

AAUP NEWSLETTER

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Montgomery College Chapter

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President's Corner

By Rose Sachs, Rockville

Some five years ago, the negotiating teams for the faculty and for the administration, along with the executive vice presidents, the Director of Human Resources, and others, participated in a two-day training on Interest Based Bargaining. Interest Based Bargaining, much like any other viable system of problem solving, consists of several sequential steps: 1) identify/clarify the issue/problem, 2) identify the interests of each group of stakeholders, 3) brainstorm possible scenarios/solutions, 4) discuss each possible scenario/solution (keep, omit, combine), and 5) (which, as one might suspect, comes at the end of the process) develop a solution/conditions with which everyone can live. Inherent in this process are an honest and open sharing of information and respect for alternative viewpoints. The negotiating teams, with a few minor relapses (to be expected), have been able to devise creative solutions and negotiate agreements that have served the interests of both management and faculty, and, for the most part, both faculty and management have come through these last three rounds of negotiations with a greater understanding of the issues and a respect for each other's perspectives, intelligence, and integrity. Our experience with Interest Based Bargaining taught us that coming to the table with an open mind and attending to a process usually produces a positive outcome; conversely, focusing solely on the outcome usually derails

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Teaching Experiment: Slow Boat to China

By Jack Suruda, Retired

No matter how you look at it, last summer's Asian experiment, sending two English instructors to teach at Macau Millenium College, ran aground, becoming an unfortunate victim of haste—an inattentive rush job: too little thinking, even less planning and hands-on preparation, and no follow-up. Program creators likewise neglected to attend to participating faculty.

If Montgomery College offers its qualified teachers another opportunity to teach in Macau during summer 2005, English faculty would do well to decline the offer. Either that, or faculty volunteers should check for evidence that numerous program flaws have been fixed.

China, an enormous world power and the leading economic influence in Asia, exerts a powerful and incremental appeal to a huge audience: government economists and international leaders, corporate organizations and global industries, college educators and world travelers. For educators, especially those able to free themselves from local or family commitments, the allure of exotic summer travel combined with an overseas teaching assignment stirs thoughts of adventure as well as service. However, a new venture demands careful preparation.

In fact, international teachers bring unique talents to far-off situations, providing crucial skills for worthy causes and worthy students. For such service—providing linguistic talents to a country such as China, professional volunteers deserve fair recompense. They should also expect no less than a properly organized academic and living environment and, at the least, several arranged opportunities to taste the Chinese lifestyle—the opportunity to experience what can be called China's material culture—what an educated traveler absorbs through the senses—things she sees, tastes, hears, smells, and touches.

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the process, stalls any outcome, and makes everybody very cross. For the College community as a whole, collaborative problem solving of this type engendered a more harmonious environment inclusive of trust and mutual respect. Having said this, my questions are: 1) So, how did the faculty and administration get to this current environment of that which appears to be mutual paranoia and 2) is this where we really want to be?

Almost daily, new issues arise, issues in which both faculty and administrators race madly towards conclusions, and in which both faculty and administrators are misquoted or, at the very least, quoted out of context (of course, without information sharing and discussion, there is no context). Miscommunication and misunderstanding seem to underlie almost every major issue with which we are contending. Administrators appear to judge all faculty by and attempt to establish policy aimed at those few who do not meet their responsibilities, the faculty leave policy (which I will get to later), a case in point. During a time in which many organizations are encouraging the use of telecommunication to resolve traffic and parking problems, one dean using a highly unusual interpretation of the Contract has put faculty on notice that they are required to be physically on campus four days a week, regardless of the number of distance learning classes they teach. This particular *policy*, should it become widespread, would indeed save the College some money: we would no longer need to print a schedule of distance learning classes because no one would be able to teach them. Perhaps, even more telling is the recent request for clarification of the definition of an office hour in terms of minutes. The answer to this question, needless to say, is irrelevant; the question, however, speaks to the apparent systemic distrust of faculty by the administration.

The administration's distrust of faculty is matched only by the faculty's distrust of the administration. Recently, as many of you may know, an email went to all Rockville faculty, delineating the policy on safety, security, and tidiness. From this email the inference could be, and was made, that important information and articles, etc., aimed at stimulating critical thinking and an exchange of ideas would be systematically seized from our bulletin boards and office doors and destroyed. Despite the ensuing palaver about academic freedom and the essential characteristics of an educational institution, not to mention IT's insightful contributions, the intention of the email was never formally clarified. And so, when those of us who came to work one morning to find our department bulletin boards and office doors had been stripped, we were all too willing to believe that indeed our assessment had been correct: our protests, once again, had not been heard and our contributions to our students are of little value. Many faculty members are still unwilling to accept the explanation that it was all a terrible mistake, a

misinterpreted directive, which, to be fair, by all indications, is the truth. Compared to many of the more significant issues we face, the policy on tidiness incident may seem a bit frivolous; that the faculty feels the need to vehemently guard academic freedom and to be prepared at a moment's notice to do battle in order to meet the needs of our students, however, is serious and problematic, indeed.

I do not really believe that either the faculty or the administration is particularly content with the current climate; we are surely stronger and more productive in unison than in separate and conflicting camps. But relationships require work, the work of recognizing that problems exist and the work of trying to fix them. In our classrooms we attempt to teach our students that which we were taught: to think critically and deliberatively, to obtain all of the salient information before reaching a decision, to engage in collaborative and process-driven problem solving, to respect and embrace diverse viewpoints, and to take action based on the good of the whole, rather than on the promotion of self. We live in a terribly complex and treacherous world environment, one in which these very basic lessons seem to have been forgotten. It would be a pity if we, as an academic institution, forget these lessons as well.

UPDATES

Although accurate information is a bit hard to come by, I will share what I know about some of the issues that are looming large, issues about which I receive almost daily questions:

Faculty Leave: Apparently the deans, College-wide, were directed to come up with a policy to standardize faculty leave. It was reported at this past meeting of the Academic Assembly that this directive came essentially from and was agreed upon by AAUP and that the Executive Committee's concern is with the standardization of implementation, not with the conditions. This report is not entirely accurate. First of all, the Chapter does not have the authority to give directives; secondly, although we requested that a standard and equitable (equitable being the operative term) policy be effected, no one ever said that it did not matter what the policy was as long as it was standard; and finally, no formal agreement was reached, or even broached on this issue. The Executive Committee has never seen this policy statement, nor have we engaged in a joint discussion, in or out of negotiations, about the policy. Some sidebar conversations occurred, primarily about the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and professional

week. Sidebar conversations do not establish policy. I have requested a copy of the draft (?) of this particular policy. I am confident that the document will be forwarded to the Chapter and that once we have reviewed the conditions set forth, we will have the opportunity to discuss these conditions, in or out of negotiations. At this point, the Chapter has been misquoted and our intentions misunderstood; for us to comment on a document yet unseen, I believe, can only lead to the deans being misquoted and their intentions misunderstood.

Division Chairs/Assistant Deans: As most of you may remember, information trickled down to the faculty last semester that management was planning a reorganization of the academic area that included the hiring of division chairs, who would, regardless of title, function essentially as administrators, and that part of their responsibilities would be to evaluate faculty. Moreover, several deans had informed us that these positions had been placed in the budget, and that a pilot of six areas, two on each campus, had been proposed. We were subsequently informed by the administration that this information, information that we passed on to the faculty, was wholly inaccurate: this particular plan was one of many possible plans, and discussion, College-wide, was scheduled to occur before any plan was decided upon and/or enacted. Indeed, discussion has occurred, College-wide, in the form of directed discussions led by faculty, administrators, and staff. In the sessions I attended and from information shared by those who attended other sessions, it was clear that most faculty are in agreement that the deans, particularly those with very large areas, are faced with overwhelming responsibilities and are in need of support personnel. Main concerns voiced by faculty were: 1) that no decision be made without a clear statement of the problem and an examination of the deans' responsibilities that contribute to the problem; 2) that an examination of the entire academic area occur, beginning with the administrative assistants, who are charged with more and more responsibilities that once belonged to other areas, such as Human Resources and Procurement; 3) that an assistant/associate dean not be hired as a 12-month, non-bargaining faculty member, but rather, as an assistant/associate dean; 4) that the deans continue to evaluate faculty; and 5) that an additional layer of personnel not be placed between the faculty and the administration, thus limiting the opportunity for direct communication between faculty and deans, which would only serve to perpetuate the current climate.

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Last summer, AAUP members Dr. Jorinde van den Berg (5 years teaching at Germantown) and Dr. Maria Donahue (21 years at Takoma Park) were the two volunteers selected to teach a 2004 summer course for six weeks at the Macau Millenium College in Macau, an island peninsula off the coast of mainland China. In late February, Montgomery College administrators drew up the proposed program basics. Essentials included the following items:

- prior assessment testing
 - an EN101A course format, syllabus, and text books
 - no more than 20 students in a 4 day week, daytime schedule
 - \$8000 minimum wage stipend
 - 2 ESH for evaluation
 - accommodations and transportation.
- (Essentials included no arranged trips.)

Reality differed from the proposed program. As the departure date neared, MC reneged, reducing the teaching stipend from \$8000 to \$7500. Then, the adventure continued. Beginning a more than 20 hour trek, Professors van den Berg and Donahue embarked on a United Airlines flight from DC's Dulles to Chicago's O'Hare airport, then traversed north Canada, the North Pole, and Siberia to Hong Kong. After a two hour wait, a one hour jetfoil trip deposited them in Macau—like Hong Kong, a special administrative region governed separately and differently from mainland China.

For the arrivals, the adventure soon darkened. More accurately, the wheels fell off. The EN101A class format disappeared (since assessments for "students"—croupiers, limo drivers, casino workers, cashiers, hostesses, pit bosses, waiters, security personnel, and fan tan dealers from the local gambling emporium—ranged from mostly low end EL101 to a few rare EN101A's). Writing ability also ranged low end. (One student wanted to "dilate her horizons.") Other dark surprises emerged. There were no text books and no applicable syllabus format; furthermore, "smart" classroom technology (too smart) did not accommodate American Zip disks. For both professors, student enrollment had ballooned from the promised 20 to 50; a standard daylight schedule morphed into 3 hour morning and evening shifts to accommodate "student" work schedules; classes ran M/W/F with Tuesday and Thursday left for manufacturing classroom materials and non-stop essay grading; 48 classroom instructional hours blimped up to 96. Professor Donahue ended up with a similar manic but somewhat reduced schedule: no Friday teaching. Lastly, MMC housed both instructors in an unsightly dormitory hostel (no refrigerator, no microwave, and a barely functioning

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At this point, with no clear, unified statement to faculty, rumors abound: several deans, on all three campuses, have announced to their areas that individuals will be hired, some have announced that these individuals will be assistant/associate deans, and some have announced that these individuals will evaluate faculty. Rather than risk reporting inaccurate or incomplete information, the Chapter is hopeful that the administration is preparing (as we speak) to let us know what has happened to the responses from the directed discussions, who is interpreting and analyzing those responses, what, if any, weight our input carries, which academic areas, if any, are indeed hiring assistant/associate deans, and if so, what their responsibilities will be as it affects us.

Pay/Progression: Despite being very close to agreement (it's only taken four years) of a system that would be ready to put to faculty for ratification, because evaluations are a critical element, the Executive Committee has suspended discussions until the plan for reorganization of the academic area is, at the very least, a bit more settled.

Parking: The good news is that we will not be riding busses en masse. Both the faculty and the staff have taken a strong and unified position against a transportation fee levied on all employees. The general consensus has been that the most equitable solution is a reasonable fee for a desired service. At this point, some unanswered questions remain; once the details of a fully developed plan emerge, we will share them, and the parking proposal will be put to a full faculty vote. ♣

Death of Gloria Halpern

On February 11th, Gloria Halpern, a professor in the Business Administration and Economics Department on the Rockville Campus, was killed in a tragic accident. Those whose lives she touched during her 26 years at the College are still reeling from the loss of an adored teacher and a treasured friend and colleague. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and hope that they might find some small comfort in knowing how loved and well respected she was in her profession and within the community in which she chose to work. Gloria's smile will never fade from our minds and our hearts. Contributions to honor Gloria may be made to the Gloria Halpern Scholarship and Assistance Fund (Montgomery College Foundation) or The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 650309, Dallas, TX 75265.

shower) within walking distance (if you enjoy torrid heat) or bus transport to the classroom site, one floor of a multi-story office building. The whole thing played out like an Asian modernization of Dickens' satiric novel, *Hard Times*.

With grit, fortitude, ingenuity, and enormous generosity, Professors van den Berg and Donahue kept afloat, but with scarcely any time to taste Chinese culture—at most, four day trips to Hong Kong, the local Macau scene, and a small piece of mainland China. Because of her lighter schedule, Professor Donahue had additional time to visit Beijing.

Remarkably, Professor van den Berg found time to keep a journal recording her observations outside of the classroom. Her words suggest a whiff of China—bean curd dumplings that look like goldfish, steamed vegetables, dried fungi, roasted pork, Chinese spices; teeny-tiny spicy crab cakes in a Thai restaurant; fishcakes on a float in the middle of a sea of Jell-O, Japanese sashimi, and a prepared room-temperature chicken with its little head still attached....She also records powerful images: a tiny woman squatting on a sidewalk with a fierce butcher's knife hacking into pieces a silvery fish on a wooden slab; a boy feeding a fire in an iron basket with little sticks and other debris right there on the walkway; residents performing Tai Chi, Fan, and Sword dances in a small peaceful park with banana trees and blooming exotic plants in front of the school; statues of goddesses—A-ma, goddess of the sea, and Iam, goddess of Mercy; little street corner shrines; burning incense sticks to drive away evil spirits like Daai Si, King of the Hungry Ghosts; poor construction workers in big floppy hats pulling stones in grass buckets up bamboo scaffolding; the swirl of cars and scooters flying out of tunnels, alleys, and highways; restaurants as small as bathrooms; the skeletal form of a beggar holding a plastic cup....

A day trip to Guangzhou in mainland China records other impressions. Crossing the border to mainland China, she views an unusual scene, "... a bizarre city of shops, doctors' offices, restaurants under the ground. Millions of people crawl like ants one over the other." Then comes Zhuhai, recently rated as China's most beautiful city, with manicured lawns and well-kept flowerbeds and a gigantic Chinese gate topped by red-glazed roof tiles and, nearby, a gargantuan city square followed by seascapes, small fishing boats, green islands, oddly shaped rocks, cozy bus stops with pretty roofs, and, finally, rice-paddies and banana trees that stretch as far as the horizon,

Then back to the classroom instructional grind. Professor van den Berg estimates that she graded at least 450 essays during her six week stay, to say nothing of preparing (from scratch) daily materials and student exercises. Sometimes, survivors understate their achievement. Professor van den Berg summarized her six weeks, "...overall I liked it but was frustrated with details. We did laugh a lot." Although pretty much abandoned to their own resources, both professors survived their summer in Macau.

One last item. As of yet, the two have not received their promised 2 ESH for program evaluation.

If Montgomery College wants to refloat the program, the experiment requires both heavy duty academic fixing as well as serious attention to the needs of future instructors—a healthy balance among disparate items: teaching duties, recompense, a comfortable environment, and an organized, thoughtful introduction into Chinese life.

Advice to program fixers: Where the program's busted, fix it. Slow down. Get it right. ♣

On Union Membership

By Bruce Madariaga, Germantown

PREFACE

The Editors asked Prof. Madariaga to explain to his Union colleagues his reluctance to join the AAUP, MC Chapter. What follows is his attempt to do that. We thank Prof. Madariaga for his candid treatise. We welcome responses and other ideas for improving the effectiveness of our organization from both members and non-members. We hope to begin a dialogue that will encourage more non-members to join AAUP and that will promote changes in our organization that could make us even more effective in working toward a better work environment.

The Editors

After three and a half happy years as an economics professor at MC, I am still not a member of the AAUP. My friends Bryant Davis and Steve Newmann asked me to share with you my reasons why I have not yet joined. I do so with some reluctance. Writing a somewhat critical article about my colleagues' union in my colleagues' Union Newsletter is certainly no way to make friends. But I have agreed to do so because I see this as an opportunity to influence policy in a way that can serve our students. So please think kindly of me and keep an open mind regarding my unorthodox views.

First, I offer a general observation about labor unions. Those who have studied economic theory and history understand that, while unions often succeed in serving the interests of their members, they typically do so at some cost to others. Collective bargaining is a way to obtain monopoly power (many people are quick to bash monopolies, not realizing they are willingly part of one). By colluding together, workers can negotiate a higher price for their services. Unfortunately, worker benefits achieved from unionization often come at the expense of employers who may lose profits, consumers who may pay higher prices and workers who may never be hired because of the increased costs associated with hiring new workers. I do not wish to detail the economic arguments and evidence underlying this observation. Rather, I just want to note that union policies sometimes serve member interests at the expense of non-member interests.

With this observation in mind, and recognizing that we all care deeply about our students, it seems reasonable to ask: Are the policies advocated by MC's Chapter of the

Who's Who in 2005

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At-large Member	Trudy Cohen - (TP)	650-1412
At-large Member	Ken Weiner - (R)	279-5203

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AAUP (the AAUP) best serving the interests of MC's students? I believe the answer to this question is no.

The AAUP focuses on serving MC's faculty. Undoubtedly, many policies negotiated by the AAUP simultaneously serve MC's faculty and MC's students. But in at least a few critically important cases, policies advocated (or at least agreed to) by the AAUP are serving faculty interests at the expense of student interests.

Consider what many would agree is the AAUP's primary goal each negotiation cycle—to improve salary, benefits, and job security for faculty. I believe many of the “successes” the AAUP has achieved in obtaining such faculty benefits have not served our students' interests. For example, each cycle, the AAUP has negotiated relatively generous salary increments for all MC faculty members. These pay increases reduce the availability of MC's resources which can be used for other educational purposes (such as for hiring more faculty). But most importantly, the pay structure negotiated by the AAUP grants pay increases to all faculty members regardless of performance. I believe this pay structure, combined with our near-tenure appointments, are seriously detrimental to faculty performance at MC.

You needn't be an economist to appreciate the critical importance of incentives to performance. Imagine what would happen to student performance if all students were given the same grades each semester and graduation was virtually assured! Professors too respond to incentives. No doubt many MC faculty members are highly motivated, effective teachers who would work hard to serve our college community almost regardless of financial compensation. But, as we all know, a significant minority of faculty would not pass this test. Currently, insufficient incentives exist to motivate faculty to reach to achieve their potential. If in any institution employees are assured the same pay increase, the same benefits, the same advancement in rank and the same near-guaranteed employment regardless of performance, the predictable result will be suboptimal effort and performance. Thus I cannot support AAUP efforts to advocate for such faculty benefits.

To create performance incentives, faculty evaluations can be made less perfunctory and more consequential. Faculty should be evaluated and compensated (through salary, rank and benefits associated with rank, and job security) based on performance. While performance measurement is an inexact exercise, reasonable people (our deans and department chairs) can reasonably assess the productivity of individual faculty members using pre-defined criteria. Extra rewards should be given to high performers, but poor performers should not be rewarded. Moreover, we should be granted *less*, not more, job security than we have now. It is management's responsibility to replace faculty who consistently under-perform. They should have more flexibility to do so. I think most of us know such reforms would increase faculty performance and thereby improve educational quality at MC. Of course, disposing of our current “risk-free” system may require sacrifice (both to faculty and management). But aren't we willing to make this sacrifice to better serve our students?

I was encouraged to hear the AAUP expressed willingness to incorporate a merit-based component into our pay structure during the negotiations last spring. This could have led to a great step in the right direction - in the direction toward promoting excellence in teaching and college service. However, I was disappointed to learn the latest agreement contained no such component. I very much hope AAUP negotiators demand that meaningful performance incentives be incorporated into future agreements. When the AAUP commits to such student-focused reforms, I'll gladly join the AAUP team and do what I can to help develop and advocate for such policies.

Thanks for this opportunity and your understanding. ♣



BREAKING NEWS: UPDATE ON FACULTY LEAVE POLICY

In an effort to quell the rumors and clarify the proposed policy on faculty leave, the Executive Committee attempted to obtain a copy of the policy from the dean who was reported, by several other deans, to have the most current draft:

“There has been some confusion and concern about the policy on faculty leave that has been produced by the deans, College-wide. My understanding is that you have the latest draft of the document. The faculty is asking the Executive Committee of the Chapter for a response; rather than add to the confusion, we would like to read the policy before commenting. I would appreciate if you would send me a copy.”

The response received demonstrates the Administration’s commitment to clear communication, an open sharing of information, and a genuine desire for faculty input:

“As much as I appreciate and understand your interest in this issue, I would ask that we direct our conversations concerning employment matters through the appropriate channels. If this is a union/management discussion, then all such communications must be between the union leadership and Ken Barrett. What I might say regarding the specific issue is that the deans are supportive of the faculty desire for a clear and consistent practice regarding leave. No recommendation for a change in policy or procedure is being contemplated by the deans. The main point of our interest at this time is to implement an existing system that is not clearly understood, namely the faculty leave request process. Our investigations found that many faculty are not aware of their obligation to request leave nor of the process by which to do it. It is my personal hope that together, administrators and faculty leaders, can increase awareness about this issue among the faculty. It is your call as leader whether or not to develop a position on the issue. In your deliberations, please know that our intentions are to be clear, fair, and consistent, so that we’re all doing our best to achieve our mission and serve students.”