Contract negotiations begin for AAUP Unit 1

Contract negotiations for AAUP Unit 1 began with a 2-hour session on Friday, June 13.

Members of the Faculty Bargaining Team said the first session was cordial and collaborative. Another bargaining session is scheduled for June 23.

“Both sides want to solve some of the same problems,” said Faculty Chief Negotiator Geoff Woolf.

“We also have a shared interest in not repeating the contentious tone from the last time we bargained a contract for Unit 1,” Geoff added.

Faculty Team Member Yvonne Baker said that the Administration Bargaining Team expressed interest in continuing the kind of dialog that was present in the Faculty/Administration Communication Team (FACT) meetings.

Two members of the College Board of Trustees participated in the FACT meetings, along with several faculty members and administrators who are members of the current bargaining teams. (See AAUP News, May 12, 2014, for more about the FACT meetings.)

“The Administration Team told us that the Trustees hope the tone of these negotiations will help set a positive tone College-wide,” Yvonne said.

Faculty Team Member Tom Burns added, “The Administration Team stressed several times that they want these contract negotiations to be ‘solution-oriented’ rather than adversarial.”

The Administration Bargaining Team includes Steve Brooks, the College’s Labor Relations Manager, as Chief Negotiator, along with Academic Vice President Monica Posey, and Dean of Humanities & Sciences Robbin Hoopes.

Vice President for Finance Mike Geoghegan is also a member of the Administration Bargaining Team, but he did not attend Friday’s session.

The Administration Team said others may join their team for discussion of specific topics, such as co-op or clinical experiences.

The AAUP announced previously that “issues specialists” may be added to the faculty team at times.

Faculty Team Member Pam Ecker said, “The Administration Team told us they are not using an outside attorney as their Chief Negotiator this year, because they want to continue sharing ideas openly, as we did in the FACT discussions.”

Geoff said the Administration Team identified four goals they would like to achieve through this year’s negotiations:

• dealing with the faculty workload problems associated with the 36-unit annual load
• enhancing implementation of the College’s plans for improving student retention and completion of courses, degrees, and certificates
• increasing and facilitating online education
• maintaining fiscal sustainability in the next budget year and future years

“We appreciated that the Administration Team was willing to share their major concerns at the first bargaining session,” Geoff said. “The goals they discussed are important to faculty members, too.”

According to the Faculty Team, much of the first session focused on examining possible approaches for

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discussion of specific issues, to be implemented at future bargaining sessions

“We’re working on developing a more collaborative approach to moving forward,” Geoff said.

“Both teams agreed to bring materials to the next session that will help us examine where our interests coincide and where they may differ,” Geoff added.

All of the Faculty Team members have experience in a variety of academic and faculty advocacy roles.

Chief Negotiator Geoff Woolf has served on 9 bargaining teams for AAUP Unit 1 and Unit 2 contracts, including serving as Chief Negotiator 6 times.

Geoff is a Professor and Department Chair for English and Literature, and a past recipient and multi-time nominee for the House-Bruckmann award for faculty excellence.

Geoff also is a professional mediator, with an M.S. in Negotiation and Dispute Resolution.

Yvonne Baker is a Professor in the Business Technologies Division and is the Co-op Coordinator for the Accounting, Finance, and Pre-Business Administration programs. She is a CPA and has experience in public accounting.

Yvonne served for 8 years as AAUP Treasurer and has served on the AAUP Communications Committee. She is also a multi-time nominee for the House-Bruckmann award for faculty excellence.

Dr. Tom Burns is a Professor in the Civil Engineering Technologies program and past Chair of the program, which offers several majors and certificates.

Tom served for 3 years as an AAUP officer and has been a member of the Compensation Committee during past bargaining years.

Tom also served recently as Chair for the Faculty Peer Mentoring program. He is also a past recipient and multi-time nominee for the House-Bruckmann award.

Pam Ecker is a Professor of Technical and Professional Communication, with teaching responsibilities in the Multimedia Information Design Department of CIT as well as several Humanities courses.

Pam is a long-time member of the Academic Policies and Curriculum Committee and has served on numerous other College committees and task forces.

Pam was elected AAUP President when the Chapter became the faculty union in 1990, and has continued to serve as an AAUP officer and committee leader since then. She is also a past recipient of the House-Bruckmann award.

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