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# AAUP NEWSLETTER

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## President's Corner: Summer ESH, an Open Letter to the Administration

By Rose Sachs (R)

Although the reduction of ESH for the coming summer is not a contractual violation, please be aware that this action places a significant financial burden on many of our faculty members and, once again, singles out faculty as the only population of employees whose income has been significantly diminished by the current economic situation. Restricting overtime pay for staff is in no way comparable to a faculty member losing one-third of his/her expected and planned for summer income. Moreover, as the staff members who will be most affected by this decision are those who are most financially vulnerable, please note that we, the faculty, do not support this action. For the administration to promote the notion that we are all making monetary sacrifices and sharing equitably the consequences of the revenue shortfall is offensive,

*See President's Corner, continued on page 2*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's Corner
- 1 Summer ESH Revisited: No Lessons Learned
- 5 Who's Who in the Chapter 2007-2008

## Summer ESH Revisited: No Lessons Learned

By Tammy Peery, Chair of English (G)

*The following letter was initially written to the editor of the AAUP newsletter in 2003. We thank Professor Peery for allowing us to reprint it with changes to reflect the current situation.*

I initially wrote this letter to the editor in 2003—the last time faculty were restricted in the amount of ESH they could teach in the summer—and find myself disappointed that I need to revisit it. While a few issues have changed, it would seem that, the more things change, the more things stay the same.

Recently, management announced that in order to save money during the current budget crisis, full-time and adjunct faculty could earn no more than 6 ESH during the combined summer sessions, and overtime has been frozen. Once again, cutting costs falls upon the faculty and staff. The college continues a hiring process for new administrators with luxurious salaries—administrators without whom we've done just fine for a number of years and without whom we could continue to survive, certainly in the short-term. As members of a college faculty, we are seen as altruistic—no one becomes a teacher for the money—therefore, perhaps management believes that we will be more willing than other groups to tighten our belts in the interest of the “greater good.” However, while money is certainly not the most important facet of our jobs, that doesn't mean we can afford to do without pay. Furthermore, limiting full-time faculty to six summer teaching ESH may save the college a little money; however, when the cost of restricting our teaching in the summer is

*See Lessons, continued on page 4*

given the lack of participation by all populations of employees, which would include administrators, directors, and managers—exempt employees who, for the most part, are not eligible for overtime pay.

During each and every round of salary negotiations, faculty and management alike have identified attracting and retaining quality full-time faculty members as the primary interest. With an aging faculty, many of whom are eligible for retirement, this goal becomes even more compelling. Perhaps the hardest hit by the decision to restrict summer ESH are our young faculty members, many of whom cannot even afford to live in the county. It is reasonable to assume that, in order to meet their financial obligations, a substantial number will commit to employment elsewhere.

*A full- to part-time faculty target ratio of 65:35 over a five year period has been requested by the County Council (2008 Middle States Self-Study Report), and the College has committed to meeting this goal—at least during the academic year. With full-time faculty limited to 6 ESH, while adjunct faculty will maintain their 10 ESH cap, it appears unlikely, if not impossible, that we will maintain even the current 60:40 ratio, established by the College as a formula necessary to the provision of quality education. In fact, it appears that the ratio may actually flip. According to the calculations of a very large department that shall remain unnamed, but one in which faculty members know how to count, with the 6 ESH restriction their projected outcome for the summer semesters will fall to approximately 40% full-time faculty—with a savings of less than \$30,000. We find the administration's lack of consistency to their commitment to the integrity of the academic program and their willingness to compromise the quality of education for students enrolled in summer session classes, our students as well as students from other institutions, troubling indeed. Increasing the number of adjunct faculty who will be teaching classes while decreasing the number of full-time faculty who will be teaching classes as well as integrating and coordinating adjunct faculty, particularly given the demands of accelerated courses, will, indeed, compromise academic standards. Despite our many truly talented adjunct faculty members, they are not held to the same*

scrutiny and standard as our full-time faculty, nor are they involved in curriculum and programmatic development. Education is a process; a student's ability to understand concepts, to build skills and to manipulate materials in one class often has roots in the previous semesters. Critical to *student success*, the centerpiece of our mission statement, are experienced and accessible full-time faculty members who provide quality instruction within a department/area's programmatic framework—every semester, not just during fall and spring.

Consistently, over the years, chairs and coordinators in most, if not all, departments have struggled to identify and hire qualified adjunct faculty. This quest is often even more daunting during the summer when classes run four days a week. Additionally, many adjunct faculty members have full-time positions and can only teach evening classes. Trying to locate adjunct faculty now, after the final submission of the summer schedule, will require an enormous outlay of time, time that is taken from our students, and will most likely yield meager results, particularly given the amount of time it takes Human Resources to process new hires. Consequently, in addition to the obvious, failure to meet our students' needs in terms of classes offered and quality of instruction, it would seem that the number of classes that will be cancelled (some already have been) because there is no one to teach them might very well negate the projected savings.

Due to a number of factors, the Chair/Coordinator ESH Committee has not completed its analysis. One finding, however, to which both faculty and administrators agree is that the number of undocumented hours that chairs and coordinators work (with no compensation) is stunning. If chairs and coordinators are unable to find qualified adjunct faculty, they will need to use their allotment of 6 ESH for teaching, thus leaving departmental decisions—hiring during the summer and coordinating, mentoring, and supporting the increased number of adjunct faculty—and preparing for fall semester to—well, I suppose that really is the question. Moreover, students who require consultation with a faculty member from a specific department or a signature to register for summer or fall semesters will have those needs met by—yet

another question to consider. Perhaps the silver lining is that—depending upon how counseling faculty are affected by the 6 ESH restriction, and with virtually no cadre ESH—the need for a strong faculty presence will diminish as we will have so very few students. On the other hand, without experienced, full-time counseling faculty to guide students and oversee adjunct counseling faculty and without the cadre of faculty advisors, the incidence of students receiving incorrect information and misadvising will very likely increase dramatically, thus necessitating a substantial reallocation of monies to fund litigation activities.

In addition to the need for full-time teaching faculty, full-time counseling faculty, chairs, and coordinators over the summer, almost every department and every area have situations that do not fit the 6 ESH limit. Lectures and labs in the sciences; lectures, labs and discussion sections in the sciences; 4 and 5 ESH courses in math and accounting, 5 ESH courses in English, reading, and AELP; tutoring in our centers and departments; advising cadres; programs for specific populations such as scholars; planning time for both the credit side and WD/CE (yes we do have full-time faculty there); College/community events such as Summer Dinner Theater – oh, there are just too many to mention. Adopting a practice, the outcome and impact of which are unsubstantiated, and further compounding that practice with the requirement to provide a rationale for exceptions to the defined norm—when clearly the exceptions are the norms—seems an enormous waste of time, energy, and resources; we all, deans, chairs, coordinators, teaching/counseling faculty, have far more than a reasonable workload already. Moreover, we believe that this process is divisive; at a time in which we all need to be working together, vying for additional ESH will pit faculty against faculty, department against department, dean against dean, provost against provost, and ultimately, everyone against management. Perhaps the College will be able to save a bit of cash by cutting back the salaries of those folks who are heading up the *Communications Offensive*, considering how few people will be speaking to one another.

The perception that administrative positions are being filled at a considerable expense, vice president positions in particular, while the campuses, the departments, and the department offices are

drowning is one held not only by a very few malcontents, as the administration might like to believe, but rather by many, many faculty members across the College. While we do not question that these positions were conceived and established in an effort to provide a solid administrative structure to the College, given the prevailing fiscal situation, we are somewhat dismayed that direct services to students, such as advising and teaching, are viewed as so much less important. We wonder how the cost involved in funding search committees, transportation for out-of-town candidates, and, obviously, salaries for high-level administrators compares to that of funding up to 9 ESH, as needed. Was the impact of delaying the hiring of new vice presidents weighed against the impact of limiting instructional and non-instructional ESH? What other cost-saving options were examined? What process was followed to ensure an equitable outcome? What information was gathered to guide this decision? Were deans and chairs asked for input in terms of needs and consequences? The lack of transparency that characterizes the administrative decision-making process diminishes morale and alienates the faculty.

The administration's interpretation and implementation of the *Learning College* has provided a philosophical focus, albeit a bit narrow, for the College over the past several years. If the administration were to examine the original and authentic underpinnings of the *Learning College*, as presented by those who crafted the movement, we believe that they would find that the restriction of ESH, which will directly and negatively impact our students, contradicts the very foundation of a *learning-centered college*. Given our administration's unwavering dedication to identify as a *Learning College* whenever the opportunity is presented, we would assume that the decision to restrict summer ESH has been subjected to the quintessential question posed by Kay McClenney, Director of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement: *How does this improve learning?* And we eagerly await the answer.

We believe that the decision to cut the full-time faculty presence by one-third during the summer is ill-conceived, ill-informed, and ill-advised. We do not question the right of the administration to allocate and to reallocate funds as they see fit. We do question, however, the merit of a decision that has

*See President's Corner, continued on page 4*

been made without soliciting pertinent information from the various stakeholders, particularly deans and chairs. Moreover, the way in which an institution allocates and reallocates funds, particularly during a budget crisis, reflects the values of the institution. We are saddened by the lack of commitment to faculty and believe that the ramifications for the institution, particularly as this decision affects our young faculty, will be far more devastating and long-lasting than the dollar amount savings this summer. A Middle States concern is that *resource allocation support the mission and goals* of the institution. Given the variety of cost-saving options available, to select one that negatively impacts student learning and student success and that devalues the role of the faculty sends a message to the College community, to the community at large, to the Middle States team, and, most critically, to our students that is wholly incongruent with our stated mission and goals and with what we at Montgomery College, both faculty and administration, truly believe. Many colleges and universities across the nation have selected to address the economic downturn in ways that maintain academic and programmatic integrity. Dr. Johnson makes clear the College's responsibility to students in his letter to the College community: *Nothing could be more shortsighted than short-changing the educational aspirations of the men and women who drive our economy*. It is our hope that the administration will reconsider their decision; we believe that limiting the presence of the faculty will damage the instructional program, sully the reputation of our institution, and compromise our students. ♦

evaluated, it becomes obvious that this sudden proposal is a poor solution to solving the college budget conundrum.

First, this announcement was ill timed, sending department chairs scrambling to completely revise summer course schedules that were completed one to two weeks ago. Surely, the administration was aware of this impending budget problem some time ago—why wait until summer scheduling was complete to make this announcement? Furthermore, this late

announcement leaves faculty members with the unpleasant task of figuring out how to make up for a potential 50% pay cut with only a few short months until the summer begins. While no faculty member is guaranteed a teaching position in the summer, they had already been scheduled, and many of us count on supplementing our normal incomes with summer money. Taking away from faculty this opportunity to earn a reasonable wage with such short notice has put many faculty members in a position of hardship. Summer camp programs for children required non-refundable deposits a month or two ago. Plans for new homes and tuition for our own children's educations may have to be put on hold so that the college can save a drop in the budget bucket. People may not be able to afford their well-earned vacations. We were not given the opportunity to plan for the loss of this income, creating the perception that our lives and families are not valued by our administration. This abrupt policy change not only damages our finances, it seriously damages morale.

Not only does this decision impact our families, it will have a serious, detrimental impact on the college and our students. The college does expect to conduct classes as usual during the summer—just without the full-time and more experienced part-time faculty. Many students take summer classes—they deserve to have access to sections taught by quality professionals at a variety of times just like fall and spring students do. Many developmental and ESL students take classes in the summer to be able to begin college level classes with their peers in the fall. These are generally 5-hour classes; limiting us to just 6 summer ESH severely limits the number of experienced faculty teaching these courses. The classes that we most need to staff and that require the most experienced professionals will either go unstaffed or be staffed by newly hired adjuncts with little training. In some cases, classes that would surely have run, providing the college with much-needed tuition revenue, will have to be cancelled for lack of qualified faculty. Can the cost savings of not hiring full-time and experienced part time faculty truly offset this potential loss of revenue? Furthermore, these students whose classes are cancelled or who have negative experiences with inexperienced faculty members will likely not return for more classes in the fall, creating a domino effect.

Surely this staffing decision will negatively affect fall enrollments and the quality of students in fall classes. Is there any other profession where talented, intelligent professionals are eager to do extra work and are told that they are not wanted? Is there any other profession where the management eagerly embraces having less-experienced people do the work when seasoned professionals are available? Offering the same number of classes, but restricting the number of experienced faculty teaching them, sends the message that we are not wanted, not needed, and not worth the modest amount of money we are being paid.

Academic Advising and Registration will suffer the negative impact of this decision as well. Experienced members of faculty advising cadres will be unable to both teach and advise during the summer. The full-time counseling staff can't absorb the loss of hours that these faculty members would provide, forcing the college to offer fewer advising hours to students eager to enroll for summer and fall. Imagine the frustration of both students who want to register and staff who want to register them when they must be told that we can't provide quality academic advice for them – it's simply not within the budget limit. We will begin the fall semester with the nightmare of a large number of students forced to "self advise" into classes for which they are not adequately prepared. Again, the negative impact will send ripples for semesters to come.

The amount of money saved by limiting faculty to 6 ESH is a drop in the budget bucket, and the timing of this announcement sends a very negative message to faculty and staff. Is the relatively small sum that the college might save worth the financial hardship, low morale, and poor service to students that will result from the policy? Expecting faculty and staff alone to shoulder this budget cut is detrimental to achieving the mission of the college. Is management making similar efforts to reduce their payroll to help with the budget? We certainly don't need *additional* administrative positions with high salaries and search costs. Perhaps the college can cut back in other areas. Perhaps we can plant fewer flowers on the grounds or not replace those worn park benches. Maybe we can stop sending out so many paper flyers. Maybe we can sell the Koi from the pond at Rockville. Without quality, satisfied faculty and staff, how can the college do its business? Without us there is no college for the community.♦

## Who's Who in the Chapter 2007-2008

<b>President</b>	Rose Sachs (R)	567-5077
<b>Secretary</b>	Pat Feeney (R)	567-7484
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<b>Past President</b>	Harry Zarin (G)	567-7767
<b>Governance Liaisons</b>	Jim O'Brien (R)	567-5233
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<b>At-large Members</b>	Ken Weiner (R)	567-5203
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