

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE CHAPTER  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

January 21, 2009

To: Montgomery College Full-Time Faculty

From: Rose Sachs, President, AAUP Chapter

On behalf of the Executive Committee of our AAUP Chapter, I want to welcome new faculty members to the College. I also want to welcome back returning faculty from a winter break that I hope was restful and refreshing.

Despite a badly broken world, in just about every possible aspect, yesterday was indeed an inspiring day in the history of our country – and a promise for a better future through collaborative effort. Here at the College, we too are experiencing major and unprecedented challenges. As you all know, for the first time in the history of the College, the administration will not honor our negotiated Agreement, and we are in salary negotiations for FY2010. This was neither unexpected nor entirely unwarranted given the state of the economy. And we too hoped for the promise of a better future through collaborative effort.

We approached the administration early in October and let the faculty know on October 8<sup>th</sup> that based on our discussions, we were optimistic that *decisions regarding budget reductions will be developed with faculty input and discussion and that we will be provided with a context in terms of the possible array of cost-cutting options and dollar figures. This did not occur.*

In early November, when all other county unions were already at the table, on behalf of the Executive Committee I put in writing our desire to work proactively with the administration to identify solutions within a collaborative framework. We requested to meet with administrators to begin to address current and projected circumstances and options. In addition, we requested *that in order for us to be informed participants in any discussions designed to craft workable solutions to potentially severe budget challenges, the administration provide us with as much critical and detailed financial information as possible, incomes and expenditures. This did not occur.*

On December 3<sup>rd</sup> we sent an email to faculty detailing the continued lack of response on the part of the administration which put us in a time frame that essentially precluded the possibility of meaningful negotiations. On December 12<sup>th</sup> I received official notification from the Chief Human Resources Officer of the College that the College was reopening our Contract. Even at that late date we expressed to the administration our willingness to work collaboratively and our belief that modifications to faculty salaries could be responsibly crafted only after a thorough examination of all expenditures and other internal and external contracts. We entered into these current negotiations in good faith and with the intention to work together with the administration to formulate a cohesive

response to the economic situation. The administration assured us that detailed information would be forthcoming and that they shared our willingness to work together to develop solutions. Although we believe that the administrators at the table are certainly honest and well-intended, alas, **this did not occur**.

A bit of background: During the past decade, negotiations between management and faculty have occurred within the construct of Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). This strategy has not only enabled us to satisfy the needs of both the administration and the faculty, but, perhaps more importantly, it has benefited students by identifying and negotiating to the core values of the institution. Over a year and a half ago, the Director of Employee Relations, who served as the chief negotiator for the College, retired. Despite our continually-voiced concerns, the position has remained vacant. Consequently, the College has hired a consulting attorney to negotiate the three employee contracts. Ah, the irony in a time of fiscal restraints. The attorney, who is serving as Chief Negotiator, has a long history with the College, but has not, at least here, engaged in any version of IBB or collaborative process of negotiation. When the format of the negotiations became apparent at the first meeting and because we believe that the faculty deserves the absolute best representation, we contracted our attorney to be part of the proceedings as well.

Although we cannot disclose the content of our sessions, suffice it to say that we have met several times and within the context of traditional, non-IBB, negotiations, both the faculty and management have offered proposals. We are somewhat disheartened by this unexpected turn of events because we believe that a failure to work collaboratively and to be forthcoming with regards to the disclosure of pertinent information will surely fracture the relationship between faculty and administration for many years to come.

And yet, there is a basis upon which hope rests. On December 11, 2008, the College-wide Classification and Compensation Sub-Committee developed a guiding philosophy that would enable the College to *attract and retain highly skilled and talented employees*. Three days later, on December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to establish a structure and to increase the FY2009 salary for adjunct faculty by approximately five percent based on, in part, *an on-going effort to attract and retain well-qualified, part-time faculty...to maintain salaries competitive with the market*. While no commitment to attracting and retaining highly-skilled, well-qualified, and/or talented full-time faculty has emerged – clearly, this is an oversight on the part of the administration and an announcement will be forthcoming any moment now.

As you read the following justification for our 2006 proposal that in essence became the very Agreement that has now been broken, please keep in mind that MCPS is providing a step increase to its faculty for FY2010 and that we are firm in our belief that our faculty should not receive substantially less.

*During the 2000 negotiations, both Faculty and Management identified MCPS, based on its significantly higher pay scale, as a primary competitor for quality faculty within our community; consequently, we committed to closing this salary gap. The very small gain*

*that we had made through this negotiation, however, was negated when we lost the negotiated third year of that agreement, a loss of approximately \$900 in each of our base salaries; MCPS maintained their three-year structure. During the following rounds of negotiations, Faculty and Administration identified the lack of parity with MCPS as problematic; the economic climate during those years, however, precluded any action aimed at resolution. In 2004, compensation for faculty at the top of our salary scale was approximately \$6500 below that of MCPS; the salary gap is currently [2006] almost \$7900. Not only are we not closing the salary gap, but we are, in fact, falling farther behind every year.*

The salary structure that we agreed upon and that we have adhered to for two of the three years did not facilitate parity with MCPS; it simply allowed us to maintain the existing gap, to not fall further behind, and to not additionally damage the ability of the College to attract and retain competent faculty.

*Unity of purpose over conflict and discord*, a notion stressed by our newly elected President of the United States seems to have been lost on the administration in terms of the process by which the negotiations have been structured. Let us hope that this notion has not been lost in terms of the values and priorities that are at the heart of the institution. We will continue to keep you informed.

Executive Committee

Rose Sachs (R) - President  
Bryant Davis – VP-G  
Rick Penn – VP-R  
Jason Fuller – VP-TP/SS  
Bill Talbot (R) – Treasurer  
Stephanie Pepin (R) – Secretary  
Tim Kirkner (R) – Grievance Officer  
Harry Zarin (G) - Governance Liaison/Past President  
Daniel Wilson (R) – At Large  
Ken Weiner (R) – Emeritus

Negotiating Team

Gail Jenkins (TP/SS)  
Joan Naake (G)  
Rick Penn (R)  
Rose Sachs (R)  
Bill Talbot (R)