

APA September/October 2011 Newsletter

APA Tailgate

Please join us for the first APA tailgate on Saturday, September 24 as the Spartans take on the Central Michigan Chippewas. APA will have a family-friendly tailgate beginning at 10:00 am, so bring your family for burgers, hot dogs and lots of fun! Look for the APA banner and tent at the northwest corner of Shaw and Red Cedar, directly south of the old Shaw Lane Power Plant. Make sure to check our facebook group or twitter feed for updates as the date approaches. We'd love to see you all there!

Bargaining Update

Maury Koffman, President/Chairperson

The 2011 APA Bargaining Team met on August 10 to discuss bargaining input provided by APA members and to identify the priorities of the Team in negotiating a successor contract. Formal negotiations with the University commenced on August 15. While complete details and all matters to be addressed and resolved are still unknown, the Team remains optimistic that a beneficial agreement will result.

APA members - through membership bargaining surveys, emails, phone calls, and conversations at meetings - have raised concerns over a multitude of matters and taken notice to the modification to Educational Assistance and overtime compensation that have resulted from negotiations between the University and other campus labor unions. The APA Bargaining Team shares concerns about these benefits and anticipates having lengthy discussions regarding the impact of these benefits on the APA membership.

The current contract for the APA runs through September 30, 2011. The APA Bargaining Team continues to offer dates and times to meet with the University in hopes of reaching a tentative agreement prior to the expiration of the current contract. Ultimately, any tentative agreement reached between the APA Bargaining Team and the University must be ratified by a vote of the APA membership.

The APA Bargaining Team and eBoard will continue to use available resources to engage and inform members regarding the progress of contract negotiations. If ever you would like to provide your input, concerns, and questions, please email msuapa@msu.edu or contact the APA office at 517.353.4898.

Legislative Update

Elections Have Consequences

Leo Sell, Legislative Committee Chairperson

Michigan lawmakers took their usual extended summer break but not before doing dreadful damage to the interests of the middle class and public employees – particularly those in K-12 jobs. Teacher tenure has been decimated. Educators will no longer be allowed to collectively bargain teacher placement and teachers at all levels can now be fired for almost any reason. Support jobs are more at risk than ever.

More broadly, legislation passed that places a “hard cap” dollar limitation on the amount of premium cost that can be paid by a public employer and forces their public employees to pay at least 20 percent of medical insurance premium cost. This is seriously onerous legislation that impacts all public employees except those working for the big three universities and civil service state workers. That means eventually every employee of every school district, local governance unit, police, firefighters, etc. will be forced to bear this cost. One wonders what happened to local control and home rule concepts that are supposedly also so dear to conservatives.

Let’s be clear. It is not that the current legislature did not WANT to apply these measures to you and I. The ONLY reason this measure is not applying to us is because doing so requires an amendment to the Michigan Constitution.

One ray of hope is pending recall efforts. One particular legislator in the Genesee county area – Paul Scott, faces a November recall election after over 12,000 recall signatures were gathered in his district. Here in the greater Lansing area, we are fortunate at this time to have local legislators who are highly supportive of public education and public employees as well as middle class interests in general terms. Most of Michigan is not so lucky, though.

Which leads to the recently signed redistricting bill. A number of factors came in to play this year. First, redistricting in Michigan is effectively controlled by the very incumbent politicians who can benefit most by gerrymandered districts. Obviously, with Republican control of the entire machinery of lawmaking in Michigan, partisan advantages will be maximized. An additional factor was the loss of one congressional seat. Not surprisingly, congressional districts were designed to pit two Democratic congress members against each other.

That aside, the congressional districts drawn up for southeast Michigan appear to be designed to reduce minority vote strength and are probably in violation of the law – although it’s doubtful the GOP-controlled Michigan Supreme Court would so rule.

As far as state districts, analysis is still going on and it is not clear what kind of makeup exists district to district just yet. You can see the maps at http://house.michigan.gov/home_redistricting.asp.

Finally, the flip of the Michigan Supreme court back to Republican control (really, you don't think that body is truly nonpartisan, do you?) has resulted in a couple of notable decisions. One is a reversal of a previous decision and has effectively eliminated the payroll deduction of PAC (Political Action Committee) contributions. That has little effect on us at MSU because we've never pursued that avenue. We do, of course, highly encourage members to contact the APA office to request a PAC form and make one or more contributions to help fight off these constant attacks on our livelihood.

The other interesting supreme court decision is better news. In effect, they've ruled that e-mails sent through the employer's mail system among leaders of the union/association are not public documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We still advise caution, of course, about using the MSU mail system for purposes related to union representation, since in theory the employer can examine that data under the law (however so would be a violation of MSU policies.)

For update to date information on legislative issues, sign up for [MEA's Capitol Comments](#).

Community Based Events

by Nick Bourland & Debra Porter, Co-Chairs Community-Based Events, MSU APA

As part of its ongoing effort to meet member needs, the APA Executive Board formed a Community-Based Events Ad-Hoc Committee (CBE Committee). The Committee's primary purpose is to provide opportunities to APA members to reach out, promote and engage in charitable, non-profit, non-religious activities in the Greater Lansing Area.

To ensure that only quality and relevant organizations are considered, a purpose, policy, and procedure statements were created and are available on the APA website (<http://www.msuapa.org>). In addition, proposed activities are not contributed to by Association funds and rely solely on volunteer contributions. APA members are encouraged to send proposals of activities to the CBE Committee for consideration.

In July 2011, the Executive Board adopted the Committee's first two recommendations which are a formation of a team for "2011 Walk to End Alzheimer's" for the Alzheimer's Associations in Barry, Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, and support of the Capital Area Literacy Coalition (CALC) or commonly referred to as "The Reading People."

The Alzheimer's Walk will occur on Sunday, September 18, 2011, at 11 a.m., at the MSU Auditorium Field. Members are encouraged to contact Debra Porter (porterd@msu.edu) for more information.

Capital Area Literacy Coalition (CALC) is a non-profit volunteer literacy organization. CALC, or The Reading People, provides a variety of services to enable people to achieve personal goals through literacy.

Some volunteer opportunities include tutoring adults or children for an hour or two a week, collecting and distributing books, providing office support, and donation of other professional services. This Fall, a campus wide children's book-drive will occur and needs MSU building captains!

To volunteer as a book-drive MSU building captain, please contact Nick Bourland (bourlan2@msu.edu).

For more information, please visit the CALC website (<http://www.thereadingpeople.org/>), call them at [517-485-4949](tel:517-485-4949), or send an email message to mail@thereadingpeople.org.

All members are encouraged to submit other ideas to the CBE Committee! Visit the APA website (<http://www.msuapa.org>) select Committees: Community-Based Events.

Know Your Contract

by Melissa Sortman, MEA Uniserv Director

How am I doing? Evaluate Me, Please!

What every member needs to know about evaluations.

Some employees appreciate never being evaluated.

Some employees desire feedback and enjoy being evaluated regularly.

Some employees accept feedback better after big projects are complete.

But contractually what is allowed?

An annual performance review should be done by the supervisor, according to Article 12 Clause 100 of the MSU APA Master Agreement, (<https://www.msu.edu/~msuapa/apacontract.pdf>)

If an employee is struggling, more frequent evaluations are allowed. The Performance Evaluation Form is standard a form and can be found on the Human Resources website: http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/PDP.pdf.

The formal evaluation form is one of the few documents that may be placed in an employee's official personnel folder (link to Article 11 of agreement). In addition, an employee may add additional comments regarding the evaluation to be placed in the personnel file. You have a right to know what is placed in your personnel file which is governed by the Bullard Plawecki Employee Right to Know Act <http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/righttoknow.htm>

If you are not evaluated, there is a presumption of satisfactory work.

If you receive an unsatisfactory evaluation and/or placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/PIP.pdf, you should notify your Association Chairperson, Maury Koffman at koffman@msu.edu or MEA staff, Melissa Sortman, msortman@mea.org for advice and support. If you contact your union representative, it will be kept confidential.

You will be reevaluated in ninety days and your union representative can assist you in many ways through the process. The APA representative can, at the member request, call a conference with the evaluator prior to the ninety day evaluation. This meeting can be useful to facilitate problem solving path versus a punitive one.

Don't hesitate to ask for assistance, the MSU APA office is (517) 353-4898.

Resources:

Probationary Evaluation Form:

http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/ProbationaryEval.pdf

Performance Development II Form:

http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/PDP2.pdf

Performance Improvement Plan:

http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/PIP.pdf

Employee Self Review Worksheet:

http://www.hr.msu.edu/performance/supportstaff/staffperformance_docs/selfReview.pdf

New APA-Specific Track from HRD – Coming Soon!

Human Resources Development is collaborating with the APA to develop a certificate series specifically for APA members. The series will address core competencies important to the effectiveness of administrative professional employees in their varied roles.

A design team comprised of APA employees, APA board members, and others will be formed this fall, and will work together to design the series. The team will be seeking input on the competency areas that should be addressed and how the series should be designed in terms of number and frequency of sessions, format, etc. The goal is to run a pilot of the series in spring 2012 with a full roll-out in fall 2012.

If you have any input or would like to be involved in the process, please contact Dawn L. Hecker, Assistant Director of Human Resources Development via email at hecker@hr.msu.edu.

APA Launches New Facebook Presence

The MSU Administrative Professional Association is now On-Line!

Please check out our new web presence. The APA participates in Facebook and Twitter in order to share information and engage members in discussion pertaining to the working conditions of our members and public education policy.

Twitter: [@MSUAPA](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/msuapa