

AAUP Newsletter October 2014

Updates from Harry N. Zarin- G Counseling, Chapter President

Welcome back colleagues:

I want all of you to know that I am very honored to represent you as the President of the Chapter, and I deeply appreciate the fact that you have confidence in my ability to manage our Chapter affairs along with the members of our Executive Committee. It is my hope that I will be able to communicate with you monthly during the academic year via our Chapter website and e-mails. Please don't feel that you have to wait for me to communicate with you. If you have something that you want me to hear, send me an e-mail or call me. My number is 240-567-7767. I would also be pleased to meet with you here in Germantown or on your campus if that is more convenient for you.

I'd like to thank all of you who attended our spirited opening meeting. Those of you who couldn't make it, we hope you can next time. It's great to hear from everyone, and the issues facing us need your attention and input.

Executive Committee Updates:

During the summer the members of the Executive Committee communicated about the various changes happening at the College. As a result of some of those announced changes I requested and had a private meeting with Sanjay Rai in June. At Dr. Rai's request I, and the members of the Executive Committee, had a subsequent meeting with him. As a result of these meeting Dr. Rai requested that Tim Kirkner, Grievance Officer, and I meet with him and Carolyn Terry monthly during the academic year. These meetings will provide us with an opportunity to discuss, in private setting, Chapter concerns that we feel are important for them and the Administration to be aware of. We already had one productive meeting and look forward to our future meetings with them this year. We are grateful to Dr. Rai and Ms. Terry for the opportunity to meet with them and appreciate their interest in the concerns of the faculty.

The Executive Committee met once over the summer and we had our first meeting of the academic year on September 10th. We are scheduled to meet twice a month throughout the academic year. If you have any concerns that you feel we need to hear about it is important that you communicate those concerns to me or any other member

of the Executive Committee. I can't stress enough how important it is for each of you to take the time to do this when issues arise or when you think an issue is about to arise. You are our eyes and ears on your campus and we need to hear from you.

Contract Negotiations:

Negotiations began on September 26th with both teams receiving training on the Interest Based Bargaining process. Another session was held on Friday October 3rd. Additional sessions are planned for consecutive Friday afternoons. We are very pleased that we have received a commitment from the Administration to conduct negotiations using the Interest Based Bargaining process. This is an approach to bargaining that we have been using successfully since the 2000 academic year. It has also been agreed upon that both sides can have consultants available to them but no consultants will be in the room during actual negotiations. The consultants will be available for consultation on an as needed basis in an adjoining room. It is the hope and goal of both teams that negotiations will progress smoothly and quickly during the fall semester, and we have also agreed to hold a weekend negotiating session in early November as a way of trying to wrap things up this fall.

Once negotiations begin I will only be able to provide you with minimal communication about progress in negotiations until both sides develop an agreed upon statement about the tentative agreements that have been reached.

Parking Fee Increase:

On August 5th we received a memorandum from Dr. Dewey Yeatts, Vice President of Facilities and Security telling us of planned parking fee increases. As well, a Transportation and Parking Committee was formed and I am a member of that Committee representing the Chapter's interests. Prior to the first meeting of this Committee I contacted Dr. Yeatts and informed him of a 2007 negotiated agreement that he was unaware of. (Please refer to the Chapter Documents section on the Chapter's website where we have posted the original 2004 parking agreement and the subsequent 2007 agreement under the heading **Chapter Documents 2014-Document Updates.**)

At this point in time it has been decided that our parking fee will increase by \$12.00 in January 2015. The Committee is aware of the additional proposed increases. These increases are under discussion as they are subject to the terms and conditions of our current collective bargaining agreement.

Textbooks:

A variety of issues were brought up by the membership during our opening meeting and perhaps the one issue that caused the most concern was the perception by many that the Administration was moving in a direction of asking the faculty to start using the common textbooks in the courses they are teaching. After our meeting Dr. Rai sent out a memorandum on August 29th that I believe clarified this particular issue. He is asking us to talk to each other about the textbooks we are requiring our students to use and whenever possible move towards using a common textbook. Specifically he stated in this memorandum;

“I am placing the conversation to adopt common textbooks in the hands of the faculty, department chairs, and deans. Some of our disciplines are already using common textbooks or moving in that direction after doing their own research, and some courses will soon be taught using Open Educational Resources, OERs, alone. During this academic year, I encourage all disciplines to hold open discussions to decide how and if course materials can be coordinated across sections.”

In addition he stated;

“Again, textbook decisions will continue to be a faculty decision, as you know best how to convey your subject matters to our students. I have complete confidence in your judgment on this issue. I fully expect and accept that a common textbook might not be viable for certain disciplines due to the nature of the subject matter. The exploration you will undertake this year with your colleagues will allow that decision to be well-reasoned and clearly articulated, informed by the collective viewpoints of discipline faculty, chairs, and deans, the curricular developments made at other institutions nationally, and most important, the learning needs of our students.”

I believe these two statements should alleviate many of the concerns expressed at the opening meeting and help you recognize that you do have the right to select the textbook you feel is best suited for you and for your students. No one is planning on taking that right from you but holding a collaborative discussion on this issue within your disciplines is something the Administration is expecting us to do this year. With that in mind, I believe it is important for the Administration to hear when disciplines are using common textbooks. If disciplines across the campuses or on particular campuses are using the same textbook I believe it is important for this to be communicated to the deans so that they can communicate this information to Sanjay.

The Chapter Website:

One way we as a faculty can communicate with each other throughout the year is via the Chapter website. The link for the site is <http://mcaaup.org>. The website is

maintained by Julie Levinson-R Counseling. Feel free to write a comment on any of the posts made on the site. I will respond privately to you each time a comment is posted.

Recently, I had several documents posted to the Chapter Documents section of the website. These documents include the 20004 and 2007 Parking Agreements, the 2007 Faculty Leave Policy, the 2014 Distance Learning Side Letter, and the 2014 Department Chair Side Letter. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the website and these important documents.

Academic Restructuring:

It appears that the long process of academic restructuring is over, at least for now, and like it or not, we have to work with the structure as best we can. Having Dr. Rai and Ms. Terry at the helm of the academic side of the house is refreshing and we are confident that they are looking after both the best interests of our students and the staff and faculty. Shortly after Dr. Rai's arrival he began working on putting the final touches on the academic restructuring plan and he had input on how funding from the county and state would be used to better support the division that he heads. We are pleased with the addition of 13 new full-time faculty positions and 14 new staff positions for the new Bioscience Education Center at the Germantown campus. Recruitment for some of these new positions has already started. A reallocation of existing funds provided for an addition of 14 lab coordinators, instructional associates, and administrative aides in the disciplines and academic support centers. Dr. Rai also provided funds for more than 150 additional ESH for tutoring. Also, he insisted that the new chairs be compensated above the mid-range of their new class so that more experienced faculty members would be encouraged to serve as chairs.

How much money do you earn?

Each fall I looked forward to receiving a letter from Human Resources informing me of my current annual salary, my monthly pay, and the amount of our negotiated increases. If I ever had to apply for a loan or a credit card application it was very easy for me to refer to this letter and find this required information. For some reason a decision was made, although the decision was not communicated to the faculty, to stop sending out this important letter. We have asked the Administration about this situation and they did confirm that the letters are no longer being sent to the faculty. If you are interested in learning what your annual salary is you will need to contact Human Resources by phone or e-mail. I would suggest you contact either Elaine Doong or Kathleen Harding. I am not recommending you contact the Payroll Office since they were not responsible for sending out this letter. I actually don't know who made the decision to stop sending

out this important information to the faculty. Below is some suggested wording you can use if you plan on sending an e-mail to either of these two people;

In lieu of the long standing traditional communication from HR about my salary I would appreciate it if you would provide me with my annual salary for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Regarding this year's increases in salary, they are as follows;

Effective the first day of the fiscal 2015 academic year, the faculty salary range shall be a minimum of \$56,840 to a maximum of \$106,575.

Effective the first day of the fiscal 2015 academic year, there shall be a two-and-one-half percent (2.5%) general wage adjustment.

Faculty members who have been in the bargaining unit for at least one semester as of the beginning of the fiscal academic year are eligible for an increment of 3.5% to the extent that an employee's salary does not exceed the maximum of the salary range.

Faculty members with satisfactory performance who have been at the salary maximum for five (5) consecutive years will receive a one-time longevity step of \$1,600 to be added to the faculty member's base salary.

Coordinators:

It has come to the attention of the Chapter Executive Committee that many Coordinators are being asked to perform some of the duties of their Chair. For obvious reasons this is problematic. You are not a supervisor and there is supposed to be a clear distinction between what you are doing and what your Chair is supposed to be doing. If you have any concerns about what your Chair or Dean is asking you do to as a Coordinator please get in touch with one of us on the Executive Committee. Also, if you are a coordinator and you received a list of duties from your Chair or Dean we would appreciate it if you would send us that list of duties. Please forward the list of Coordinator duties that you received to me so that we on the Executive Committee can review them and see if any are problematic.

Next Communication:

In the next communication on behalf of the Executive Committee I will provide you with a limited update on negotiations, the progress we have made on creating a position for Shop Stewards on the campuses, an update on our monthly meetings with Dr. Rai and

Ms. Terry, and more. I encourage you to leave comments on the Chapter's website or talk about any concerns you have with any member of the Executive Committee.