

APA WITHDRAWS FROM THE COALITION OF LABOR AT MSU

by Maury Koffman, APA President

Today, the APA is proud to be the largest union on campus and been one of the founding members of the Coalition of Labor Organizations (CLO) at Michigan State University. Over the past decade we have accomplished a great deal through openly sharing information between campus unions.

Yet, as time has passed and leadership transitioned within local campus unions, it seems the dynamics changed and the commitment to the founding principles of the CLO faded. With growing frustrations among many CLO members and concerns about political posturing by some CLO leaders with the University administration, the APA Executive Board engaged for months of deliberation whether our participation in the CLO was helpful or harmful to the APA membership.

In the recent months, following the unexpected passing of Charlie Heckman who served as the President of AFSCME Local 999 and also as the chair of the Joint Health Care Committee (JHCC) on campus, there was an increased unwillingness of CLO unions to openly share information unless demanded.

Elevating the APA's concerns was the decision of the CLO to move forward with the appointment of a new JHCC Chair at a meeting where the APA and other campus union leaders were unable to attend. Exacerbating the APA concern is that a final vote count was requested by the APA and was denied by those who purportedly participated in the vote. The detailed election results have still not been released.

In considering multiple factors and recognizing that a subset of the CLO intentionally excluded the APA in the deliberations regarding the next JHCC Chair, on April 12, 2016, the APA Executive Board proposed and unanimously adopted a motion to withdraw from the Coalition of Labor Organizations at MSU.

This action of the APA Executive Board will have no direct impact on individual members of the APA and the APA will continue to be actively engaged at JHCC. The function of the unanimous decision of the APA Executive Board to withdraw from the CLO was to affirm that only the APA speaks on behalf of its members regarding the APA's and MSU's mutually ratified wage and health care agreement.

Both the APA and MSU recognize we have a mutually ratified agreement through December 31, 2017 and have reaffirmed our desire and intent to continue working through the JHCC in a consistent, collaborative manner just as we have in the past.

Finally, how we bargain our wage and health care agreement is a decision that must be made every four years. Withdrawal from the CLO does not prevent the APA from bargaining jointly with other unions should that be the mutual desire when we approach wage and health care negotiations in late 2017.

To put it another way, it is JHCC that addresses the ratified wage and health care agreement. Since nothing has changed between MSU and the APA regarding the wage and health care agreement, and noting the affirmation by both MSU and the APA to continue working in JHCC, we will continue to meet just as we have in the past.

While the APA is disappointed that the actions of a few CLO leaders compelled this result, the APA Executive Board recognized we could not sit silently on the sidelines while decisions were made that adversely impacted the entire APA membership. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the APA office at 517.999.4004 or email us at msuapa@msu.edu.

QUESTIONS FROM THE TRENCHES

For this installment of APA Questions From The Trenches, we asked APA President Maury Koffman to answer a potpourri of questions that members have brought to attention recently.

If I leave MSU employment prior to 25 years of service, do I retain the total balance of my 403(b) retirement account including the MSU contribution?

Yes. The APA is proud to have negotiated a vibrant retirement plan. Employee contributions are 5% and University contributions are 10% of the employee's base annual salary. The money contributed to your 403(b) plan – employee and employer amounts – vests immediately and goes with you at any time you conclude your employment relationship with MSU.

I have questions about our APA bargained retirement plan administered through MSU. Who can I contact for more information?

There is an FAQ on the MSU HR website at <http://www.hr.msu.edu/benefits/retirement> that provides more information around our retirement plan. Additionally, you can contact the retirement office via phone at 517.353.4434 or via email at benefitsinfo@hr.msu.edu.

How much is the negotiated APA annual wage increase this year for 2016?

The APA negotiated annual wage increase is applied every year in October. For the 2016 year, the APA annual base wage increase is 1%. This amount will be applied across the board meaning each and every member of the APA will be provided the full 1% base wage increase in October 2016.

When wage increases are greater than 1% in a given year, the APA contract provides that 40% of the wage increase is automatic – across the board – and 60% applies the merit pay guidelines that require objective and consistent application. Your immediate supervisor should also provide advance notice of you annual wage increase amount before it is realized on your October 2016 paycheck.

Does the APA contract define a minimum and maximum annual salary for all members of the bargaining unit?

Yes and no. The APA contract outlines minimum salary requirements for all grade levels within the bargaining unit. However, the APA contract serves as a floor and individual bargaining unit salaries may rise above the APA minimums and progression levels.

How long do I have to maintain one APA position before applying for other positions on campus?

Per the APA contract, individuals can apply for other APA and campus positions at any time. There is no period of time a bargaining unit member must wait before seeking alternative positions.

I have been offered another job on campus. How much notice must I give before resigning my current position?

There is no length of notice requirement to resign from your current position. However, when moving to another position within MSU, departments may facilitate up to a 30-day window for the transition. The APA encourages providing as much notice as possible with the standard minimum of two weeks notice if your calendar for transition allows.

PLEASE WELCOME MELANIE WALTZ – NEW APA UNISERV DIRECTOR!

We would like to welcome Melanie Waltz as the new UniServ Director for the Administrative Professional Association. Melanie has been working for the Michigan Education Association (MEA) since 2007 and in that time has worked both in the field and at MEA Headquarters. In her tenure with MEA, Melanie has represented K-12 teachers, educational support professionals and the city library staff. In addition to bargaining contracts and advocacy work in the field, Melanie has also worked for three years at MEA Headquarters in East Lansing in the Professional Development and Human Rights Department.

While at MEA HQ, she focused on training, member engagement and organizing around professional issues – including certification, evaluation, professional development and teacher leadership.

Melanie and her husband, Patrick, love to spend time with friends, family and their dog, Sadie. They are also embarking on a new adventure this summer – learning Spanish and building a small “Casita” in Nicaragua where they love to vacation.

¡Bienvenido!



Melissa Sortman and Melanie Waltz

YOUR FELLOW APS

Interview by Laura Wise, APA Executive Board

Our APA Member Spotlight this month is highlighting Tom Cummins at MSU Extension.

What is your job title?

Communications Coordinator, MSU Extension Communications

How long have you been at MSU? Just over six months.

Have you been a member of APA the whole time? Yes.

Can you tell me a little bit about what you do?

I work with the MSU Extension's Health and Nutrition Institutes. My role involves development of communications and marketing materials and related planning, editing and posting articles written by health and nutrition extension educators and general management of website content related to the health and nutrition institute's five work teams.

What brought you to your job at MSU?

Following a positive study abroad experience at MSU I immigrated to Michigan from Australia in 2015 to get married and carve out a small piece of the Mitten State to call home.

What do you love about working at MSU?

I love the campus itself, the greenways and buildings. It is also great to be a part of an educational environment with a strong focus on building healthier communities.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

I really enjoying trying out new restaurants, revisiting favorite restaurants, drinking great coffee, cooking, reading and exercising.

MEA SPRING 2016 REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

by Sue Brandt, APA Board Member

I had the privilege of being one of the APA delegates attending the Michigan Education Association Spring 2016 Representative Assembly held on Friday and Saturday, May 6 and 7 at the Lansing Center. Hundreds of delegates from around Michigan gathered to discuss common issues, elect leadership and ratify the budget. On a broader sense it was a great opportunity to network with K-12 union members, because when you think about it, these are the feeder schools for our higher education institutions. The caucus lunch and session time provided a forum to meet with fellow delegates from just higher education. For me personally, the highlights of the weekend included getting to see and better understand parliamentary procedures and attending the Saturday rally at the capital. Hearing some motivating speakers including: Becky Pringle, Vice President of the National Education Association, who flew in from Washington DC just for our event; Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha; Acclaimed children's author Patricia Polacco; and six inspiring educators and leaders who were honored at the Human Rights Awards Dinner.

I also learned, that just like at MSU where our retirees are a valuable asset who continue to work behind the scenes, I learned that MEA retiree members are vocal, strong advocates for education and community involvement.

6TH ANNUAL APA PICNIC

More than 300 people attended the 6th Annual APA picnic at Patriarche Park in East Lansing on Tuesday, May 17th. APA President Maury Koffman and many APA executive board members were on hand to speak with members.



Many families were in attendance on a beautiful sunny day, enjoying dinner, children playing at the park and conversation with other APA members.

Board member Carol Greysmith commented “It was great fun to see a lot of the same people from year to year.” Incoming APA Vice-President Dennis Seybert enjoyed answering many questions from our members. We hope to see you all again next year!



Carol Greysmith and Dennis Seybert