AAUP NEWS

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Volume XV No. 10 April 22, 2004

AAUP seeks expedited arbitration of grievance; other Spring workload issues still unclear

The AAUP plans to file today for arbitration of a grievance concerning Spring Term overload compensation.

According to Chapter Grievance Officer John Battistone, the issue to be resolved is when faculty should be paid for overload work incurred during the Spring Term.

"For the entire history of the College, overload incurred during a given term has been paid during that term," John said.

"Because of the alleged College fiscal crisis, the administration is attempting to defer payment of overload until the end of summer, which will be in the new fiscal year," John said.

"The administration never asked the AAUP to agree to any special arrangements," John continued. "Some administrators just unilaterally told some faculty members that they would not be paid this term for the overload work they are doing this term. We had no choice but to file a grievance."

According to John, the administration has agreed to the AAUP's proposal to use the American Arbitration Association's "expedited" or "streamlined" arbitration procedures in order to get a faster resolution to the issue.

Under the AAA's streamlined procedures, an arbitrator will be appointed quickly. The arbitrator will set a hearing date and there will be one day for a hearing. The arbitrator will make a decision within seven days.

"We're hoping the arbitrator will set a date quickly, so that this issue can be resolved before the end of this term," John said.

Other workload issues under investigation

Chapter President Pam Ecker said that the AAUP Executive Committee is still examining other data related to Spring Term workload changes that could result in filing of additional grievances.

Pam said the AAUP requested from the administration a complete report on Spring Term workload, including the workload assigned to each full-time faculty member, and the workload assigned to adjuncts.

"Dr. Posey told us a few weeks ago that she had asked the Deans to avoid assigning full-time loads to adjunct faculty in Spring as a 'cost-saving' measure," Pam said.

"Nevertheless, we are aware of several adjuncts whose assigned duties for Spring amount to 16 units or more, and we'll be looking closely to learn whether these assignments are an anomaly or a continuation of long-term patterns of excessive work assignments for part-time employees," Pam said.

The AAUP also requested a report on special project units that were removed for Spring. Pam said the AAUP received a report indicating that about 60 special project units were removed from Spring loads, but the report did not explain how all of this work would be covered.

"It appears that a significant amount of work that previously has been done by faculty members is simply not going to be done at all in Spring Term," Pam said.

What would happen if Cincinnati State increased the cost of tuition?

--Marcha Hunley and Siamak Salehi, Economics Dept., Humanities Division

At the March Board of Trustees meeting, some of the Board members asked Dr. Wright to provide data to help answer the question of what would happen to enrollment if the College raised tuition.

For those of us who teach Introduction to Microeconomics, the Board's question immediately brought to mind a basic economic concept we teach every term: elasticity.

Simply stated, the concept of elasticity examines the price sensitivity of a product. Understanding of elasticity provides an answer to the question "How much change will occur in the quantity of products sold when the price of that product is changed?" Understanding of elasticity also answers the question "What will be the impact on total revenue when the price of a product is changed?"

We explain to our students that when demand for a product is elastic, it means that consumers have many acceptable substitutes, and they can change their buying behavior when prices change.

Many of us shop for gasoline this way—we go to the Shell station or the BP station or the Clark station, depending on which one has the best price. All the competing products seem about the same to buyers.

When demand is inelastic, consumers have strong personal preferences, and they do not view potential substitute products as acceptable alternatives. This is how some people choose what ice cream to buy—if you're fond of Graeter's peach ice cream, nothing else will do—so even if the price goes up, you're willing to pay more and you continue buying the product.

For a college, the questions an economist would ask are "Would raising tuition cause a drop in enrollment?" and "Will that change result in lower revenue?"

The elasticity of demand could be calculated using past experience data from college records as well as data regarding the experiences of other two-year and four-year institutions.

Economic research shows that when your customers believe your product is excellent, it is possible to raise your price, and still increase your total revenues.

Do we really think our students want to attend a low-priced "Wal-Mart" college?

Economists would ask "What happened at higher education institutions in the past when tuition was raised?" If tuition went up and enrollment stayed the same, economists would conclude there is an inelastic demand. Raising tuition when there is inelastic demand will result in higher levels of revenue. If there is a high degree of inelasticity, enrollment could even drop and revenue still could increase--because people are willing to pay more for the product they value.

Economists also examine and evaluate the "determinants of elasticity," such as the number of possible substitutes for the product, the acceptability of the substitutes, the percentage of increase in the price compared to the income of the purchaser, the price of the substitutes, and the time frame.

Using these approaches to assess the Cincinnati State situation, economists would examine the other educational opportunities in the area and consider whether there is a realistic substitute for Cincinnati State's educational product. Specific questions could include:

- Who else offers a five term schedule?
- Who else offers co-op?
- Who else offers small classes and the other "personal" qualities valued by students?
- What is Cincinnati State tuition compared to the other institutions?
- Will Cincinnati State continue to have a lower tuition rate than the other institutions?
- What percentage of the students pay their tuition directly out of their own pockets?
- How will the funding sources that students use incorporate a tuition increase into their funding calculations?

The concept of elasticity is not just a classroom theory. For economists, figuring out the answers to "what if" questions associated with raising tuition is a matter of gathering the data and then doing the calculations.

It is possible to construct a

see *Elasticity*/ 3

Letters

To the Editor:

For several years I have been teaching CAR 9002, College Success Strategies, which is the College orientation course The purpose of the class is to increase retention and student success, and it has been a required course for degree-seeking students since Early Fall 2001.

Diane Stump, along with a team of faculty and administrators, developed this course. Diane is also the "lead teacher" who maintains quality control for the course. Many faculty members (both full-time and part-time) as well as some administrators and some staff members serve as instructors for this one-credit class, and many sections are offered each term.

Instead of a textbook, the College Success Strategies course uses a binder full of materials developed specifically for the class. The binder has always been provided to students at no cost.

At the beginning of this academic year, Diane asked for clerical help to assemble the binders and keep track of the various materials. In response to this request, the Dean of Humanities decided to pay an adjunct instructor three units per term to "coordinate" the class. This "coordinator" is supposed to meet regularly with the lead teacher, Diane, to ensure that quality is maintained for this multi-section course.

At 11:14 a.m. on Monday, April 12—the first day of the Spring Term—the "coordinator" sent an e-mail to the Spring Term CAR 9002 instructors, letting us know that there would not be any binders this term—just loose papers.

Now I consider myself to be a world-class procrastinator, but by the first day of the term I generally know what text materials I will be using. This term, no CAR 9002 instructor knew what materials would be used for this class until one section of the class had been over for an hour and fifteen minutes!

When I checked with the lead teacher and the Dean, I was told that neither of them had known that we would not have binders until they received the e-mail. Later, I learned this adjunct has many other assigned duties this term, and is in fact carrying a full-time load at part-time pay. It doesn't appear that the budget for binders was cut—it's simply that the job didn't get done.

The bottom line is one more example of poor communication, wasted resources, a group of teachers who are confused and inconvenienced, and a number of students who may now have less chance for success than our students deserve.

From what I hear, my first-day experience is only one of many recent examples that our commitment to quality is a thing of the past.

Joyce Rimlinger, Humanities

Elasticity/ continued from 2

model to predict the revenue outcome. In fact, there are research firms that are in the business of calculating product elasticities.

If such a study were to be conducted, and the conclusion showed there is no real substitute for the Cincinnati State "product" then presumably we could raise our "price" five or even ten percent, and our "customers" would not stop "buying" what we have to offer.

It is appropriate to raise a price when it is necessary to cover the cost of providing the product or service. For Cincinnati State this would not be, as some have tried to characterize it, a case of "balancing the budget on the backs of the students." It would be a pragmatic response to a careful evaluation of the situation.

Not raising our "price" has undermined our ability to provide the high-touch, high-tech qualities that have given Cincinnati State a competitive edge for many years. It is not a service to offer a cheap price and deliver a substandard product.

Students come to Cincinnati State because they value the education they can acquire and the opportunities that emerge as a result of their education. They deserve to receive the excellent educational product that was once praised by *The Wall Street Journal.* They do not want to attend a Wal-Mart college.

We believe that a thorough and systematic economic analysis would reveal that if Cincinnati State were to raise tuition, most Cincinnati State "customers" would still consider their education to be a good buy, even at a higher price.

Join your colleagues for pizza and conversation before the Board of Trustees meeting

Tuesday, April 27
4:15 to 5:15 p.m.
Room 354, Main Building

BOT meeting in the Conference Center, 5:30 p.m.

Cincinnati State Chapter
American Association of University Professors
3520 Central Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45223-2690

Executive Committee

President
Pam Ecker
Phone: 513/569-1722

Vice President
Joyce Rimlinger

Secretary
Geoff Woolf

Treasurer
Paul Davis

Past President
Bob Eveslage

Grievance Officer
John Battistone

Membership Chair
David Simmermon

Member-at-Large
Ron Craig