

# FAN

## Faculty Association Newsletter

Volume 37 • No. 4

MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 18, 2004

### President's Corner

by Mike Goho

These days, my hallway conversations have turned toward the topic of negotiations. People I run into are well aware that our contract will expire on August 31, 2004, and they are naturally curious about what the future might hold. I am writing this column to update you on many of the topics which have come up in these conversations.

Your FA negotiating team (Chief Negotiator Charlie Clarke, FA Vice President Taine Vinci, Bethany Gizzi, Christopher Otero-Piersante, Paul Wheeler and I) has been meeting since the fall semester. So far, we have put in approximately 40 hours in team meetings and about 100 hours beyond that doing research to prepare for the start of negotiations. Your responses to the priority polls (thanks to Angel Andreu for creating the spreadsheet and to Marlene Goho and Sonja Lenhard for inputting all of your responses) have been studied and used to establish the FA priorities for the negotiations.

Currently, the management negotiating team has not been fully assembled. Diane Cecero will be the Chief Negotiator for management. Dick Degus will be on the management team. Others have yet to be added, but will probably include one or more of the Vice Presidents or their representatives.

We had hoped to start negotiating in January, however, President Flynn requested that negotiations begin after

Governor Pataki released his proposal for the state budget. The Governor proposed cutting FTE aid to SUNY community colleges by 5% (\$2,300 to \$2,185). The FA actually considers this to be fairly good news. Last year, the Governor proposed a 15% cut, which was ultimately restored by the State Legislature. We believe the worst case scenario is for the Legislature simply to restore these funds, and we would receive no increase as has happened the last two years. Historically, FTE aid has not decreased in any of the last 10 years. We consider it highly unlikely that the cut proposed by the governor will survive the Legislature's process.

A reasonable goal in this round of negotiations is to emerge with a multi-year contract of no less than three years. Although projecting the future can be difficult, we will negotiate from a perspective that historical patterns must be used to frame any future contract. To that end, we have examined trends in historical data in the college budget, FTE students, tuition, FTE funding, county funding, retirements, the fund balance, number of faculty represented by the FA, the percentage of sections taught by full-time faculty and health care costs.

Our contract is mature and we expect no changes in most of the articles in the contract. However, the negotiating team, with the approval of Faculty Council, has established goals for the new contract. Currently our lower paid faculty rank well below the mean in terms of salary. Our instructors rank 17th out of 30 SUNY community colleges, and our assistant professors rank

*Continued on page 2*

15th of 30. The FA believes we should rank 6th among community colleges (we do not believe we can or should try to compete with the 5 community colleges in the New York City area where the cost of living is so much higher than in Rochester). In our conversations with President Flynn, he has stated that a ranking of 6th is a goal we should be working to achieve. The FA does not believe this will happen in one giant step; however, we do want the next contract to contain salary provisions which will allow us to move toward a higher standing relative to community colleges outside of the NYC area.

A second goal of negotiations is to maintain our health benefits and to add domestic partners to those who are eligible to receive health benefits.

The FA will also bring items related to chairs to the table when negotiations begin. Because of an increase in chair turnover, we recognize a need to improve compensation for chairs both in the stipend they receive and in total release time provided for the chairs. Additionally, we want to increase the stipend adjunct coordinators receive. Both chair stipends and adjunct coordinator stipends have not increased since 1993.

One of the most contentious issues has been the inconsistent compensation for professional staff who are required to work beyond the normal work day/work week. In the fall, we successfully resolved a grievance to compensate faculty in Computer Network Services who were required to put in about 500 hours of extra time during August and early September. Recently, we reached agreement on compensation for faculty who will be required to put in extra time working on the Banner project. (You will be informed of the details of this agreement in the next FAN.) In the upcoming negotiations, we want to clarify language in Article 45 regarding compensation to professional staff for required work beyond the normal work day/work week.

Two subcommittees of Labor/Management have been working since last year preparing for two items related to negotiations. A Titles Committee has been examining titles of Professional Staff. Included in the work of this committee is dividing the title Specialist into three levels and dividing the title Coordinator into two levels. This will create a ladder which will allow Technical Assistants and Advisors to be promoted into the titles of Specialist and Coordinator more easily. Another subcommittee of Labor/Management has been examining Article 54 – Evaluation. The purpose of this committee is to clarify evaluation procedures for both teaching faculty and professional staff. Currently, this article is “one size fits all.” We hope to create an article which is clear and which addresses the variety of work we do here at MCC.

We will negotiate for increased availability to sick-time for part-time faculty and for increased job security for adjunct faculty. Additionally, we will seek service credit for years of part-time employment.

We hope to create some new retirement options which will allow faculty to reduce their workload as they approach retirement and which would provide the administration with some greater predictability in planning for retirements.

This is a list of the major items we will bring to negotiations. It is rather ambitious, but it is necessitated by not having had any major negotiations since 1999. Last year, we agreed to a one-year extension of the contract because management did not want to commit to a longer term contract because of uncertainties in the revenue streams funding the college. Over the past year, however, the fund balance has grown by 10%. The FA believes there will always be uncertainties in our funding and that we must predict the future by examining the past. If the sky really does fall, the FA has shown a

*Continued on page 3*

willingness to reexamine its contract, and we have made adjustments in dire times. Our desire as we enter negotiations is to produce a contract by early May. This would allow us time to inform the membership of the provisions of the new contract and to have a vote before the end of the spring semester.

People have asked me what happens if we are unable to negotiate a new contract before the present one expires? The Tri-borough Amendment to the Taylor Law requires that the terms of an expired contract continue until a successor agreement is reached. All the provisions of our contract would remain in place should we not reach agreement by August 31. The Tri-borough amendment adds great strength to any union bargaining in New York State. Prior to its passage, management used a tactic of refusing to bargain and letting contracts expire. Upon expiration, management would institute new, highly detrimental terms of employment, frequently forcing concessions from the unions in order to achieve any kind of reasonable contract. The Tri-borough amendment forces employers to come to the table to try to achieve gains.

I hope this article has answered many of your questions about negotiations. We are planning two meetings in March (see dates below) to inform you of the progress of negotiations, and I will keep you informed through FAN as well. The meeting dates will be announced in FAN and on the new FA website:

<http://www.monroecc.edu/go/FA>

**NEGOTIATIONS MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS SCHEDULED**

- **SATURDAY – MARCH 13**  
9:30 – NOON; 8-200
- **TUESDAY – MARCH 16**  
4:00 – 6:00 P.M.; 8-200

*Refreshments will be served*

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## **Labor Documentary Film Scheduled for February 27th**

*by Marlene Goho*

The Faculty Association is pleased to present a documentary film co-produced by Sociology Professor and Faculty Council member, Lauren Pivnick.

The film, entitled *STRUGGLE IN SMUGTOWN: Rochester's Workers, Radicals and Reformers*, will be shown:

Friday, February 27  
College Hour - 12-1 p.m.  
The Empire Room (Campus Center)

The film chronicles the efforts of early as well as contemporary Rochester workers: their work, their unions, and their struggles for social justice. This is a great opportunity to learn about local history! Whether you're new to the area or have lived here all your life, you'll want to experience the film. Attention teaching faculty. Students are welcome! Please feel free to share the date and time.

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## **International Women's Day Conference March 6th**

The International Women's Day Conference will take place on Saturday, March 6 at the New York State United Teachers Building, 30 North Union Street in Rochester. The theme of this year's conference will be "Knowledge and Empowerment."

Interesting speakers and workshops are planned for the day. The cost is only \$10 and includes refreshments and lunch.

MCC Professors Lauren Pivnick and Bethany Gizzi from AHPS will be presenting two of

*Continued on page 4*

the scheduled workshops: The Media and Popular Culture and Modern Women and Social Movements from Suffrage to Eco-Feminism.

Contact the FA for a program and pre-registration form. You can also register at the door on the day of the conference.

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## **FA to Reconsider Student Scholarships**

*by Marlene Goho*

When the Faculty Association was formed in the 1960s and the Bylaws written, one purpose of the organization was to advance educational opportunities for students. To that end scholarships were offered, and later the process was set aside, perhaps for more pressing FA business.

We're now considering re-instituting the FA student scholarship. But first, we'd like to form a sub-committee of our members to explore this issue and to make a recommendation to Faculty Council.

If you are interested in serving on the Scholarship Sub-committee, please contact the FA Office by March 5th.

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## **VISIT THE FA WEBSITE!**

<http://www.monroecc.edu/go/FA>

On Monday, February 9, 2004, the Faculty Association website became reality!

You'll now have instant access to the contract, FA Bylaws, meeting and events schedules, and many other items including important union issues, such as upcoming negotiations. You'll be able to access a copy of FAN and directly

connect to the FA Office, for any immediate questions or concerns you might have. We've also included links to our affiliates, NYSUT, AFT, NYS AFL-CIO, or you can connect to the Chronicle of Education.

I hope you'll take a few minutes to become familiar with the site and to make it a regular stop when you're on-line. Any comments or questions can be directed to our office.

*by Marlene Goho*

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## **FA to Reconsider Political Endorsements**

*by Ellen Mancuso, FA Legislative Chair*

One of the four purposes of the FA as stated in its Bylaws (Article II) is "to promote legislation favorable to education and to the teaching profession." In the past, the FA had been active in the political endorsement process and we'd like to begin the process again. We believe, more than ever, it's time to talk about the political endorsement process and the role our union members play in the process. Should the FA become more politically active? Should we reinstate the political endorsement process? Should the FA participate in a voter-registration drive? Should faculty talk politics? What issues are facing faculty, unions, and education?

Are you a member who'd be interested in beginning a dialogue on these issues? If so, please contact Ellen Mancuso, FA Legislative Chair via OUTLOOK or at extension 2313.

Once we receive the names of interested faculty, we'll announce the date and time of a meeting. Please consider becoming involved in these very important discussions.

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## FA Meeting With Professional Staff to be Held

Issues surrounding the Banner Project and work beyond the normal workday/workweek will be discussed at a meeting scheduled for:

Wednesday, March 3

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

The Empire Room – Campus Center

FA President Mike Goho and Contract Administrator Charlie Clarke, as well as professional staff members of Faculty Council, will be there to discuss these issues. The meeting has been scheduled toward the end of the workday in hopes that as many faculty as possible will be able to attend. We look forward to seeing you on the 3rd.

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## No sweat' clothes

Check out a new online “No Sweat” store at **[www.nosweatapparel.com](http://www.nosweatapparel.com)** to shop for union-made T-shirts and athletic wear. Although the product list is limited, visitors may subscribe to the free No Sweat News, with interviews, articles and more. The site isn't just a place to buy unionmade clothing from around the world; it's also a resource for information about the growing antisweatshop movement and the garment industry.

Also, **[behindthelabel.org](http://behindthelabel.org)** is a multimedia news magazine and online community covering the stories and people of the global clothing industry, including the hidden stories of the millions of workers around the world who make our clothes, the people who care how their clothes are made and the multinational corporations behind the labels. The site represents the efforts of a global alliance of clothing workers, religious leaders and students standing up to demand human rights for sweatshop workers.

## Porter Scholarships Available

Applications are being accepted for the AFT's Robert G. Porter Scholars Program.

The program offers four 58,000 scholarships for high school seniors graduating in 2004 who are dependents of AFT members and who intend to pursue a career in labor, education, healthcare or government.

Also offered are 10 one-time grants of 51,000 for AFT members to pursue further study in their field of work.

The Porter Scholars Program was established through a resolution passed by the AFT executive council in 1992 to honor the late Robert G. Porter, who served as AFT secretary-treasurer from 1963 through 1991. There could be no finer way “to recognize the contributions and memory of Robert G. Porter, in perpetuity,” than to foster the education of AFT members and their families, reasoned the drafters of the resolution.

A mix of national AFT contributions and voluntary contributions from AFT affiliates, members and friends make the scholars program possible.

Members may download the application from the AFT Web site at **[www.aft.org/scholarships](http://www.aft.org/scholarships)** or send an email to **[porterscholars@ddaft.org](mailto:porterscholars@ddaft.org)**.

## Get experienced assistance with your finances

Now that we're in the New Year, what better time to get your financial house in order? For help in starting, consider enrolling in the Financial Counseling Program through Ernst & Young LLP, available from the Member Benefits department of New York State United Teachers, our statewide union affiliate.

One valuable feature of the program is the toll-free access to Ernst & Young's *Financial Planner Line*. When you call, you can expect

- Objective guidance based on your needs - E&Y sells no financial products,
- Answers to personal or general financial planning questions,
- Follow-up responses to complex issues,
- Action-oriented recommendations, and
- Confidential assistance.



You can call the *Financial Planner Line* weekdays between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time. But you may be wondering what types of issues they can assist you with. What follows are actual questions the financial counselors have helped members with.

*I keep getting further in debt. What can I do?*

*How can I best invest my tax-deferred annuity?*

*Do I need a Will?*

*What kind of financial aid will my child be eligible for?*

*Do I have enough money to retire?*

*Should I adjust my tax withholdings?*

*Should I refinance my home?*

*Does an account that has "in trust for" count for Medicaid application?*

*I know I need life insurance, but what kind and how much?*

*What should I do with this inheritance that I received?*

*How do I structure my estate to pay the least amount of estate taxes?*

The program includes a number of other features. You can request financial analyses targeted to a specific topic and customized to your unique situation. You'll receive E&Y's financial planning newsletter. And you have the option to request an in-person financial planning consultation (you may incur an additional fee for this). No sales pressure on this one—if you do not desire this component, no one will call you. The in-person consultation is activated solely by your request for this service.

The annual fee for this plan is less than \$80. Many NYSUT members have received valuable assistance from this program. If you think you could benefit from experienced, objective financial assistance, take a closer look.

For information, contact NYSUT Member Benefits by calling 1-800-626-8101, e-mailing [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org), or logging on to [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).