Unit 1 bargaining prep includes survey, focus groups, & Chapter meeting

Preparations for contract negotiations are continuing for faculty members in Cincinnati State AAUP Unit 1.

About 70 faculty members participated in the Open Forum discussion of concerns on Jan. 23, and more than 40 faculty attended AAUP information sessions on Feb. 24.

On Mar. 12, a survey on contractual concerns was distributed by email to all faculty members whose work is covered by the Unit 1 contract. Also, focus groups on specific topics are being held this semester.

AAUP Chapter President David Simmermon said the AAUP Executive Committee appointed Paul Davis and Peggy Rolfsen as co-chairs of the Bargaining Council.

The Bargaining Council supports negotiations by doing research and assisting with communications. Their tasks so far have included drafting the survey and getting feedback prior to its release, and organizing focus groups to gain input about specialized faculty concerns.

Focus groups have been held or are being scheduled for co-op coordinators, program chairs, clinical coordinators, untenured faculty, and other groups.

A Chapter meeting is scheduled for April 7, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., to update faculty prior to the end of the semester. Dave said the members of the faculty bargaining team will be introduced at this meeting.

“Before the faculty bargaining team can go to the table and talk to the administration, we need to be sure all faculty have had a chance to share their concerns with Chapter leaders,” Dave said.

“Some bargaining topics affect many faculty members, and some are directly applicable to only a few, but everyone needs to have their say before we begin formal negotiations with the administration,” Dave added.

According to Dave, in past years the formal bargaining

AAUP seeks public records for “online college” discussions

The Cincinnati State AAUP has filed a public records request seeking information about discussions College administrators have held with representatives of Pearson, a provider of online education services, and Higher Education Partners (HEP), an organization that provides start-up funding to support community college initiatives.

HEP provided funds to support the opening of Cincinnati State’s Middletown Campus, in Fall 2012. The College and HEP have a long-term contract regarding funding for construction and renovation of Middletown Campus buildings.

The public records request was prepared by the Chapter attorney, Don Mooney, and was delivered to the College’s Executive Vice President, Carla Chance, on Mar. 10.

AAUP Chapter President David Simmermon said, “Although faculty

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sessions between faculty and administration teams often started in late spring, but substantive bargaining did not happen until summer.

“We always hope that negotiations will be conducted efficiently, and that we’ll be done with bargaining well before the new academic year begins,” Dave said. “However, we can’t achieve that goal unless the administration has the same goal in mind.”

However, faculty members have expressed concern that a partnership with Pearson could obstruct faculty governance of course and curriculum decisions, as well as impede on intellectual property rights,” he added.

The AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement ensures faculty primacy in academic decision making, including faculty participation in decisions related to online course development and delivery.

The contract also defines faculty intellectual property rights in relation to development of online courses.

“The bottom line for Cincinnati State faculty is the quality of our courses, no matter what methods or media are used to deliver those courses,” Dave said. “We’re uncertain if a financial partnership involving Cincinnati State, Pearson, and HEP will maintain the quality that our students deserve.”

Dave noted that similar concerns have led faculty at other colleges and universities to reject proposed partnerships with Pearson to initiate or expand online education programs.

Recent examples include Howard University, which recently put a hold on a proposed partnership with Pearson to create a flagship campus for distance education among historically black colleges and universities.

Another example is Rutgers University, where faculty of the undergraduate school of Arts and Sciences as well as the Graduate School initiated a boycott of online degree programs managed by Pearson.

SEIU contract negotiations continue after members reject tentative agreement

The Cincinnati State local chapter of SEIU District 1199 (Service Employees International Union) expect negotiations for a new contract to resume later this month, according to officers of SEIU.

SEIU represents about 140 professional, technical, and clerical employees at the College.

The current SEIU contract expired at the beginning of Fall semester. Negotiations for a new contract took place during Fall semester, culminating in a tentative agreement with the College administration. SEIU members met in December to review and discuss the tentative agreement, and voting took place on Dec. 18.

The tentative agreement was rejected, 53-51.

According to SEIU officers, a meeting of the SEIU and administration bargaining teams was held on Feb. 28 to review areas of concern related to the rejection of the tentative agreement.

Additional bargaining sessions are scheduled for March 31, Apr. 3, and Apr. 4.

National AAUP election ballots mailed to homes

AAUP Chapter members should have received a ballot, mailed to their home address, for election of National AAUP officers.

Paul Davis, Past President of Cincinnati State AAUP, and Vice Chair of the National AAUP Collective Bargaining Congress, said all chapter members are encouraged to vote in the National officer elections.

If you did not receive a ballot, call Élection-America (the company managing the election process) at (888) 914-5654.

Information about candidates is posted on AAUP’s website at www.aaup.org/about/elected-leaders/elections/2014-election-information.
Letters: “36” does not cut it

To the Editor:

To somebody who doesn’t do well with numbers, “36” is just another number.

Don’t get me wrong; I understand basic math. I also understand inequality.

Preceding negotiation of our last contract, I was on a committee that researched the workload requirements of the other 2-year institutions in the state.

I guess I was overconfident about our chances for equality, since at that time no community college in the state required more than 30 annual contact hours for full-time faculty, along with an average of 150 working days.

Even after the contract was settled, I still couldn’t grasp how life on this campus would change as a result of what “36” really meant.

My first reaction to “36” was, “Fine, I’ll just have to limit the amount of my committee service and my help to student organizations, and cut down on my volunteer work.”

I knew I was lying to myself as the words came out of my mouth.

I heard many colleagues say the same thing; I knew they were lying too.

We still volunteered for committee after committee and showed up to event after event. We rushed to sign up to help the Administration figure out why both morale and retention were low (as if we didn’t already know the answer).

As a group, we still stepped up to the plate because this is what Cincinnati State faculty do.

But I have to ask, do you feel like you do anything well anymore? I don’t.

The one thing I thought I did best, helping students one-on-one at the drop of a hat, is no longer at the top of my priority list. I feel bad even saying that aloud, but it’s true.

Sometimes I try not to make eye contact with a student I suspect will ask me for help. I have to watch what I say to former students now.

I used to say, with a smile on my face, “Let me know what you need and I’ll make sure it happens.”

Now, as much as I try to hide the worn out expression on my face from my students, I just can’t some days. I don’t blame anyone; I blame “36”.

Like many of you, I’ve served on a plethora of retention-related committees where we try to come up with innovative ways to help students succeed.

We spend hours creating ideas for programs and recommending effective policy changes. Some programs even get to be piloted, and many of those are successful.

Here’s the problem, though. The way to ensure that a student stays in our classroom is to be able to talk to them face-to-face, without a facial expression that bleeds exhaustion.

Unfortunately, “36” causes us to spend more time on the theory of success than the practice.

I can name at least five students per class, per semester who leave my class before I get the chance to build the trust that needs to exist between instructor and student.

The reality is that those students are sacrificed so that we can carry out a workload that instructors at other community colleges don’t have to deal with.

Those of us on the academic “side of the house” know how retention really works. To ensure that retention and student success happen, we must fight for a reasonable workload.

These last three years have been grueling. Some members of the administration routinely ask how we can “boost morale” at the College.

There is a simple answer. When we get to the bargaining table, negotiate with us for an equitable workload!

“36” does not cut it, and our students deserve better.

Ryan Shadle
Academic Foundations - Language
Have a Heart: donate days to the Sick Leave Bank

The Unit 1 contract expires on the day before the start of Fall Semester 2014.

Any member of Faculty Bargaining Unit 1 or Unit 2 who has accumulated more than 35 days of unused sick leave may donate some of those days to the faculty Sick Leave Bank.

Faculty bargaining unit members can donate from 1 to 10 unused leave days to the Sick Leave Bank, to be used by faculty members who have used up their own available leave days.

Donations are made using the form that is available from Chapter officers, or on the AAUP Chapter website (cinstateaaup.org) in the “Community Service” section.

Those donating days must retain a balance of at least 35 sick and/or personal leave days in their own account.

The Sick Leave Bank was established in 2002 during contract negotiations.

Over the years, this AAUP service has provided help for many employees experiencing unanticipated medical problems and in need of extended leave.

A faculty member who has fewer than 10 days of sick and/or personal leave and anticipates a need for more may apply for up to 20 leave days from the Bank.

If necessary, the faculty member may apply for an additional 20 days, but no one will receive more than 40 days from the Sick Leave Bank during a 12-month period.

The Human Resources Office allocates the days using criteria in the contract and other generally-accepted criteria.

AAUP Chapter President David Simmermon said that currently, the Sick Leave Bank has about 70 days available.

“We never can predict when one of our colleagues will need to request days to deal with a personal emergency,” Dave said.

“We encourage those who may be ‘cashing out’ some leave days at the end of the year, and those who are retiring, to consider donating a few days to the Sick Leave Bank,” Dave added.