
May/June 2009

The APA

NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter for the Administrative-Professional Association of MSU
MSU Administrative-Professional Association MEA/NEA/1480 Kendale Blvd, Suite 300/East Lansing MI 48823/(517) 353-4898

2009 Association Elections Results

MEA Region Election

Election Dates: March 4-11

APA Executive Board Election

Election Dates: March 23-30

by the APA Nominations and Elections Committee

March was a busy month for APA members as it was time for the annual election of APA executive board and MEA/NEA delegates. This was also the month for MEA region elections for various contested MEA board seats.

The membership has elected the following five APA members to serve on the executive board (3-year term ending in 2012):

**Nick Bourland,
Ramiro Gonzales
Vivian Leung
Leo Sell
Rachel Zakhem**

Below are the five MEA/NEA delegates who were elected (3-year term ending in 2012):

**Nick Bourland,
Ramiro Gonzales
Vivian Leung
Leo Sell
Rachel Zakhem**

Final vote counts and a complete list of all of the candidates was sent via listserv message shortly after the official "live" vote count took place on March 31, 2009 at the APA Association office in East Lansing.

APA Vice-chair, Cynthia Schneider has been elected to the MEA Board of Directors. Her presence on this body will provide the APA increased awareness and a greater voice within our parent organization, the MEA.

"It is a pleasure and honor to have been elected to the position [MEA Board of Directors Minority 3-1G] by the region but more importantly by the local, the APA," states Schneider. "It is comforting to see so many votes cast." Schneider won the election by an overwhelming majority of the vote with nearly 1000 ballots cast in her favor.

NEA Higher Ed Conference

March 2009 Report from Portland, Oregon

by Cynthia Schneider

APA Executive Board Member/Vice Chairperson
APA Communications Chair



Recently I had the opportunity to attend the annual NEA Higher Education Conference (March 27-29) in Portland, Oregon.

The conference theme was "The Seamless Web of Education." The conference explored issues that affect education from pre-K through higher education for example, accountability, college readiness, funding, dual enrollment, and featured examples of how NEA and our affiliates are involved in such efforts. The conference included policy, legislative, legal, organizing, bargaining, and professional development sessions for all sectors of higher education membership.

This conference was not all about issues facing faculty but a good portion dealt with ESP or support staff and administrative professionals. I was asked to be a panelist for a discussion on issues facing professionals

such as those who comprise the MSU/APA. The discussion centered upon an article by Vicki Rosser of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

Nearly 60 percent of U.S. higher education employees are academic professional staff and Education Support Professionals, a 15 percent increase since 1993. For her 2009 Almanac chapter, Vicki Rosser interviewed a sample of ESP leaders-representing employees across ten states and several unions-on key compensation and workplace issues. The title of Rosser's article is "Support Professionals: The Key Issues Survey." The groups surveyed were from four-year traditional public universities and two-year, community college institutions.

Melanie Gofton, a union leader and secretary from St. Clair County Community College shared the panel with me. Of the many issues facing ESP across the country – respect, pay rates and living wage, overtime, merit pay and fair performances reviews – another timely issue is outsourcing, privatization and contract employees. Gofton mentioned that St. Clair privatized the IT department at her college, thus outsourcing all of the date work at the college. This was done as a cost saving measure according to the administration. With two years, this "cost-saving" was costing the college 10 million dollars of a 30 million dollar budget. Costs are estimated to rise to 17 million in the next budget cycle.

Performance reviews – or lack of them – were also a concern of ESPs who were surveyed. Reviews are in theory to be used as guidance in how well or how poorly a job is done and how to improve as an employee and positive member of the work team. Instead, they are used as a negative and way to "save up ammunition for a 'gotcha' moment." This causes more ill-will and negative feelings in the workplace thus leading to poor morale which in the long run, can fuel low productivity and poor productivity.

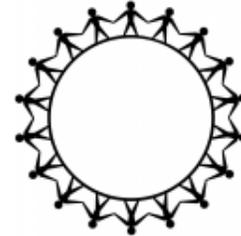
Supervisors who are not skilled in the jobs they supervise is another concern. With this lack of knowledge comes poor direction and ineffective time management. ESPs are often left to repeating tasks or taking longer to complete projects and then being blamed for not having direction or forethought. We are to be independent thinkers but only when it is convenient for the "boss".

Being on the panel was a real eye-opener as to what is happening with units all across the country and how MSU factors into issues related to being higher ed support staff. Participating will assist me in better serving our members at MSU.

Check out our Rosser's article which will be posted in "Communications" portion of the APA website.

MSU Coalition Minutes

Now Online!...Check it Out!



Many of you may not know this but, the MSU Coalition of Labor Organizations meets every month to discuss health care related issues affecting the University and our current contract, as well as other global issues facing our unionized workforce. Beginning with April, the Coalition is now meeting twice a month as we gear-up to negotiate a successor health care agreement.

As a way to better informed our membership, meeting minutes will now be online. We anticipate posting recaps on the APA website in the near future. Please take a moment to learn more about the Coalition and what is happening with upcoming health care negotiations. Remember that our current contract expires at the end of this year – December 31. So stay informed!

Legislative Updates

The Politics of Collective Bargaining and Why You Should Care...

by APA Legislative Committee



There have been a couple of House Bill that are worthy of note as they relate to issues facing higher education.

- **Community colleges** will receive the same funding as this year under Governor Granholm's proposal for 2009-10. One April 2 the House passed HB 4435, the Community College appropriation bill for 2009-10, and sent it the Senate. The funding for community college

operations was frozen at the current level, the same as the Governor proposed. However, total appropriations were increased by \$97 million through the addition of federal stimulus fund for job training.

- **Public universities** take a hit of 3% in the allocation for each institution. Combined with other cuts, higher education is reduced by a total of \$100 million when compared to this year. One April 2 the House passed HB 4441, the Higher Education budget bill for 2009-10, and sent it on the Senate. The bill restores university operations to the current year levels through use of a portion of the federal stimulus dollars.
- **Privatization** – HB 4219, sponsored by Rep. Fred Miller (D-Mt.Clemens) would remove the prohibition in the Public Employment Relations Act against school employees having the right to negotiate over the issue of privatization of their services. This bill has been referred to the House Labor Committee. We also know that Rep. Doug Bennett (D- Muskegon) plans to re-introduce his bill calling for a cost benefit study prior to a decision to privatize and Rep. Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge) plans to re-introduce his bill giving existing employees the right to bid on any work that is slated for outsourcing and/or privatization.

Go to <http://www.mea.org/gov/legislativeupdates.html> for more on these and other legislative matters.

Know Your Contract!

Article 16: Reduction in Workforce



Okay, it's on everyone's mind during the current national economic downturn and the negative economic issues facing the state of Michigan: layoffs. What do I do if "they" come to my department?

This issue of the newsletter and "Know Your Contract" highlights our contractual rights with regards to potential reductions in our workforce.

Article 16, paragraphs 112, 113 and 114 states:

-112 For purposes of layoff only, layoffs shall be within units identified below (see paragraph 119).

-113 Employees to be laid off shall be given at least 45 calendar days notice, not to be offset by accrued vacation. A copy of the layoff notice will be sent to the Association Chairperson.

-114 Within a unit, probationary employees will be separated before non-probationary employees are laid off, where the non-probationary employees are able to perform the work within a 90 day evaluation period.

Where ability to perform the work remaining is equal, the Employer will follow these priorities for reduction in force:

1. Temporary before permanent.
2. Employees with unsatisfactory records before employees with satisfactory records. In the case of evaluations, an employee shall not be considered unsatisfactory until the employee's performance is determined to be unsatisfactory in two consecutive evaluations.
3. Employees with short service before employees with long service.

For complete information, Article 16 [Reduction in Force] begins on page 27 and continues through page 36.

Know Your Contract! Part II

Where the Coalition of Labor Organizations (CLO) is today...And where we are headed.



Where We Are

Many of you may not be aware, but the MSU Coalition of Labor Organizations (MSU/CLO) meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues related to our health care agreement as well as other global topics affecting the unionized workforce at MSU.

During this monthly meeting and others, the MSU unions continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our

health care letter of agreement and work closely with staff benefits to facilitate discussion around consumer quality, cost and access. Being that it is a bargaining year – the current health care agreement expires December 31, 2009 – the CLO is participating with other University initiatives, specialists and consultants in a Health Care Advisory Committee. It is hoped that this effort will allow us to become even more effective consumer representatives when we sit down to negotiate a successor agreement with the unions and University. The CLO is also expanding its monthly meetings into bi-monthly sessions.

Where We Need to Focus

In the February 6, 2009, edition of the State News, President Simon is quoted as saying “our goal is to reduce cost but not shift the burden to the public payroll by reducing insurance. We think what we can do is really look progressively at some prevention methods using evidence that hopefully can reduce our health care costs ...everything is on the table.” It is the belief of the CLO that the President reaffirmed our mutual commitment to preserving access to quality health care for all MSU employees by continuing to engage the industry with a joint purchaser consumer partnership.

MSU benefits experts and labor leaders understand and agree that most employers don't measure the cost of poor health among their employees. If they did they would discover that many of the steps they have taken to reduce benefit costs have actually made the resulting costs of poor health even greater. Smart business leaders know that what is measured can be improved.

When the MSU Health Care Special Advisory Committee is able to identify meaningful and accurate ways to measure patient outcomes for medical conditions, we will be able to address ways to improve wellness and screening initiatives as well as address improved diagnoses, and find ways to achieve more timely treatment with less invasive methods. We need to engage our health plans in cost reduction and containment strategies, which MSU does well, but we also need to continue pressing for accountability for quality and value from our benefits and push for outcomes measurement throughout the system. As we address this important work throughout the year we will keep you informed of the progress and new developments.

The CLO is cooperating with the University in the development of the health management and information web site -- <http://www.hr.msu.edu/healthystate/> -- the President announced earlier this year. Members will be provided with the opportunity to make their views known through surveys and other methods to be actively involved in the process.

Campus Happenings

What's Going-on In Your “Neck of the Woods?”

by Cynthia Schneider

APA Executive Board Member/Vice Chair

APA Communications Chair



From a member of the APA:

*“As an MSU employee you can get nutrition help from Peggy Crum, RD. Peggy is great! There are lots of courses you can take through **MSU Health4U**. Peggy is an advocate of **Health for Every Size** which means that her goals are on health, not size.*

<http://health4u.msu.edu/focusareas/nm.html>

Information on **Health for Every Size** from USDA:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/mar06/health0306.htm>

There is low-cost individual nutrition coaching, too.”

And...Save the Date!

What: The Truth About the Mackinac Center

When: Wednesday, May 27

Time: noon-1 p.m.

Where: International Center Meeting Room

It's not a vacation resort for the elite, but you probably have heard the name – The Mackinac Center. Founded in 1978 by former Michigan Governor John Engler and other Republican activists, The Mackinac Center has grown into the largest conservative state-level “think tank” in the nation.

Learn how this organization affects YOU as a unionized public employee. Lunch will be provided to attendees. RSVP at Christina_Canfield@mea.org .

Send your **“Campus Happening”** to Cynthia Schneider, Communications Chair/Editor, APA Newsletter, cynthia@wkar.msu.edu. Include basic information as well as contact name and number for follow-up support.

[Note that the APA does have an editorial policy. Please consult the website for it prior to your submission. All submissions will be held to editorial standards.]

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**Executive Board meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of each month commencing at 2:00pm in the APA office located at 1480 Kendale Blvd., Suite, 300, East Lansing. Visiting members should call in advance to verify the time and place.*

