate their own raises. In fact, at unionized universities like Wayne State, the union negotiates pension and healthcare funding, annual raises and promotional increases, and the *minimum* salaries that must be paid to each faculty ranking— **the contract does not, however, put a ceiling on individual salaries**. Rather than leave all personnel decisions in the hands of administrators who may— or may not— place due-process above personal opinion, the collective bargaining agreement establishes standard rules and criteria for promotion and tenure, term contracts, selective salary adjustments, and other matters of professional concern.

con't on page 3

Letter from Professor Dan Crowl, Chemical Engineering, to MTU Faculty, 30 January, 2004

Faculty Colleagues:

I am writing this to share with you my thoughts on faculty unionization. I have been a member of AAUP for most of my 26 years of academic experience, with 16 of these years at Wayne State University. Wayne State was unionized several years prior to my arrival as an Assistant Professor in 1977.

My experience has shown that unionization is an effective mechanism for providing long-term stability for the faculty. Once a contract is settled, the issue of raise's and merit pools, benefits, and faculty handbook issues are fixed for the duration of the contract. There is an incredible sense of peace that comes with the signing of a multi-year contract – particularly in times of turmoil!

The AAUP Chapter at Wayne State represented my interests well, worked hard to defend all of the faculty, and gave us access to extra resources such as legal or financial analysis. Chapter decisions were guided by the membership with equal representation and a true seat at the table. The

presence of a union in no way restricted Wayne State's ability to attract talented faculty, maintain a strong promotion and tenure process, reward merit or conduct research. During my years at Wayne State I was promoted through the academic ranks from Assistant to Full Professor. I received several special individual raises. My program in process safety began and flourished there and grew to international stature during that period.

One question that I have heard at Michigan Tech is how unionization affects professionalism. I feel strongly that a person is not behaving professionally if they allow themselves to be abused – including abuses related to salary and benefits. Defending the profession collectively has the advantage of extending protection to those who may be less able to defend themselves....

In summary, I strongly support the current unionization drive and urge you to do the same. Please complete your signature cards and mail them so that we may take the next step to achieve the professional treatment we deserve.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Crowl,
Herbert H. Dow Professor of Chemical Process Safety

con't from page 2, MTU - Engineering & Science Vote

First contract

In the meantime, the union's election victory has already forced a fundamental rethinking of the faculty's role in university governance. In past years, the University Senate's constitution limited membership to non-union employees, which then included the entire faculty. To prevent the wholesale disqualification of tenured and tenure-track faculty, the Senate conducted a vote of its current members on October 6 (a week before the Michigan Employment Relations Commission officially ratified the union's victory) to overturn this provision. The proposal won a large majority—286 in favor and 166 opposed—but fell 16 votes short of the two-thirds needed. "I do believe that the senate can reconsider the election and call for a re-vote," said Senate President Terry Monson, who believes the rump constituency of non-union employees "will agree to allow tenured and tenure-track faculty back into the Senate."

While the Senate sorts out this anomalous situation, president Barna says the next step for the union is to begin preparations for bargaining. "We will be contacting all of the members of the bargaining unit to survey them regard-

ing their needs and concerns for the negotiating proposals. We will also be encouraging faculty to join MTU-AAUP in order to increase our collective strength in these negotiations." This includes the non-tenure track faculty who were excluded from the balloting by the university's claim that there is no "community of interest" linking tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. The union rejected this claim but felt that, rather than delay the vote indefinitely pending a decision on who would be included, it was important to win the first round of balloting and then move to organize the non-tenure-track faculty.

[This article was compiled from: the MTU-AAUP website, www.mtuaaup.org; Brad Salmen, "Union Rep Presents Case to MTU Senate," *The Daily Mining Gazette* (9/16/04); The Keweenaw Report, "MTU Unionization" (9/30/04); Brad Salmen, "MTU Faculty Vote to Unionize," *The Daily Mining Gazette* (9/30/04); *Tech Topics Online: Michigan Technological University's Faculty and Staff Newsletter*, "Senate Constitutional Change Fails" (10/8/04); MTU-AAUP Letter to Faculty (4/7/03); and AAUP Press Release of 9/30/04.]

WSU AAUP-AFT CHAPTER STATEMENT ON BALLOT PROPOSAL 2

The proposal on the Michigan ballot states: “THE UNION OF ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN IN MARRIAGE SHALL BE THE ONLY AGREEMENT RECOGNIZED AS MARRIAGE OR SIMILAR UNION FOR ANY PURPOSE.

The ballot proposal is very pernicious. Its language is sweeping and lends itself to a broad interpretation that would deny any protection whatsoever to all same-sex couples living in committed relationships. If the proposal simply read, “The union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as marriage,” it would be bad enough. The effect would be to declare that as a constitutional matter same-sex couples can never have the right to marry and so would forever prevent the Michigan courts from finding as the Massachusetts courts have done, that under the Michigan Constitution, same-sex couples have the same right to marry that the law provides for opposite-sex couples.

But the proposal is much worse. The language “recognized [as] similar union for any purpose” would forever prevent the Michigan courts from finding, as the Vermont courts have done, that under the Michigan Constitution, the law must provide substantially the same benefits, apart from marriage, for same-sex couples that it provides for opposite-sex couples. It would specifically prohibit the Michigan Legislature from ever enacting a law, as the Vermont Legislature has done, establishing civil unions for same-sex couples.

Interestingly enough, the proposal would not prohibit the Michigan Legislature from enacting a law establishing

civil unions for unmarried opposite-sex couples. This belies the claim that the proposal is about “protecting marriage” and shows that it is simply motivated by hostility toward same-sex couples living in committed relationships and is an attempt to say that such relationships are not entitled to legal recognition for any purpose.

Worst of all, from the standpoint of AAUP-AFT, this language could prohibit a governmental body such as WSU from providing “any” benefits at all to persons living in committed same-sex relationships. It would render illegal the current provision in the AAUP-AFT/WSU Collective Bargaining Agreement providing domestic partner benefits for same-sex couples (including bereavement leave). It would also prevent the State of Michigan and Michigan cities from ever providing domestic partner benefits for same-sex couples. But it would permit the state, the cities and the universities to provide domestic partner benefits for unmarried opposite-sex couples, which again shows that the proposal is not about “protecting marriage,” but only about discrimination against same-sex couples living in committed relationships.

The proposal is simply a blatant attempt to constitutionalize discrimination against same-sex couples living in committed relationships and to forever deny any recognition whatsoever to those relationships. For this reason the Wayne State AAUP-AFT urges its members to vote against Ballot Proposal 2.

Wayne State University Chapter

AAUP-AFT

5440 Cass, Suite 103
Detroit, MI 48202-3680

AAUP-AFT Executive Board

President

Charles J. Parrish

Vice President

Naida Simon

Secretary

Susan LaLiberté

Treasurer

Robert Arking

Member-at-Large

M.L. Liebler

Member-at-Large

Allen Goodman

Board Member

Ralph Parchment

Contract Implementation

Anca Vlasopolos - Faculty

Barbara Jones - Academic Staff

Grievance Coordinator

Mary Cay Sengstock - Faculty

Lothar Spang - Academic Staff

Information Coordinator

Steve Babson

Academic Staff Chair

Pynthia Caffee