

The *Negotiator*

FALL 2014

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *PTI awards*
- *Outreach grant*
- *MPSEERS Retirement*
- *Get to know PIO*
- *Contract Fun Facts*

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Tracy Hall

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Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Services announce part-time faculty awards

Over the past year two large colleges at WMU announced new programs to recognize teaching excellence among part-time faculty.

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest college at WMU and home to the largest number of part-time faculty. Last spring Dean Alex Enyedi announced the college's first-ever part-time teaching excellence award. According to the college's website, the award "acknowledges significant contributions to the learning environment by part-time instructors" and "is based on an accumulated record of achievement as a teacher at WMU as evidenced, for example, by student evaluations, peer and supervisor feedback, and letters of support."

In April, the college announced the first three winners of the part-time faculty teaching excellence award, three PIO members and long-time teachers who bring unique perspectives to their classes. Dr. Hedy Habra is an artist, poet and Spanish teacher with many years of service at WMU, David Paul is an instructor and union steward in the Philosophy department who has taught at WMU for more than twenty years and Dr. Britt Hartenberger is an Anthropology instructor and an accomplished archeologist whose research includes excavation and lithics and ceramics analysis at sites in Cyprus, Greece, Syria, and Turkey. Each instructor received a \$1,000 award in recognition of their work. The College will honor more part-time faculty this spring. Nominating forms can be found at www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/instructor-excellence-award and are due March 14.

This fall, the College of Health and Human Services followed suit, establishing its own part-time faculty teaching excellence award and offering \$1,000 to a part-time instructor based on an accumulated record of teaching excellence in any of the following categories: classroom teaching, creative or innovative work as regards teaching, fieldwork, or supervision, and teaching that involves interdisciplinary or collaborative activity. The nomination deadline for 2014 was November 19.



Dean Alex Enyedi presents Hedy Habra (Spanish), David Paul (Philosophy) and Britt Hartenberger (Anthropology) with teaching excellence awards at the College of Arts & Sciences ceremony in April.



Dean Earlie Washington, College of Health and Human Services

**Join us at our holiday party!
Sunday Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.
University Roadhouse**



2015 Community Outreach Grant Nominees

In fall 2013, PIO teamed up with the Teaching Assistants Union to announce the WMFCE Community Outreach Grant program. The grant will provide a one-time contribution of \$1,000 to a Kalamazoo-based charitable organization chosen by our members. Only dues-paying PIO or TAU members may nominate a charitable organization for selection. The nominating member must submit a basic grant application by October 31 each year, and the WMFCE executive board (officers from each union) will narrow the list down to three or four nominees. Our members will select the winner at our annual holiday party.

Our 2014 holiday party is Sunday, December 7 at 5 p.m. at the University Roadhouse. All PIO members are welcome.

This year's nominees are:

Community Living Options

Nominated by PIO member Justin Gish (Anthropology), CLO is a private, non-profit organization serving adults with mental illness, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and/or substance use disorders throughout Kalamazoo County. CLO provides these services through specialized residential homes, supported independent living programs and skill building day program services in southwest Michigan. Many CLO residents would benefit from the vast knowledge and experience of members of the PIO. Justin hopes that PIO members might offer brief lectures on interesting topics to enrich the lives of individuals in the homes, tutor some of the residents, or help them in another skill-related capacity. Unfortunately, because of limited resources CLO is unable to get many residents out into the community to engage in cultural or scholastic events. Partnering with the PIO could bring enriching activities to CLO houses and in turn enrich the live of those CLO serves. Justin works at CLO as a program supervisor.

Kalamazoo County Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council

Nominated by PIO member Karen Hayter (Sociology) KCAN is a 501c(3) agency in existence since 1976 with a mission to educate community members and advocate for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. KCAN has a number of signature projects including the Kids are Special program (a sexual abuse prevention class for Head Start students) the Family Help Book (a community resource guide) Mandated Reporter Trainings, the Blue Ribbon Trees (on the downtown mall during the month of April) and parenting literature. All services are provided to the greater Kalamazoo area residents at no charge. The Family Help Book is a popular resource guide used throughout the community and KCAN distributed nearly 10,000 copies since 2013. With the WMFCE grant, KCAN could print 1,000 additional copies. Karen is the executive director at KCAN.

Fire Historical and Cultural Arts Collaborative

Nominated by TAU member Brandon Soderman (Anthropology), FIRE is located in the Edison neighborhood. It has been there for about eight years. They serve youth in the neighborhood with the intent of facilitating authentic expression. One of the major ways in which FIRE attempts to do this is by providing the means to develop artistic talents. However, responding to the needs of youth in the neighborhood is central to FIRE's mission. Therefore, although there is a focus of the artist development, FIRE is always reinventing itself to better collaborate with the neighborhood. FIRE is attempting alternative forms of providing services for the community in a way that goes beyond being charitable. In doing so, they attempt to respond to the needs of the Edison neighborhood. In short, they are a valuable resource to Kalamazoo, but because of their unique strategies it can be difficult for them to procure resources that are needed for them to operate. Brandon and his wife are regular volunteers at FIRE.

Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center

Nominated by TAU member Eric Denby (History), KGLRC is a non-profit charitable organization serving the GLBT community in Southwest Michigan for more than 20 years. KGLRC started in 1987 with the Lesbian/Gay Resource Line and a simple two-page newsletter. In 1992 KGLRC began sponsoring a Youth Group and expanded to include GLBT proms, New Year's Eve events and other support groups. For example, KGLRC sponsors Transcend, a peer support group for transgender persons, provides friendly visitors to isolated LGBT seniors, books speakers for area classrooms, churches, and civic organizations and sends representatives to cooperate on various projects with other local groups. KGLRC seeks to inform and entertain members of the GLBT community and their allies and to educate the persuadable public of the realities of what it means to be lesbian, or gay, or bisexual, or transgender through film screenings, book discussion groups, Pride month, lectures and more.

SLD Read

Nominated by PIO member Cheryl Endres (Social Work), SLD Read has committed to bringing the power of reading, writing and spelling to all individuals in West Michigan with dyslexia or other unique learning styles, enabling them to achieve their full potential. SLD Read was founded in 1974 on 1 to 1 specialized instruction based on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading, writing and spelling. This includes multisensory techniques, in particular, utilizing the visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile learning pathways. SLD's vision is a community working together for literacy that empowers all individuals to achieve their full potential by assisting educators to identify learning challenges, provide training and techniques to enhance reading curriculum and increase community awareness and understanding of literacy issues. Cheryl is a board member with SLD Read as well as the mother of two dyslexic children.

Kalamazoo Book Arts Center

Nominated by PIO member Jeff Abshear (Fine Arts), KBAC is a nonprofit arts organization incorporated in 2005 to provide a resource for artists and writers, to serve as a learning center for the general public, to offer educational programming for the local schools, and to teach the creative disciplines of book arts, fine printing, handmade paper, and creative writing to a wider audience. Their 3,500 sq. ft. facility includes a hand papermaking studio, six letterpresses with movable type, three intaglio, relief, and lithography presses, a bookbindery, a classroom and resource library, a retail store, and a gallery and presentation space. KBAC is the first comprehensive non-profit center for the study of book arts in Michigan and one of the largest in this part of the county. KBAC programming includes workshops and classes, a visiting artists and writers program, exhibitions, publications, and the critically acclaimed Poets in Print reading series. Every year KBAC receives thousands of visitors to exhibitions and events, and teaches workshops for up to 800 local youth through an education program with the public schools and community groups. KBAC also collaborated with many departments on campus including the Frostic School of Art, the Lee Honors College, the English Department, and Waldo Library and established its internship program in 2007. Each year up to 18 students from WMU and Kalamazoo College learn the processes of book arts, assist with teaching, and help with gallery installation, event organization, and nonprofit management. Since its beginning over 75 students have participated in the program and most receive academic credit through Independent Study. Jeff serves as KBAC's executive director.

Gryphon Place

Nominated by TAU member Lindy Demarest (Comparative Religion), Gryphon Place is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping those in crisis or conflict through a variety of programs. The agency is probably best known for the Help-line, which is a local crisis intervention hotline for Kalamazoo County and is answered in the Contact Center at Gryphon Place. The Contact Center operates 24/7 and consists of both paid and volunteer staff. Contact Center staff provide suicide and crisis intervention services on a variety of hotlines locally and across the state, including the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (Lifeline) and after-hours for Community Mental Health agencies. The Contact Center also provides 211 information and referral services and advocacy to help individuals get connected with community resources to meet a variety of needs. In addition, Gryphon Place offers two school-based programs, The Gatekeeper Program and Peer Mediation, which provide support and education to youth in Kalamazoo County and surrounding areas and dispute resolution services to help individuals resolve disputes privately and without violence or legal action. The mediation process is facilitated by a trained mediator and assists with a variety of disputes, including landlord/tenant issues, family conflicts, neighbor disputes, small claims and general civil courts cases, contract disputes, and school conflicts. Lindy has volunteered with Gryphon Place.

**Member
Representatives****Sojn Boothroyd***Education***Martin Burch***Frostic School of Art***Steven Cartwright***History***Douglas Coulter***Biological Sciences***Nate DeBoer***Comparative Religion***Tracy Hall***Gender & Women's Studies***Britt Hartenberger***Anthropology***Thomas Kostrzewa***Haenicke Institute
Lee Honors College***Michael LoPresto***English***Mark Miller***Physics***David Paul***Philosophy***Erin Praedel***Family & Consumer Sciences***Tracey Quada***Industrial & Manuf.
Engineering***Glenn Roehrig***Office of Field Placement***Karl Schrock***School of Music***Adam Schumaker***College of Fine Arts*

To learn how you can get involved, contact Kevin at 269.290.8656 or kevin@wmfce.org today!

Ongoing confusion about MPERS and part-timer retirement

[NOTE: This information is reported accurately to the best of our knowledge. We are in the process of gathering more information and we will communicate directly with any part-time faculty involved.]

Until the late 1990s, WMU enrolled part-time faculty in the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS). When WMU stopped enrolling new employees in MPERS, they also stopped making contributions for 46 part-time faculty members who have taught continuously since the late 1990s. MPERS is a defined benefit plan, meaning employees pay into the system for a number of years and once they are fully vested, they draw a pension regardless of how much they “contributed” to the plan. WMU is supposed to make a set contribution for all employees enrolled in MPERS, and the employees match with a small percentage of each paycheck. So long as both employer and employee make contributions for a set number of years (between 10 and 30 years depending on the employee’s age), the employee will vest and receive a pension for the rest of his or her life.

However, when WMU stopped making contributions for part-time instructors in the late 1990s, they also stopped reporting hours for those employees and those employees stopped accruing years of service. This is a violation of state guidelines. WMU should be continuously making contributions and reporting hours for any part-time faculty enrolled in MPERS. According to WMU, they corrected the situation in 2012 by reporting hours for all part-time faculty enrolled in MPERS going back to the 1990s. WMU is now waiting for the state of Michigan to invoice them for the employer contribution.

We still have many questions left to answer. What about the employee contributions? Are we expected to make retroactive contributions going back nearly 20 years? How are WMU and the state of Michigan calculating our years of service? Credit hours? Total work hours?

Luckily, the American Federation of Teachers has MPERS experts who are researching these questions and who are willing to help guide our members through the process so that each of us receives exactly what we are owed for our years of hard work and dedication.

If you have concerns about MPERS please join us for a MPERS information and Q&A session specifically for part-time faculty on Wednesday, December 10 at 10 a.m. at the PIO office in the Wesley Foundation on main campus. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact Kevin Wordelman at (269) 290-8656.

Get to know the PIO!

This fall, part-timers are teaching 2,185 credits of classes, down from 2,492 credits of classes in fall 2013. However, the percentage of part-timers with continuing status is up 6.8% at 60.8% and our per capita compensation is up roughly 8%.

