



Representing Wayne State Faculty and Academic Staff

NEWSBRIEFS

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The Role of the Union in Collegial Governance: The Case of CULMA

On March 7, the Provost announced to the Academic Senate that she would recommend the abolishment of the College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs (CULMA) and the relocation of its constituent units to the Provost's office or the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The announcement has understandably raised many questions about the future of these programs and the job security of CULMA personnel. Of special concern to AAUP-AFT members is the role of the union in these affairs, particularly in light of the several occasions where due-process procedures may have been compromised.

Collegial Governance

Protection of collegial governance is a central goal of the AAUP-AFT, and the collective bargaining agreement contains multiple and legally binding guarantees that faculty and academic staff have voice and vote in determining the central issues of academic life—including tenure, Employment Security Status, promotion, selective salary, periodic review of colleges, consultation on budget matters, and the selection of principal administrators. One of the prime concerns of the union is to protect these elements of collegial governance and insure that, whatever the outcome regarding the Provost's proposal, they are maintained in spirit and deed.

Above all, the process needs to be genuinely consultative and as transparent as possible. President Reid's public statements in Lansing appeared to preempt the role of the Academic Senate in reviewing the Provost's proposal, and he has sent his regrets to the Senate for these comments. The failure to distribute the college review to CULMA members and the university community was ill-advised, particularly as the collective bargaining agreement was initially identified as the obstacle.

This is not the case, and the union has obtained a copy of the review and posted it on our website under "News."

Opinions may differ within the union's campus-

wide membership over the merits of the Provost's proposal, but the union does not negotiate the academic mission of the university. The Academic Senate is the appropriate venue for that debate, and the collective bargaining agreement protects the Senate's consultative role. Whatever substantive differences there may be concerning the CULMA proposal, however, there is a shared concern for process. On this basis, the membership meeting of April 6 voted unanimously to present the following five requests to the Administration:

AFT Provides New Retiree Health Benefits

Current and prospective retirees need to plan for potential health expenses “after Wayne.” In a context where the cost of health insurance is rising to unprecedented levels—roughly \$12,000, for example, in annual premiums for full family coverage under Blue Cross / Blue Shield (BC/BS)—the prospects for individuals seeking affordable healthcare are daunting.

While the AAUP-AFT has maintained comprehensive healthcare coverage with reasonable insurance copayments for employed members, we have not been able to win university-paid healthcare benefits for retirees. The union continues to seek such benefits through collective bargaining, but in their absence we have been looking for alternatives for our members.

We are therefore pleased to announce the availability of three very affordable retiree plans that are offered to affiliates of the Michigan State AFL-CIO: *Retiree Med Choice*, *Retiree Med Preferred* and *Retiree Med Plus*. As indicated in the accompanying chart, the annual cost of premiums for a retiree at age 65 ranges from a low of \$1,536 a year for the basic plan (*Choice*) to a high of \$2,868 for the highest coverage (*Plus*). Premium costs rise with age for current and prospective retirees to a maximum for those 80 or older of \$2,580 for *Choice* and \$5,112 for *Plus*.

What do They Cover?

All three plans provide a “Medi Gap” benefit that pays all or most of the difference between the actual cost of medical services and the approved cost that Medicare will pay. There are no restrictions on choice of hospital, physician, or clinics.

For example, while Medicare will pay the cost for the first 60 days of hospitalization (“Part A”), individuals must pay a deductible of \$876; for the 61st thru 90th day, the deductible rises to \$219 *per day* and for the 91st thru 150th day it rises to \$438 *per day*. After that, Medicare pays nothing. All three of the Retiree Med plans cover the full cost of these deductibles and, beyond day 150, the full cost of hospitalization for up to 365 days.

For Medical Services (Medicare “Part B”), the plans vary in their coverage for 1) deductibles and 2) excess charges above the cost that is “approved” by Medicare. The *Choice* plan does not cover these excess charges; Preferred and Plus do, and the latter also provides a prescription drug benefit. The chart below provides a brief comparison among the three plans

	<u>Choice</u>	<u>Preferred</u>	<u>Plus</u>
Medicare Part A	Medigap Expenses	Medigap Expenses	Medigap Expenses
Medicare Part B	Medigap Expenses Less Excess Charges Above Medicare Approved Amounts	Medigap Expenses	Medigap Expenses
Home Health Care	Medigap Expenses	Medigap Expenses	Medigap Expenses
Other Benefits	Expenses Incurred Abroad	Expenses Incurred Abroad	Expenses Incurred Abroad <u>Prescription Benefits</u>

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Cost Per Year

Age 65 – 67	\$1,536	\$1,788	\$2,868
Age 80+	\$2,580	\$3,060	\$5,112

How Do They Do That?

The Michigan Public Employee Trust, owned by the Michigan AFL-CIO, is the non-profit 501c3 that, in turn, owns Michigan Employee Benefit Services, or MEBS. In contrast to BC/BS of Michigan, which pays its CEO \$2.3 million and has an administrative cost burden that eats up 19-20% of premiums, MEBS has administrative costs of only 7%. Formed in 1986 as a licensed insurance agency, MEBS has the single purpose of providing affordable health insurance to AFL-CIO affiliates in Michigan and Ohio. MEBS is one of the fastest growing corporations of its kind and currently administers healthcare coverage for 70,000 participants. Its retiree program is underwritten by Monumental Life Insurance Company of Baltimore, rated "AA" by Standard and Poors.

Eligibility

All current and retired members of the AAUP-AFT are eligible for enrollment in these plans at age 65 or older. You can obtain the necessary forms and sponsorship letter by contacting our office (577-1750, aaupaft@wayne.edu).

All AAUP-AFT retirees already have the right to buy into their current health insurance as provided by Wayne State by taking on the full cost of the premium, that is, their current contribution plus the roughly 50-90% share (depending on the plan) that is paid for by the university under the collective bargaining agreement. All of these current plans provide prescription drug benefits.

The union's offering of these three plans does not constitute an endorsement of any one of them over what is currently available to retirees. Still, the plans represent an opportunity for members to expand the menu of options available to them as they plan for retirement.

RUTGERS UNION VOTES FOR JOINT AFFILIATION WITH AFT

Faculty, graduate employees and counselors at Rutgers University in New Jersey have voted overwhelmingly to extend their American Association of University Professors affiliation to a joint affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The 575-222 vote among the membership came March 28, a month after a 19-3 vote for affiliation by the AAUP chapter's executive council. The affiliation brings more than 4,000 academic professionals on all three campuses of the university system under the AFT banner. "We anticipate a much more effective political presence in Trenton once we are allied with AFT colleagues," says Rudolph Bell, president of the 30-year-old Rutgers

AAUP chapter. "When the AFL-CIO makes its presence felt in the political arena, the AFT is at the table," and the AAUP wants to be there too, he says. The affiliation has a three-year trial period, after which the chapter will vote again. The national AAUP is scheduled to approve the affiliation this summer.

Faculty and academic staff at Wayne State voted in 1998 by a 2-1 margin to extend their AAUP affiliation to a joint affiliation with the Michigan Federation of Teachers (MFT).

(Portions of the above taken from *Inside AFT*, April 4, 2005)

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- 1) Distribute the written “charge” to the CULMA Review Committee
- 2) Distribute the final and official report of the Review Committee
- 3) Provide the rationale for the proposal to the Academic Senate
- 4) Provide for an Impact Statement
- 5) Confirm a commitment to a consultative process

Job Security

Of equal importance is the issue of job security. For those protected by union contracts (the AAUP-AFT for faculty and academic staff, the UAW for clerical workers) the collective bargaining agreements will continue to safeguard the employment status of non-probationary employees. AAUP-AFT members with tenure or Employment Security Status will continue to work at WSU no matter what the outcome of the Provost’s proposal; reassurances by the Administration that are straightforward and unambiguous on this score have been shared with the Board of Governors. Employees on term agreements will retain the same prospects— and risks— within their units as before.

In summary, the union’s role in the CUMLA matter is to assure that employment rights guaranteed under the collective bargaining agreement are protected and that the academic governance processes for considering and deciding the matter are followed. The union intends to fulfill its obligations on both counts.

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