

November 2010



Dear Colleagues,

I am very happy to be writing to you with an update on the activities of our faculty union. With new officers just elected, and the implementation of our latest contract well underway, it seems like the right time to initiate what we hope will become a regular Goddard College Faculty Union newsletter. Please note especially the “Know Your Rights” feature containing important information on our union contract. As always, the GCFU runs on our donated efforts, so we need volunteers to bring this and other union initiatives to fruition. Please see the end of the update for information on how to volunteer.

In Solidarity,

Eva Swidler (IBA 1)
GCFU Vice President

Greetings From the Incoming President of the Goddard College Faculty Union

Let me say at the outset that I never expected to be directly involved in the union at Goddard. However, I was surrounded in the early days of unionization by faculty who were activists, and that is exactly what happened. At first we joined the National Education Association (NEA), but in the end we did not feel that we were as well served as we could be. Someone informed us that the UAW was now representing a broad spectrum of workers including those in the field of education. We contacted them and quickly came to an agreement. I was chair of the Faculty Council during the first union/administration negotiations and followed the events as they unfolded. I think it became immediately clear to everyone that we were much better served by the UAW and the outcome was a defining collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that served as the basis for the subsequent reopener and recently completed CBA.

Following a term as Chair of the Faculty Council and a briefer stint as Faculty Trustee on the Board of Trustees, I decided to toss my hat into the ring to be part of the negotiation team for the reopener that took up issues related to compensation in the transition year into the full scale negotiation for a new CBA. To say the least, it was an initiation into the hard realities and challenges of being at the negotiation table, where differences get worked out and decisions have a lasting impact. I learned to value and appreciate my team colleagues **Jane Wohl** (MFAW), **Rachel Pollack** (MFAW), and **Muriel Shockley** (IBA) and our **UAW Reps, Tim Scott** and **Henry Fijalkowski**. I also learned a good deal about the perspectives of the Goddard administration, which was well represented by **Daryl Campbell** (CFO) and **Pam Kinniburgh** (HR). In fact, I think we all learned a good deal from one another in that first round.

Enthused by the experience, and with the encouragement and support of faculty, I put my name in to join the team for the full-scale negotiations. If the reopener was my initiation into the world of negotiations, the full-scale CBA negotiation was a test of endurance that involved multiple levels of data, adjustments, reconsiderations, and so on. As we moved deeper into the negotiations, my admiration for the previous teams who had started all of this from scratch grew. So, too, my admiration for my team members. The new team included **Muriel Shockley**, **Rachel Pollack**, **Tim Scott**, and **Henry Fijalkowski** from earlier reopener negotiations, with the addition of **Richard Hermann** (EDU) and **Ron Patenaude** (President of UAW Local 2322). I have to add that such negotiations may often be difficult and even adversarial, but the way was smoothed by the professionalism of the administration team under the able leadership of **Bob Kenny** (then EVP) and including **Pam Kinniburgh**, Program Directors **Steve James** (PSY) and **Ann Driscoll** (SBC), **Joe McConnell** (attorney for the Goddard College Corporation), and **Erin Tittel** (HR). Once again, I think we all learned a good deal from one another. I see the current CBA as a testimonial to all the work that we did together. As those of us who negotiated it well know, it's a complex document and not without its flaws, but with limitations more than balanced out by what it offers in the way of strong support and protection of the faculty, thereby contributing to the creation of a just and humane workplace.

What lies ahead as we move into the new landscape that is framed by this agreement? My priorities include better communication within the GCFU (including vigorous dialog about union matters at the program level to inform our future activities); fostering activism by a broader swath of our membership (see the Call for Volunteers at the end of this update); and enhancing the GCFU's voice in our UAW local and UAW region. (See the profile of Local 2322 President **Ron Patenaude**, below, for more about this regional picture.) Building an effective faculty union at Goddard is about so much more than contract negotiations: at the most fundamental level, it's about enhancing our college's democratic traditions and academic freedom.

I want to end by saying that I very much appreciate the encouragement and acknowledgement of the Goddard College Faculty Union negotiation team and the support I received when I put my name in for the position of GCFU President. Regarding the latter position, and on behalf of the union team and all our membership, I want to acknowledge and thank our outgoing President, **James Sparrell**, for all he has done in supporting and representing faculty over the past years. I suspect, like me, he never expected to be a union activist! In addition, I also want to offer the same acknowledgement and appreciation to outgoing Vice President **Muriel Shockley**, whose activism goes way back. To all the union stewards, **Lise Weil** (IMA), **Neema Caughran** (IBA 1), **Annie Abdalla** (IBA 2/BFA), **Jane Wohl** (MFAW VT/PT), **Kristal Owens** (PSY), **Sharon Cronin** (EDU), **Lori Wynters** (HAS), **Richard Schram** (SBC), **Ju-Pong Lin** (MFA-IA VT), and **Petra Koppers** (MFA-IA PT): please accept my thanks and I look forward to working with you. Finally, I want to welcome our new Vice President, **Eva Swidler** (IBA 1), who I suspect was an activist from the get-go.



Francis X. Charet (IBA/IMA)
GCFU President

Workload Study Group Underway

The Workload Study Workgroup was formed to gain a better understanding of the nature of the work that faculty do at Goddard College. The workgroup consists of three faculty members, two program directors, and the academic dean. The group is undertaking a study that will involve an external survey of workload at other low-residency programs, an internal survey on the various types of work that faculty undertake in Goddard's programs, and qualitative data gathering through interviews and/or focus groups. The workgroup's research and findings will be brought to the Transition Team, Faculty Council, and the PD Council for input before being made available to the college community. The design of the external survey and the selection of comparable programs is nearing completion, and the external survey should be going out to those appropriate committees soon. Data collection will proceed into the upcoming year. It is the hope of this group that the results of this study will not only inform discussions around faculty labor, but will also provide useful insights into the factors that contribute to faculty job satisfaction, or contrarily to a sense of overwork.

Spotlight on Local 2322 President Ron Patenaude

The GFCU belongs to U.A.W. Local 2322, which is based in Western Massachusetts and includes more than 3000 members. We spoke with the local's president, Ron Patenaude, about his work on behalf of members as well as his long-standing involvement in the U.A.W.'s broader social justice initiatives. Ron was elected to his current post in 2004, and before that had served for 6 years as the U.A.W.'s Civil Rights Chair for the State of Massachusetts. He first became a union activist and member of Local 2322 while working as a substance abuse and mental health counselor at Sisters of Providence Behavioral Hospital in Holyoke, Massachusetts, where he and his co-workers organized with the U.A.W. in 1997.



ABOVE: Dolores Huerta of the United Farmworkers with Ron at UAW Civil Rights Dinner 2010

When we spoke, Ron offered a welcome refresher in union structure, explaining that Local 2322 belongs to UAW Region 9A, which encompasses Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New York City, and Puerto Rico. We are an "amalgamated" local, comprising bargaining units from a range of workplaces that come together to manage our own affairs as well as having input into the regional and national UAW. We currently include 17 different "shops," from GEO (representing the graduate student employees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst) to several daycare programs to the housekeepers at Mount Holyoke College.

Ron considers his social justice work to be an integral component of his union activism. He points to the U.A.W.'s longstanding leadership on a range of civil rights issues, going back to the era of President Walter Reuther, who took part in the March on Washington in 1963. It all adds up to what Ron recalls hearing another former UAW president, Stephen Yokich, describe as "this whole idea that we're more than a union—we're a social movement."

As a “gay American who remembers what it’s really like to be discriminated against,” Ron is extremely proud of his participation in organized labor’s effort on behalf of marriage equality in Massachusetts. He recalls the U.A.W.’s political action arm (known as a CAP or Community Action Program) sponsoring a letter-writing campaign to push back an effort resembling DOMA (the Defense of Marriage Act) at the state level. Later, as Massachusetts’s same-sex marriage debate evolved, “not just the U.A.W. and other unions, but the Massachusetts AFL-CIO became instrumental in that fight.”

On the day we spoke, Ron had attended contract negotiations with members of the post-doctoral fellows in the University of Massachusetts system and Karen Rosenberg, UAW Region 9A International Representative. The recently organized post-doc bargaining unit at U. Mass Amherst will swell Local 2322’s ranks by about 200 members. We also talked about how he and Henry Fijalkowski, the local’s outgoing International Rep, got involved in the earliest stages of organizing efforts by adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, a campaign that culminated early this fall when the National Labor Relations Board finally certified their union. Although it might come as a surprise to those who assume that any union with “Automobile Workers” in its title must be based exclusively in heavy industry, these achievements are typical of the U.A.W.’s path-breaking nationwide role in union organizing by non-tenure-track faculty and other knowledge workers in higher education.

Ron is willing to put his body on the line in the interests of labor justice. One of the first things he did after being elected Local 2322 President was to get arrested in a civil disobedience action with graduate teaching assistants at New York University in protest of NYU’s refusal to recognize their union. He’s also a committed believer in grassroots

electoral democracy. As such, he ran for the Massachusetts State Senate in 2008 on a platform emphasizing employment, healthcare, and education; he’s considering the possibility of another run in 2012. Ron expresses enthusiasm about adapting to the unique challenges of working with a physically dispersed workforce like Goddard’s. In addition to helping the GCFU enforce our contract by assisting our officers and union representatives in the handling of grievances, he envisions working with our new officers to design a union steward training and orientation that could be made available to faculty at each residency.



More on Social Justice in the U.A.W.

Local 2322 has voted to send a delegation to the annual School of the Americas protest in Fort Benning, Georgia. This year, the event will take place from Nov. 19-21. More information on the protest is available on the School of the Americas Watch web site at www.soaw.org. If you are interested in participating with Local 2322, contact Rose Bookbinder: rosebookbinder@gmail.com.

For a link to a column by New York Times columnist Bob Herbert on the efforts of the U.A.W.’s new president, Bob King, to renew a spirit of progressive activism within the labor movement, visit: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/10/opinion/10herbert.html>

Know Your Workplace Rights

The Goddard College Faculty Union and the Goddard College Corporation successfully concluded negotiations on a new contract in fall, 2009. A Transition Team was created to implement its provisions and has been meeting regularly. However, there is no such thing as a self-enforcing contract and it is up to each faculty member to safeguard rights under the contract by doing the following:

Read the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) to familiarize yourself with all of its provisions: <http://gnet.goddard.edu/cba> or http://www.uaw2322.org/goddard_college.htm

If you have concerns that any aspect of your employment at Goddard might not be meeting the requirements of the contract, contact your program-based union representative to determine if, in fact, a contract violation has occurred. (See “What Is a Grievance?” below.) Representatives are as follows:

Lise Weil (IMA)

Neema Caughran (IBA 1)

Annie Abdalla (IBA 2/BFA)

Jane Wohl (MFAW VT/ PT)

Kristal Owens (PSY)

Sharon Cronin (EDU)

Lori Wynters (HAS)

Richard Schram (SBC)

Ju-Pong Lin (MFA-IA VT)

Petra Kupperts (MFA-IA PT)

If you have a concern about an issue that the contract does not appear to cover, you may still contact your representative to see whether action can be taken. It could be that a less than obvious contract provision applies; in other cases, it might be possible to address the issue outside of the collective bargaining framework. Your representative is likely to have information on whether similar issues have affected other faculty members and, if so, how they have been handled. Since no union contract can address all issues, it is also important for the union to gather information about problems that might be tackled in future contracts. Please pass on your issues or concerns to the GCFU reps and leadership.

If you are asked by anyone in the Goddard administration (e.g. your Program Director, the Academic Dean) to answer questions about your work in a context where you believe discipline or discharge might result, you should invoke your right to have a union representative present during the conversation. (See “Weingarten Rights,” below.)

What Is a Grievance?

Like other union contracts, Goddard’s CBA specifies a step-by-step procedure for resolving situations in which a contract violation is perceived to have occurred. A grievance is a formal claim that the CBA has been violated. The union recognizes that contract violations often have the potential to be resolved informally, and encourages faculty members to seek such resolutions where possible (i.e. through a conversation with a Program Director about the fair interpretation of the service hours provision, or through a query to Human Resources when a length of service pay raise fails to materialize on schedule). However, when the informal route fails, faculty members in consultation with

their union representatives should feel no hesitation about making use of the grievance procedure, and this must be done promptly as the CBA specifies a fairly narrow time range between the discovery of a contract violation and the filing of the grievance. A prospective grievant should have a fact-finding consultation with the union representative. If the rep believes that a contract violation has indeed occurred, this will be followed up with a written statement of the grievance, to which the administrator whose action is being contested is obliged to respond in writing. If no resolution occurs at this level, the matter may proceed through further steps including review by the Academic Dean, an Internal Grievance Committee, and ultimately the President. In the event that no satisfactory resolution is achieved at any of these levels, the grievance may be heard by an outside arbitrator, a neutral party with expertise in contract enforcement.

Weingarten Rights

“Weingarten” refers to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that clarified the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act regarding the right of unionized workers to union representation during investigation interviews with management. This means that if you are questioned about your job performance in a way that suggests you could be disciplined or fired if your answers are unsatisfactory to your supervisor, you can and should ask to have a union representative with you during the discussion. Obviously, all sorts of exchanges normally take place between workers and their supervisors having to do with expectations for job performance. At Goddard, Program Directors often inquire how the semester is going or provide advice on handling difficult advisor/advisee issues. The union has no role in these routine interactions. However, if you find that a conversation with an administrator about your job performance is taking an unduly critical turn, the U.A.W. strongly recommends that you say: **“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion.”** *This includes telephone conversations.* Your representative can protect you in a variety of ways, including objecting to intimidating tactics, raising extenuating factors, cautioning you against making damaging admissions in response to pressure from your supervisor, and serving as a witness to what went on in the interview should there be a later dispute about what took place. We are fortunate that working relationships at Goddard are usually collegial rather than hostile, but that happy state of affairs should not cause us to ignore the very real power of the supervisory role, which has the potential to place an employee in an unexpectedly vulnerable position. Employers are not obliged to inform workers of their Weingarten rights; the burden is on us to initiate our own access to the protections it provides.

Can't Open That Student Packet? Free Software Updates for Faculty Computers from Goddard's IT Department

Goddard College is able to offer to faculty the installation of the latest Microsoft Office on one of the faculty's own computers. The LITS department would like to encourage interested faculty to set up an appointment with them to complete this installation when faculty are on site for their respective residencies. Installation can take roughly an hour or so (depending upon the computer). As a general rule, LITS would prefer to save on resources, packaging, and postage unless absolutely necessary, but new programs can also be sent out on CD when necessary. Email lits@goddard.edu with your requests.

A more complete list of software that is available under this Microsoft agreement can be gotten from lits@goddard.edu . However, Rob Brennan says, "We do have the ability to obtain licenses for the various flavors of Microsoft Office and Windows - which are the two biggies. If there is a Microsoft product (faculty) is interested in, we can see if we're able to offer that."



Local 2322 T-Shirts

United Auto Workers T-shirts are typically given out to members who participate in union-sponsored rallies or events. But with Goddard faculty scattered all over the country, our local is making T-shirts available to any member who made it this far into this newsletter. That's you!

The office manager at our local in Amherst designed these T-shirts himself, so you won't get one like it anywhere else. Our manager Scott LaRochelle has led a varied life, working at jobs ranging from factory machine operator to lab tech to database management. Along the way he taught himself html and became a website builder and editor. Right now, he's learning graphic design, and has produced business cards, brochures, gift certificates and, recently, our very own local 2322 T-shirt.

On the back of our T-shirts are listed the many job descriptions that are united under the umbrella of our local. Here's Scott's description of how this design came about. "Early this year I attended a design workshop.... We were at a point of needing to reorder shirts, so I attacked this project again in my not-so-spare time. The message I decided we needed was one about who we really were. So many times when someone found out where I worked or saw my union shirt, questions would start about the Detroit autoworkers. The other response tended to be 'where are there autoworkers around here that need representation?' People just didn't get that we aren't just autoworkers anymore. Then it all came together for me and I am happy to say that responses have all been positive to this new design."



If you'd like a shirt, send your full contact information to scott@uaw2322.org, along with your preferred size. A few shirts of older designs are also available, if you specify your preference in the email. Otherwise, Scott's new design is what you'll get!

Volunteer to Build Our Union!

**If you are willing to work on future issues of
this newsletter or other GCFU projects, e-mail
Vice President Eva Swidler: Eva.Swidler@Villanova.edu**

**To access a copy of our Collective Bargaining Agreement,
or to view this newsletter on line, visit the Local 2322 website:
http://www.uaw2322.org/goddard_college.htm**

