



FA Courier

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(CON'T.)

Ah, Summertime!

And, for some, I'm sure the livin' is easy. For many – if not most – of us, summer means a time to catch up on reading, research and, I hope, relaxing. We talk about "recharging the batteries" but that requires being able to set everything university-related aside. If we want to keep abreast of our fields or pursue our research and creative activities or prepare for tenure/promotion or improve as educators that means we cannot completely disconnect – we can take a few days of vacation with family and loved ones, we can kick back for the weekend, but we can't simply walk away and turn off our brains for three months.

The same applies to the FA. If you are reading this *Courier* on a Tuesday or Thursday then the odds are high that your Bargaining Team is hard at work. While the state legislature seems determined to completely gut collective bargaining in Michigan, you have seven colleagues doing their utmost to achieve the best contract possible. If you see one of them – Krista Graham (LIB), Jennifer Green (HST), David Jesuit (PSC), Chris Owens (PSC), Suzanne Shellady (CSE), Phil Squattrito (CHM), Brad van Eeden-Moorefield (HEV) – take a moment to give them a word of encouragement or just say "Thanks."

This is the last regular *Courier* for me as President of the Faculty Association. I have tried to serve you well and to always act with the best interests of the membership as my goal. I could not have made it through this year without the help and support of my family and you. I need to give special thanks to the following: my colleagues in Communication & Dramatic Arts (especially in TID) for their support and understanding; to the members of the FA Board of Directors for their stamina during some long Board meetings; to the members of the Grievance Committee who work so hard on behalf of

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(CON'T.)

Ah, Summertime! (con't.)

all our members; to Roger Hatch and John Pfeiffer, co-chairs of the Grievance Committee, who have helped me understand the breadth and depth of FA involvement in protecting its members; to Jim McDonald (Secretary), David Lopez (Treasurer), Donna Ericksen (Membership Officer) and Tim Brannan (Past-president); to those retired CMU faculty who remain concerned about the welfare of the university and the faculty; to Laura Frey (President-elect) whose seemingly boundless energy and willingness to share her perspectives on FA issues made so much possible this year; to my wife, Miriam, who put up with my crazy schedule and moods without complaint; and to my daughter, Janeice, a CMU alum now working for the University of Texas at Austin who reminded me that the world of academe really is a small one when it comes to issues of budget, academic priorities and faculty rights.

And, finally, a big thanks you to all of you who took the time to call or e-mail with a concern or question, who sent a link to an interesting journal or newspaper article; to those who made suggestions about how I had/was or could/should handle a situation; to those of you who – with impeccable timing – gave a pat on the back or kick in the rear just when I needed it most.

I hope you all have a fruitful summer.

Tim

The FA and You

[This is part of a series of short stories related to the work of the FA on behalf of its members.]

Usually in this space I try to highlight a portion of the contract or policy that relates to how we do our jobs. For this issue, however, I want to take a slightly different tack and ask a question: "Who is the FA?"

Well, that's any easy question – the FA is over 600 regular faculty spread across all colleges, schools, and departments including some colleagues in Athletics, Libraries and Counseling. In other words, the FA is **all** of us.

Okay, then, a somewhat tougher question: is being a dues paying member of the Faculty

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The FA and You (con't.)

Association enough? Until I became involved on the FA Board my answer to that was, yes. I never had any issues with tenure or promotion, had never been subject to an administrative investigation nor had I participated in an individual or group grievance. The FA was "other people" doing whatever it was they did with little to no impact on my life. Sure I bitched when salary increases were low and cheered when they were high (I fondly remember the 7-7-7 contract) but otherwise I paid almost no attention. Until, that is, I was elected to the Board. It was then that I realized just how much hard work was done and how much good was achieved by 25 or so dedicated faculty. Now, several years later, I marvel at how

uninformed and detached I was from the work of the FA.

This leads me to a third question: What are you willing to do to help the FA? This question goes well beyond the simple will you serve on the Board or will you attend a membership meeting. Now, during the summer when the Bargaining Team is hard at work and many of us have scattered (literally or figuratively) to the winds, are we still giving any thought to the FA? If bargaining bogs down or becomes overtly contentious, are you willing to show your bargaining team your support? Will you wear your FA t-shirt? Will you attend a rally? Of course you will, as long as it is convenient. I'm talking about how far you will go to support your 600 fellow members of the FA when it isn't easy and convenient. How far are you willing to go to get the kind of contract you deserve, to protect your rights and your benefits?

Remember, **YOU** are the FA!

[NOTE: I wrote the above a few days ago before receiving the latest update from the Bargaining Team (see next item). I thought I would include both my original thoughts as well as these prompted by the bargaining update: **Now** is the time to walk the walk not just talk the talk; or, if you will, **Now** is the time to put up or shut up. Yes, I know, you're busy or you're out of town or you're engaged in research or I'm sorry if my tone upsets you but the administration is counting on your disengagement from campus to push forward on a contract that would erode our economic standing while making it harder to achieve tenure and promotion. In the next few weeks you may well be asked to rally or write letters or hand out flyers – will you?]

Bargaining Update

The following is a message from the Bargaining Team (June 3, 2011):

Since our last bargaining update on May 20, there have been some significant developments of which we want to make you aware.

CMU's team has told us on a couple of occasions that they will not agree to extend

Bargaining Update (con't.)

the current contract beyond June 30 (unlike three years ago when they were eager to get an extension in place) and that they will not honor provisions that are not mandatory after that date. Some examples of items that would not take place include payroll deduction of union dues and salary increases for promotions that take effect on or after July 1.

CMU has consciously attempted to put the negotiations on a fast track by putting all of their proposals (both non-economic and economic) on the table now. They are seeking significant concessions on working conditions, including:

- Reappointment, tenure, and promotion policies
- Post-tenure review
- Access to supplemental assignments
- The definition of our workload

They are also seeking significant concessions in economic areas, including:

- Salary
- Promotion increments
- Benefit contributions
- Medical insurance

While most of you are used to becoming engaged in bargaining in September once everyone is back on campus, the fact is that this year, the negotiations are reaching that pivotal stage much earlier. Your active engagement will be critical in the coming weeks to make CMU aware that its regular faculty expect a fair contract. Watch your CMU and/or non-CMU email (if you provided one to the FA) for updates.

State of the University

- ▶ On Monday, January 31, *CM Life* ran a front page article headlined, "Michigan ranks above national average in higher ed funding cuts." In the article Kathy Wilbur, VP for Development and External Relations, is quoted saying, "We will be cut. . . . The question is what amount."

Well, now we know the answer to VP Wilbur's question: 15%. Oh, but wait, that 15% cut is to the portion of CMU revenues from State appropriations. For the last fiscal year, CMU received 19.2% of its **total** funding from state appropriations.

For the moment let's also agree to ignore the threat of additional cuts if CMU raises tuition in excess of 7.1% for next year. Such a raise in tuition would be so counter-productive that it seems completely out of the question for the administration.

So, then, what kind of overall reduction are we actually looking at? About 2.88%.

State of the University (con't.)

Not 23.3 %; not 15%; not even 5% – **2.88%**.

You have probably read the stories in *CM Life* and *The Morning Sun* about CMU's finances. You might be interested in a recent article in the *Free Press*:

(<http://www.freep.com/article/20110522/NEWS06/105220530/Michigan-s-universities-sitting-3-4B-students-faculty-want-partit?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>)

And this one from *Inside Higher Ed*:

(http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/05/27/new_scrutiny_for_colleges_over_unrestricted_net_assets).

"This is a rock-solid place financially." Stephanie Comai, former Chair, CMU Board of Trustees Chairwoman, quoted in *CM Life* (September 27, 2010)

Legislative Update

A couple of *Couriers* ago I wondered about whether the legislature was simply misguided or anti-public employee. The answer now seems crystal clear and it is, unfortunately, the latter. We seem to have a group of legislators who actively believe that to the victor go the spoils and they aren't at all bashful about who they expect to pay the highest tribute – public employees (except, of course, themselves). Our K-12 colleagues are feeling the brunt of these attacks at the moment but colleges and universities are not far behind whether it be limits on health care or right to work rules.

The state legislature has unabashedly attacked unions and collective bargaining rights. While giving almost \$2 billion in tax breaks to small businesses (without any way to measure their effectiveness as a stimulus), the legislature has demanded that education, the working poor and retirees pay.

If you have never contacted a member of the legislature before, now is the time. Let them hear from you.

Not sure who they are? Look at any issues of the *Morning Sun* or your local newspaper.

Not sure what bills impact you directly? Look at back issues of the *Courier* or visit the MEA website (<http://www.mea.org>).

Not sure where the bills are in the process? Visit the Michigan Legislature website (<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>).

FA Alternative E-mail

I know you have seen this item in the last few issues of the *Courier*. Given the most recent bargaining update it is important for you to know that it may be necessary to shift updates and discussions of bargaining issues to a non-cmich listserv. If you wish to be included on that listserv, please send an alternate e-mail address to Laura Frey, FA President-elect (President as of July 1) at: lmfreyedu@aol.com.

If you have already established an alternative (i.e., non-cmich.edu) e-mail and given it to your department rep or to Laura or included it on the Volunteer Information form you will automatically be added to the listserv. Thank you.