

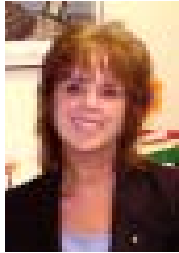


WCCFT *Union* NEWS

February 2008

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

President's Message



Our Duty Is to Represent You

By Anne D'Orazio

The next union meeting on **Wednesday, February 6 in Science 102** is especially important because it will focus on upcoming contract negotiations. Your interests need to be represented at that meeting. Please plan to attend. As always, lunch will be served at 11 and the **meeting will begin promptly at 11:15**. Although individuals are free to leave at 12 for other meetings, due to the important nature of this particular session, **we will extend the meeting as long as is necessary to cover all issues**.

In preparation for the meeting, the Union would like to clarify a few issues.

It has come to the Union's attention that a petition is being circulated which would attempt to circumvent the established procedures for grievance representation by the WCCFT. Although we have not yet received a copy of this, we would like to explain the process by which the Union determines to go forward with a grievance from a faculty member. When union members have questions about the handling of grievances, it is totally appropriate to raise that issue. The elected body of the Union, the Executive Board., has a responsibility to the membership to answer such inquiries and explain any procedures that are unclear or disputed. A Union can only be strengthened by open and honest debate. All discussions should be welcomed by the membership because it gives everyone a chance to review the union process and to move in a direction fully supported by all members.

It is the responsibility of the Union

to protect the process bargained by the Union with the Administration, a process spelled out in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). A grievance is, by definition, a violation of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA). If that document is silent on the issue in question, then past practice may be determinative.

The responsibility of going forward with a grievance rests with the Executive Board elected by the general membership. The day to day work of representation is entrusted to a grievance committee. It has been the practice of the WCCFT to have the President and Vice- President shoulder this task. To assess what constitutes a grievance requires a thorough understanding of

ously suggest abandoning this ancient tenet of Anglo-American law. The Union may or may not agree with the Administration's charges. It doesn't matter. If the Union after careful investigation, discussion among the Executive Board members and consultation with the Union's labor relations specialist determines that the process has been compromised, it must go forward with the grievance. If the Union fails to represent an aggrieved member, it can be sued under the Duty of Fair Representation doctrine of labor law.

Let me say again, the Union protects the process so that it can protect your rights.

In a recent conversation, Dr. Hankin claimed that union members were upset

that union dues were increased to pay for our last arbitration. The Union's response is unequivocal: **There has been no increase in union dues to pay for any grievance hearings.** The arbitration process has no impact on the dues structure of the WCCFT.

A union is a collective of equals engaged in a joint effort to improve their salaries and working conditions. Its power rests on maximum internal democracy and maximum external unity. No one is

excluded from active participation at the monthly meetings and special emergency sessions, from contributing articles and letters to the Newsletter, or from the right to speak at Executive Board meetings. The officers and members of the Board who are accountable to the membership are available for meeting with members to discuss their concerns.

I hope you will all attend this very important membership meeting on Wednesday, February 6.

“...the Union protects the process so that it can protect your rights.”

contract language and familiarity with Union-Administration history at the College. At one time, the Executive Board approved the idea of adding members to the Committee and a call went out for volunteers to serve. One faculty member, who has since left the College, came forward for training.

Every faculty member is entitled to due process, the right to know the charges against him and the right to be heard in his own defense. This is fundamental fairness. No one would seri-

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Affiliated with New York State United Teachers

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Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings:

First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Science Building 102
(Lunch is served)

February 6, 2008:

JR Wilson,
"Issues of Negotiations"
Union Contract Proposals

March 5, 2008:

Benefits

April 2, 2008:

Health and Safety

May 7, 2008:

Legislative Luncheon



Membership Meeting Agenda

**Address to Membership from JR Wilson,
NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist**

Results of Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Surveys

Contract Negotiations

Adjunct Faculty Protocol

Distance Learning Protocol

Faculty Development

Health in the Workplace
(issues of health and safety on campus)

The Promotional System

Scheduling

Release Time of Department and Curriculum Chairs

Increases in Dental and Vision coverage

Sick Leave Buy Out

Ranks and compensation for new hires

Pay back for librarians

Longevity

POMCO payment criteria

Contract language clean-up

Clinical hours

Wednesday

February 6

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Science 102