

Michigan Conference

American Association of University Professors

Chapter

Delta College

Considering including support staff in College Senate
See page 6.

Kalamazoo College

Increasing membership
See page 4.

Oakland University

Tenure grievance gone to arbitration
See page 3.

UofM-Flint

Honoring courageous students
See page 3.

Wayne

Tentative Agreement reached, funding for retiree health care
See page 6.



President's Column by President Joel Russell

This issue of the Michigan Conference newsletter will alert you to a normal and a special transition for the conference. This is my first column as the new president of the conference. The conference changes presidents every two or four years but our former Executive Director, Bob Grosvenor, served in that role for fifteen years. With his extensive labor and academic background, Bob established the AAUP Michigan Conference as an important participant in the Lansing political arena and brought us national recognition as one of AAUP's premier state conference organizations. With this strong foundation we are pleased to welcome Jeffrey Lee as our new Executive Director to undertake a different set of challenges. Jeff brings to this position the research, organizational, and communication skills that are critical for providing new levels of support for both our traditional advocacy chapters and collective bargaining chapters while seeking to establish active chapters at other colleges and universities.

I should first introduce myself to those who have not attended our annual meetings for the last five years. I am a Professor of Chemistry at Oakland University who a decade and a half ago with NSF support redirected my research to the design, development, and evaluation of chemical visualization software to enhance student learning of ba-

News/Events

Experts List Being Compiled

see page 2

Read "Heidi and Bill" and Contribute to the AAUP Capital Campaign

see page 3

Grosvenor Retires

see page 4

Domestic Partnership Case Heard by Michigan Court of Appeals

see page 4

Michigan Conference Holds Annual Meeting

see page 5

Conference Lobbies Governor Regarding Governing Board Appointments

see page 5

Conference Delegates Lobby U.S. Senators

see page 5

Support Equal Opportunity

see page 7

sic chemical concepts. I have been a member of the OU University Senate for the majority of my career and chaired many of its key committees as well as served multiple times on the college and university faculty review bodies. I have been an active member of the OU AAUP chapter since the 1970s serving on multiple negotiating teams and its Executive Committee including three terms as chapter president. Currently I am chapter grievance officer and member of the negotiating team once again. For the past five years I served as Vice President of the Michigan Conference and program chair for its annual meetings. I have represented the OU chapter at AAUP national meetings and Collective Bargain Congress meetings since 1999 and was recently elected to the CBC Executive Committee.

One project that Jeff and I have already begun is to have the Michigan Conference take an active role in helping our chapters to publicize the impact of the corporatization of universities and take actions to re-focus on the core missions of liberal education and advancement of the frontiers of knowledge. In order to stem this nation-wide trend in higher education “management,” we must get many more faculty to recognize the likely future for corporate higher education and their commitment to an alternative. The results of the past few decades of faculty’s narrow concentration on their scholarship, their research students, and their disciplines and desire to just be left alone in these pursuits has resulted in corporate management replacing academic shared governance. Although we might be quite content in our laboratories and libraries, if we look around we find we are a steadily shrinking component of the faculty with contingent faculty becoming the majority at many institutions. Our corporate managers focus on their perceived productive component of graduating bodies and find cost benefits from use of part-time faculty with lower salaries and much lower benefits. As fewer full-time faculty participate in academic governance a growth in middle management has replaced faculty in former governance roles resulting in a less academic and more management focus.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TESTIFY BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE

Do you wonder on what facts public policy changes are based?

Do you wish legislators would consult more experts when crafting laws?

Now is your chance to make a difference!

The Michigan AAUP Conference is establishing an Experts List for distribution to state legislators and executive officers. This is completely voluntary, but we would like to have as many professors participate as possible. This list will be used by government officials as a resource to research and identify the implications of potential policy changes. You could be contacted to:

- Provide background information
- Help individual decision-makers understand the effects of a policy shift
- Give expert testimony before a committee

All disciplines are needed, especially hard and social sciences. One goal of this endeavor is to allow legislators to see how we all benefit from academic freedom and its importance to learning and the growth of knowledge, while also providing them with a glimpse of how vital their appropriations are to higher education.

Again, this is voluntary, but you are urged to participate. There is no enrollment deadline; you can always be added to the Experts List. However, this list cannot be distributed before a critical mass of academic participation exists, so do not delay. If you are interested please send the following to the conference office at miaaup@aol.org

Name

Institution

Fields of Expertise (as wide or narrow as you feel comfortable)

Appropriate Contact Information (i.e. office address/phone number, e-mail address)

Example, Specific Expertise:

John Smith, Professor of Social Work

Respectable Michigan University

- Welfare and Single-Parent Kids
- Parenting on minimum wage
(contact information)

Example, General Expertise:

John Smith, Professor of Land Management

Respectable Michigan University

- Wetlands Management
(contact information)

WILFRED KAPLAN WRITES MEMOIRS

Wilfred Kaplan, past President of the Conference, has written a 400-page book, based on letters between him and his late wife Heidi from 1936 to 1938. They met in a mathematics classroom in Zurich. The letters, translated from German, tell of a beautiful love story. The book contains many photographs and drawings from the letters, as well as essays on topics such as marriage, viewing art, friendship. Those interested in obtaining a copy of the book, entitled: "Heidi and Bill – Beginning of Our Lives Together," can send a message to verenapress@msn.com. The book is priced at \$40. A portion of the cost of books ordered through the AAUP will be donated to the Campaign for the Common Good, the AAUP's capital campaign.

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY REPORT

By Jim Cipielewski, Chapter President

While the Oakland University campus is relatively quiet as faculty venture out on research trips and have the opportunity to spend time with families, there is much going on beneath the calm. Throughout the past year we have been engaged in a grievance of a tenure case that has now gone on to arbitration. This tenure case had not received one negative vote as it went through three levels of faculty review; yet tenure and promotion were denied by the administration with no opportunity for faculty response before that negative decision was confirmed by the Board of Trustees. We have just completed the arbitration hearing and are awaiting the decision which is expected in late August.

At the same time we have begun to bargain a new agreement between the faculty and the administration. The five-member faculty team is led by Mike Latcha, who had experience on several previous bargaining teams. The team prepared for bargaining by meeting often with a Bargaining Forum made up of representatives of each academic unit. This forum prepared and analyzed a survey of faculty members as to issues to be addressed. They will continue to help inform and organize the faculty throughout the bargaining. In addition, the bargaining team met with most units and

interest groups on campus to discuss items specific to them. These preparations should give the team a strong sense of the faculty's concerns.

We also held elections for new members of the chapter's executive committee. Mike Latcha was elected as Vice President for another term. Frances Jackson was reelected as an at-large Director. Karen Miller joins the executive committee for the first time as an at-large Director. And this year we have added an at-large Director position on the executive committee reserved for a special lecturer (someone who teaches 16 credit hours during the year) and which will be filled by Jay Burke. Returning for another year of their terms will be Jim Cipielewski, President; Frank Lepkowski, Treasurer; Linda Schweitzer and Tom Giberson, at-large Directors; and Joel Russell, Grievance Officer. We will have an election for a Contract Officer in the Fall. The new executive committee will take office upon ratification of the new bargaining agreement.

We also congratulate Joel Russell, one of our members well known at the state level on his recent election as an at-large member of the national Collective Bargaining Congress. We are sure that Joel's wide experience as an executive committee member, chief negotiator, and his service to the Michigan AAUP will serve all of us well.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - FLINT

By Nathan Oaklander, Chapter President

For the last ten years, the Flint AAUP chapter sponsors a Courageous Students Award for those students who overcome challenges to pursue their education. This year there were four awardees. Their stories are both heartbreaking and encouraging. They have overcome family tragedy and life-threatening personal illnesses. We honored Timothy Elliot, Jessica Dixon, Jeffrey Ruth and Rebecca Aaron during our presentation ceremony with a certificate and \$100 award. It was our faculty that was honored, though, to have four students whose strength and courage is an inspiration to all of us.

GROSVENOR RETIRES

After 16 years as Executive Director of the Michigan Conference, Bob Grosvenor retired on April 8, 2006. A reception was held in his honor following the conference's annual meeting. Two of Bob's daughters, Nancy and Carol, flew in from Virginia and California respectively to be with their father. At the reception, Bob thanked the members for their kind words and the opportunity to work with them. He recalled being asked during his interview in 1990 how many years he anticipated working. Already in his mid-sixties at the time, he replied, "maybe five or six years." Not only did he exceed his timetable, he exceeded all expectations. "Rarely a meeting has gone by where I, and I think all of the presidents before me, aren't thankful we hired Bob," commented Tom Dietz. We all thank Bob and wish him the best of luck.

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

By Henry Cohen, Chapter President

The Kalamazoo College AAUP successfully negotiated with its college president for the restoration of the full range of professional duties to a faculty member some of whose responsibilities a previous president had curtailed. We proposed to the Faculty Executive Committee a modification of the Plan of Employment that puts in place a mechanism for dealing with faculty complaints of unfair treatment at the hands of an administrator. Our group also raised two issues with the Instructional Service Advisory Committee related to the ability of faculty members to more fully control the computers that they use to do their research. First, we issued a report on dental insurance coverage among Great Lakes Colleges Association institutions in order to keep that issue in people's minds. In addition, we are issuing our annual summary of where our college stands among GLCA schools with respect to salary and total compensation in all ranks. Finally, I am happy to report increased membership.

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP HEARING

On September 27, 2005, Lansing Circuit Court Judge Joyce Draganchuk ruled that the Michigan "Marriage Amendment" passed in 2004 does not restrict public employers from providing health and other benefits to domestic partners, thereby overturning the interpretation of the Attorney General, Mike Cox. In that case, the Michigan Conference of the AAUP submitted an amicus brief on behalf of the plaintiffs (City of Kalamazoo et al). The ruling was subsequently appealed to the state Court of Appeals. We resubmitted the amicus brief for that hearing which was held on April 11, 2006. The three-judge panel asked few questions. The attorney for the appellant (Attorney General) offered few critiques of the Circuit Court ruling, instead focusing on the wording of the amendment and how Judge Draganchuk's interpretation was too loose. The attorneys for the appellate focused on the publicized intent of the amendment and its consistency with the previous ruling. Attorneys representing Wayne State University and the University of Michigan presented the economic implications of eliminating existing benefits for their employees.

Most people familiar with this case expect this ruling to be appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court. In fact, the presiding judge commented that the Court of Appeals hearing was merely a brief stop on the case's path to the state Supreme Court. As of late June, a ruling has not yet been handed down.

NEWSLETTER FORMAT ABOUT TO CHANGE

This edition of the conference newsletter will be the last mass distributed on paper. Starting with the fall edition, electronic copies will be mailed to chapter offices for distribution to our members. This change will allow us to incorporate more interactive features at a fraction of the cost. This will include more stories, links to related issues and stories and finally, color pictures and graphics. We realize that some people prefer the paper version and a limited number of hard copies will be available at your chapter offices. If you would like to paper copy mailed directed to you, please call the conference office at (517) 482-2775 or e-mail miaaup@aol.com and provide your name and full address.

CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

The Radisson in downtown Lansing was host to the conference's 52nd annual meeting. The topic of the day was "Tenure in the 21st Century," but before the program could begin, new officers had to be elected. Outgoing President Tom Dietz presided as new President Joel Russell (Oakland), Vice-President Sally McCracken, and at-large board members Joel Boyd (Western Michigan), Howard Bunsis (Eastern Michigan) and Bruce Barna (Michigan Tech) were elected. We were honored to have two provosts – Kim Wilcox (Michigan State) and Virinder Moudgil (Oakland) – address the importance of tenure and each of their visions of the future of the tenured and tenure-track professoriate. Patrick Shaw, Associate Secretary from the national AAUP office, articulated the role AAUP has and will continue to play in the establishment and protection of tenure. Jeffrey Lee, co-author of "Assessing the Necessity of Extending the Maximum Probationary Period" detailed the University of Michigan administration's attempt to prolong the time before a tenure decision must be made and the faculty's response. During lunch, Pat Shaw gave a heartfelt speech enumerating retiring Executive Director Bob Grosvenor's many contributions to the AAUP at both the state and national level.

The day concluded with an afternoon session on health care. Dennis Simpson and Ariel Anderson described their work in compiling and comparing the various benefit plans at each of our chapters. Their effort was tremendous and we thank them, and will continue to be appreciative as contracts become negotiated in future years. The last speaker of the day was Tad Smith discussing the steps the University of Michigan has taken to reduce health care and prescription drug costs. A long, informative day was capped by a reception honoring Bob Grosvenor. Before the day was over, Sally McCracken, 2007 annual meeting chair, was already making plans. It will certainly be an event not to be missed.

AAUP ASKS GRANHOLM TO CHANGE NOMINATION QUALIFICATIONS

If you are worried that your institution's governing board does not understand the goals of higher education and the needs of its professionals, the AAUP is fighting for you. In a strongly worded letter, conference President Joel Russell and Executive Director Jeffrey Lee pressed Governor Jennifer Granholm to

make higher education experience a qualification for appointment to governing boards. Constitutionally, those appointments are at the discretion of the governor's office with the advice and consent of the senate.

Russell's goal is "just to get one or two board members who understand higher education" which could provide more than just a sympathetic to faculty concerns. "Someone who knows education will ask presidents tough questions and making sure the board gets all of the facts and hears all of the sides before coming to a decision," continued Russell. This year the governor will make 24 appointments to 12 boards across the state. If she is re-elected, she will have appointed all of the board members not elected by state ballot (Michigan State, Michigan and Wayne State) by the end of her second term. Added Lee, "If we are going to use Michigan's universities to a vehicle to improve the economy, we need the people who know higher education best to govern it."

THE IVORY TOWER ON THE HILL

On a sunny day on early June, a small contingent of professors from Michigan walked up Capitol Hill to make their voices heard. The agenda for the AAUP's annual meeting in Washington D.C. always includes time for attendees to lobby their Congressmen and Senators. This year representatives from Eastern Michigan, Northern Michigan, Michigan State, Kalamazoo Valley and Oakland met with staff members from the offices of both Senators Levin and Stabenow. Both meetings were productive and reassuring. In fact during one meeting, conference President Joel Russell remarked, "Michigan is lucky to have two senators who understand the importance of higher education and critical role academic freedom plays."

Unfortunately, neither senator was available for the meetings. Votes were occurring on the Senate floor and the senators were needed there. But, our voices were heard. The contingent discussed on the lack of faculty support on governing boards, the corporatization of higher education, the infamous "Academic Bill of Rights" and the languishing Higher Education Act among other issues. Any positive feelings generated during these meetings were amplified after discussions with professors from other states. "While we walked away from the Hill reassured, everyone else seemed to be disappointed or nervous. They worried about their Congressmen ignoring academic freedom. I felt like we would get the first call if any legislation that encroached on academic freedom hit the floor," added Executive Director Jeffrey Lee.

DELTA COLLEGE CHAPTER OF THE AAUP

By Raymond S. Pfeiffer, Chapter President

The Delta College chapter once again sponsored the annual awards dinner for full-time employees. The chapter granted an award for Service to Professor Neville Britto for his extensive, long-term work in the community and to three employees of Delphi for their work with Delta coop students. Profs. Drew Colenbrander and Alan Hill were given awards for their leadership in college governance. Prof. Hill has worked long and hard for the Delta AAUP chapter.

The Delta chapter has been promoting discussions among faculty over the question of whether to support a proposal to include the college "support staff" in the Delta College Senate. The Senate is currently composed of two groups from the college: the faculty and the administrative and professional staff. The faculty currently has a nearly 2/3 majority vote in the senate. Support staff members have proposed that the faculty reduce its majority vote to a minority vote in order to make way for support staff membership in the senate. The senate is the body that forms all of the major academic policies for Delta College and submits them for approval to the college president and the board of trustees.

The support staff argue that many of their members are highly educated and qualified, and should have some say in the forming of academic policies that they carry out. Opponents argue that the faculty has the basic responsibility for making academic policy, and should not give up its majority. Those who favor inclusion of support staff say that faculty rarely vote as a block on major issues. Opponents argue that there is no good reason for faculty to surrender their authority. Those in favor argue that democracy would favor inclusion, and that the current exclusion is discriminatory and demeaning.

Surprisingly, a majority of the faculty have shown support for the measure. Although it has not yet been put up for a final vote.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

By Charles Parrish, Chapter President

It gives me great pleasure to announce that we have completed the negotiations for a new three-year collective bargaining agreement. The Tentative Agreement extends the basic terms of our present contract, with some significant changes. It establishes a new vision benefit, raises salary caps, and, of special significance, takes the first step towards establishing retiree healthcare benefits. In addition, it incorporates a Letter of Agreement that settles the partial tenure grievance issue in the School of Medicine (SOM).

The proposed agreement provides for a raise over the three-year term of the contract that amounts to approximately 10.2% (the number is approximate because it includes the annual promotional increases which are usually about .15%). Each year there will be raises of 2% across-the-board and 1.25% selective. The salary caps for the across-the-board are increased substantially. In the first year they are \$84,897 for those on nine-month and \$101,876 for those on twelve-month appointments. These have been raised to \$90,000 and \$120,000, respectively. Salary minimums and caps will be raised each year of the contract by 3.25%, instead of 2% as in the past. By the third year, the caps will be \$95,945 and \$127,927.

A joint union-administration committee will address the issue of funding healthcare benefits to our members when they retire. In order to push the efforts in this matter along and to show the union's commitment to such a benefit, we have agreed to forego one-half of one percent of our raises for the first year, with the money earmarked for funding retiree healthcare benefits if agreement can be found on the size and the source of the University's subsidy. One half of the union's good-faith showing will come from the across-the-board and one half from the selective pools. The amount will be held in a separate account and, if agreement cannot be found by July 31, 2007, returned to the across-the-board and selective pools from which they were taken (plus interest) in 2007-2008.

Some will object to using part of the salary increase to help jump start negotiations on retiree healthcare. It could be argued that the Administration should be putting up all the funds for any such benefit. I agree, but we have to recognize that in the prevailing labor-management climate. Our willingness to make some sacrifice to get the ball rolling is a beginning. But, there are other arguments too. First, Wayne's aspirations as a major research university depend on being competitive

for new faculty. Most of those with whom we compete do offer a health retirement benefit and we should too. Second, at Wayne we have a union that is committed to defending the rights and benefits of its members, and that includes retirees. Third, healthcare benefits provide an additional incentive for faculty and academic staff who want to retire. Lastly, we deserve these benefits because the Board of Governors in its collective wisdom has given very generous retirement benefits to President Reid. If he gets them, we want them.

Finally, we reached an agreement on partial tenure in the clinical departments of the School of Medicine. Under the agreement, all basic scientists with less than 50% tenure will have their appointments raised to 50% tenure. This means that they are guaranteed at least a one-half time appointment in the future, and that they will be fully covered for fringe benefits, including health care. In the past, being cut to 25% tenure meant no guarantee of fringe benefits if their appointments were cut back. Further, it was agreed that there would be no further appointments in the basic science departments at less than 100% tenure. This is not everything that the union wanted, but it is a considerable improvement over the past situation in the School of Medicine

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NEED YOUR HELP

Submitted by One United Michigan

A report issued by the Center for the Education of Women at the University of Michigan says that passage of the so-called Michigan Civil Rights Initiative would eliminate important affirmative action programs needed to ensure Michigan can overcome segregation and improve its economy. The study, authored by Susan W. Kaufmann, associated director of CEW, reviewed the decade of evidence gathered since California passed Proposition 209, a virtually identical proposal to the anti-affirmative action program that Michigan will vote on this fall.

“Evidence from California indicates that Prop. 209 has eroded or eliminated previously legal, court-sanctioned efforts by state and local government and education institutions to reach out to women and minorities in order to reverse historic discrimination and exclusion by providing fair and equal access to opportunity,” the report concludes. “This evidence further suggests that affirmative action remains an important

tool for disrupting old patterns of exclusion and segregation, promoting diverse classrooms and workplaces in which innovation is fostered, ensuring equity, meeting the country’s workforce needs, generating upward mobility and creating a diverse cadre of leaders prepared to lead Michigan and the nation through a difficult period of economic transition.”

“In 2006, UCLA, which is located in the county with the second largest African American population in the United States, will enroll the smallest number of entering African American freshmen since at least 1973,” the report states. Similar losses of minority enrollment in Michigan would result in a reduction in the number of doctors, lawyers and other professional willing to serve the state’s and nation’s underserved communities, with serious implications for health status and leadership development in communities of color.

This past spring, the Michigan Conference became a member of the One United Michigan coalition. If you wish to actively assist in the effort to equal opportunity, One United Michigan suggests the following steps:

- Write letters to members of the Michigan Legislature.
- Visit your legislator. Legislators can have a lot of influence with their constituents.
- Take advantage of every opportunity to speak out in opposition to this initiative, whether it’s in the course of your job or to the person behind you at the grocery store. Word of mouth can be very effective in defeating the initiative.
- Organize a letter-writing campaign
- Form diverse teams to meet with local newspaper editorial boards. Be prepared with written information to leave with them.
- Work with the media, to get your message across.
- Host a speaker for your organizational meetings.
- Hold a public forum
- Have your organization submit a resolution or statement supporting affirmative action.
- Send a press release about it to your local paper.

For Further information please visit our website at www.OneUnitedMichigan.org

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AAUP MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Note: When you join, your membership will extend for twelve months from the month payment is received in the national office.

Full-time – AAUP & Michigan Conference & Chapter - \$184

Entrant* - AAUP & Michigan Conference & Chapter - \$114

Part-time – AAUP & Michigan Conference & Chapter - \$62

*Entrant membership is offered to non-tenured faculty for four years.

Check Membership category: Full-time Entrant Part-time

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