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NEWS

Little progress made in tenth negotiation session; teams to meet again Aug. 4

On July 30, the Faculty and administration bargaining teams met for the tenth time since May.

According to the Faculty team, some progress was made on some non-economic issues; however, major contract articles including workload, compensation, and benefits remain unresolved.

Another bargaining session is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 4.

Faculty Chief Negotiator Geoff Woolf said the Faculty team will bring to Monday's session a comprehensive settlement proposal, and he hopes the administration team will bring a meaningful settlement proposal also.

"We hope it still is possible to reach an agreement at the bargaining table, without the need for fact finding," Geoff said. "The Faculty team will continue working diligently with that goal in mind."

Other members of the Faculty team expressed frustration about the continued lack of progress in resolving contract issues.

Faculty Team member John Battistone said, "Many faculty members believed there were good reasons to think this year's negotiations would be different."

"So far, the administration's approach seems to be the same as in the past," John continued. "We had a lot of meetings, but the administration team seems determined to avoid real bargaining on some topics, and

instead force the process into fact-finding."

"Once again, it appears that the administration's goal is to defer all meaningful discussion of some key issues until after a fact-finder has issued a report and the faculty have demonstrated powerful unity regarding the importance of those issues."

see **Bargaining / 4**

A wasted opportunity...?

-- Paul Davis, AAUP Chapter President

Since I was a little boy, I've been fascinated by biographies of famous people in politics and business.

I'm intrigued by those who can take on complex problems and find good solutions, and in the ways that some powerful people can assess all sides of an issue and then generate reasonable conclusions, using their imagination and vision to make things better.

I'm most intrigued by leaders who understand moments of opportunity and seize them to attain greater good.

Because of these passions, I am distressed, discouraged and disappointed by what is happening at the bargaining table this summer.

For the past several years, those who care most about Cincinnati State have been immersed in confrontation rather than cooperation and collaboration.

We could spend a lot of time discussing why, and who is at fault--but what a waste of energy that would be. Instead, we should spend that energy

see **Wasted opportunity / 2**

Wasted opportunity / continued from 1

working together to make this College better for all of its stakeholders.

When I became the AAUP Chapter President, I hoped I could help put this College back on the road to being the best two-year college imaginable.

I believe that the rest of the Cincinnati State faculty share this goal—including the “old timers” who can remember when the College received national media recognition for our accomplishments, as well as the newer faculty who have come here because they, too, want our College to make significant contributions to the community, for all of the years that lie ahead.

I also believed that Dr. Henderson’s leadership would motivate other members of the College community to achieve great possibilities.

But at this moment, some of those opportunities are fading.

At the negotiation table, it appears that some members of the administration are more interested in settling scores than in settling a contract.

Some administrators seem determined to use this moment of opportunity simply to push agendas that would erase agreements made during nearly 20 years of faculty collective bargaining, and that would uproot cherished institutional values.

Since May, the Faculty Bargaining Team—directed by the AAUP Executive Committee and guided by our faculty constituency—has tried to work with the administration team to reach agreement on mutual solutions to shared problems.

Our Faculty team has made it clear that we prefer to reach settlement at the table, without the need for fact-finding and all of the negative possibilities associated with fact-finding.

Our Faculty team has offered new ideas for resolving old problems. Our Faculty team has offered, time after time, the possibility of genuine collaboration.

The leadership of Cincinnati State AAUP would like to spend the month of August encouraging our faculty colleagues to spend their time registering new students and preparing to provide the highest quality faculty service when the new academic year begins.

At the negotiation table, it appears that some members of the administration are more interested in settling scores than in settling a contract.

Unfortunately, it appears that some of Cincinnati State’s administrative leaders would prefer to spend August fighting traditional battles, one more time. They appear to want to travel old roads and open up old wounds... and miss a great opportunity.

It is not too late—but time is running out.

Soon, the faculty of Cincinnati State may be forced to protect our values, using all of the means afforded to us by law.

It is our duty to our current students to ensure that they can receive the best from us, and it

is our responsibility to future students and faculty members to ensure that the fundamental qualities of this College are not eroded.

And anyone who has reviewed the history of our faculty collective bargaining unit can see that when our institutional values are under attack, we have successfully defended those values.

I hope that on Monday, the administration will demonstrate the kind of leadership that I’ve read about and admired in others.

I hope the administration team will join the faculty team in solving problems both sides must contend with in our daily lives.

I hope the administration team will come to the table showing concern for the finances of the College, and also for the financial issues that faculty members face in this volatile economic climate.

I hope the administration team will collaborate with us in fixing workload problems, and establishing a workload formula that accurately addresses the roles and responsibilities of faculty in a 21st century educational institution.

I believe that collaboration is still possible, and that a month or more of anger and confrontation is avoidable, but time is running out.

The moment of opportunity is very near—and I hope that administrators, as well as faculty members, are ready and willing to seize that moment and make the best of it.

Letters

To the Editor:

While contract negotiations progress (or fail to progress), it seems there's a lot of discussion going on about faculty overload.

From what I have heard, the administration contends that faculty must not be overworked if so many of us are willing to add overload to our teaching assignments.

As I see it, there are several reasons why faculty members agree to teach extra classes, but filling up our free time is definitely not one of them.

Sometimes faculty accept overload simply because no other qualified instructor is available to teach a particular course.

For many of our technical courses, there may be only one full-time faculty member with the required expertise. Often, these specialized courses are scheduled at times when no other instructor is available.

To meet the needs and expectations of our students, we schedule many courses during daytime hours. Finding adjuncts with appropriate credentials to teach during daytime hours is often problematic, since they are employed elsewhere.

In some areas, it's equally challenging to find qualified adjuncts for evening classes.

Would the College administration prefer to not offer these classes, not meet student needs, and not collect tuition and subsidy revenue, rather than give a qualified full-time faculty member an overload assignment?

Many of us agree to teach overload courses because we

fear what will happen to the quality of our programs if adjuncts are allowed to teach even more of our classes.

This month's issue of *Academe* mentioned a recent study of four public universities, conducted at North Carolina State University, that found students enrolled in basic "gatekeeper" courses taught by part-time faculty were 20 to 30 percent more likely to drop out than those in the same courses taught by full-time faculty.

With the comparatively low rate of compensation that Cincinnati State offers to part-time faculty, we sometimes end up resorting to hiring anyone we can get, no matter how inexperienced or ineffective they might be.

While there are certainly many well-qualified, excellent adjuncts at the College, in some areas it seems no one is monitoring the work of part-time faculty to ensure quality performance.

Those who are presumably most qualified to assess specialized skills—the chair and other full-time program faculty—have their own duties and responsibilities to perform.

In programs that rely on a large and constantly changing group of part-time faculty, it's impossible for even the most dedicated program or area chair to keep up with quality assurance tasks.

Sometimes, overload assignments may relate to work performed by faculty that is outside "regular" responsibilities, such as developing new programs or new courses, providing special training for internal or external audiences, coordinating processes that lead to program accreditation, or supporting community initiatives.

For several years, I helped coordinate the annual Science Olympiad program, which brought considerable acclaim (and new students) to the College. I received a unit of overload compensation for this work.

While the compensation didn't even come close to matching the amount of time I spent on that project, it was certainly appropriate for the College to recognize that my work had value.

Finally, faculty often seek the opportunity to teach additional classes because, financially, we must. Our salaries simply have not kept pace with the soaring cost of living.

When you consider that in other lines of work, compensation for "overtime" work would be time and a half, or double time, I certainly don't feel that the College is overpaying us when we earn overload compensation.

I would love to have more of my evenings and weekends to myself, and to spend my time off with my family or pursuing other personal interests.

Instead I spend many of those hours working, and contributing not just to the betterment of my checking account, but to the betterment of our students and our community.

Of course, if the College administration insists on taking the position that having well-qualified full-time faculty teaching, developing and maintaining quality courses, and promoting the College in the community is too expensive, I suppose we can demonstrate the value of our services elsewhere.

Peggy Rolfsen
Biology Department
Health & Public Safety

Letters

To the Editor:

I am very disappointed to find out that we are having such a difficult time with completing contract negotiations this year.

The climate at the College seemed to be turning brighter; more faculty and staff volunteered for New Student Orientation than ever before; the halls have once again filled with

smiles and positive chatter. I was hopeful that we were finally over the negative hump.

Student enrollment numbers have continued to increase over the past several years, but the number of full-time faculty has not.

Now the administration wants to quibble over what type of faculty we hire. I fail to understand why they would want to continue to employ someone who was not valuable

enough to be offered tenure.

We want highly qualified faculty teaching our students, and plenty of research statistics make it clear that if we want to retain more students, we need more full-time teaching faculty.

I hate the thought of a strike, but our students deserve better than what is currently on the table.

Linda Romero-Smith
Humanities & Sciences

Bargaining / continued from 1

Faculty Team member Jason Caudill said, "There's not much that's different this year compared to when I was on the team three years ago."

"About the only change in the administration's approach is that they seem to want even more give-backs from faculty."

"The Faculty team has demonstrated our willingness to compromise on many issues," Jason added. "We have revised several of our own initial proposals in significant ways."

"In contrast, the administration has made no changes, or only very small changes, to some of the proposals they presented back in early June."

Faculty team members said that if a contract agreement cannot be reached on Monday, it's likely that impasse will be declared and the State Employment Relations Board will be asked to begin the process of appointing a fact-finder.

"If we need to engage in fact finding again, then so be it," John said.

"The real bargaining will happen as a result of the solidarity of our Faculty," John continued.

"Working together in support of our shared values, we will be able to achieve a contract that reflects what is best for faculty, students, and the whole College community."

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