

# UNION ORGANIZER



AFSCME LOCAL 3800 NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2007 WWW.AFSCME3800.ORG

## MESSAGE FROM THE UNION PRESIDENT

### Bruininks Gets Huge Raise ... What About Clerical Workers?

by Phyllis Walker, Local 3800 President

In 1996 the President of the University of Minnesota earned \$183,000 a year in salary. Today the President of the University of Minnesota is being paid a salary of \$384,000 a year. You may ask how the Regents of the University of Minnesota can justify paying the president of a public land grant institution 210% more than the position commanded ten years ago. But wait, there's more.

To add insult to injury, at the December Regents meeting it was decided that Bob Bruininks still does not make enough. The Regents voted to increase his already inflated salary by 17.5% over the next two years. In 2007-2008 his salary will increase to \$423,000 (a 10% increase) and in 2008-2009 his salary will increase to \$455,000 (a 7.5% increase). This does not include the long term insurance policy and deferred compensation that Bruininks has been awarded.

And what about the front line staff who keep the University operating? In the same ten year period that the President's salary has increased 210% technical, clerical and health care workers have experienced general wage adjustments averaging a mere 2% a year. These miniscule salary increases do not begin to keep pace with inflation and are moving us further and further into debt. I'm sure that the workers who keep this institution open and operating would also appreciate a 17.5% salary increase in our next contract negotiations.

For years tuition has been increasing at the U. It is becoming harder and harder for students to graduate in four years because they must spend more and more time working to try to offset the high cost of that tuition. The U seems unable to provide an affordable higher education for the citizens of the state but has the money to reward a president who is

willing to enforce the Regent's agenda, which values research—while deemphasizing education.

How can the Regents justify these outrageous salary increases for a president who is denying the University's land grant status by turning his back on its mission of public service and a quality affordable higher education for the citizens of Minnesota? This would lead us to question the Regents commitment to the University's land grant mission.

When the University closed General College, Bob Bruininks and the Regents turned their backs on the citizens of the state and the land grant mission they are supposed to serve. As the U shifts its focus away from its mission of education and moves toward a research based University, the big winners will be the pharmaceutical giants and major corporations in this country who reap huge profits from the U's research while the citizens of the state become the big losers as tuition skyrockets in order to subsidize that research and Bob Bruininks's inflated salary.

It is not too late to save the land grant status of the U. It can be saved by Regents who respect the U's land grant mission and by a president whose goal is to provide education for the citizens of the state—not tax payer funded research for corporate America.

This University will never be a first-rate institution if the administration and Regents view the front line workers and students as second class citizens.

#### Upcoming Union Events

- FEB 8** MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MTG 5:15 pm  
Amundson 182, East Bank
- MAR 7** AFSCME DAY ON THE HILL  
Details coming via email & afscme3800.org
- MAR 8** MEMBERSHIP MEETING 5:15 p.m.

# Why Did You Protest to Support CUHCC Clinic?

In late 2006, over 20 AFSCME workers at the at the Community University Health Care Clinic (CUHCC) were threatened with layoffs. The U of M Academic Health Center created a false 'crisis' at CUHCC by arbitrarily demanding repayments of previous allocations to the clinic, which serves mostly poor, indigenous and recent immigrant communities near campus in the Philipps neighborhood. AFSCME workers united with community groups to oppose the proposed layoffs and cuts to vital community health care services. These are comments from three people who were at the rally to save CUHCC in October.

“The effort to diminish CUHCC is one more step towards the elitist goal to create a society that is sick, uneducated, polluted and poverty-stricken. People should know that Governor Pawlenty and Bob Bruininks have made horrible cuts to healthcare, education, environmental protection, transportation – yes, they are the people responsible for raising your tuition.”



– Carol Bruner

“I work at the U, and I’m a student at the U. The U’s rolling back services that are invaluable to the community. They started with General College and I think CUHCC is just a continuation of this.”

–Jonneke Koomen



“This kind of public service is part of the U’s Land Grant mission. It’s important to me that the U keeps up its mission to disadvantaged people.”

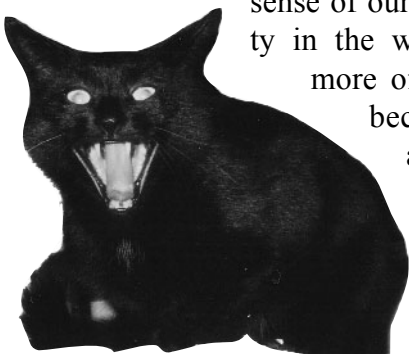
– Eleanor Haase



# What is a CAT ... and Why You Should Be One!

**Contract Action Team** members (CATs) are union volunteers in the workplace that let their coworkers know about union activities and share feedback from their coworkers with the union’s leaders. We need more CATs so that the union has a presence in every workplace at the U.

Contract Action Team members – CATs – are the glue which holds all of U of MN AFSCME together, especially during negotiations. They support our elected negotiating team by encouraging a strong sense of our worth and solidarity in the workplace. We need more of us to step up and become CATs as we are getting close to the beginning of 2007 contract negotiations. Please consider volunteering.



## What do CATs do?

- ✓ Communicate with all co-workers you've agreed to contact in a your work area
- ✓ Complete your contact as soon as possible. This is especially important during negotiations when things change rapidly
- ✓ Report back the feelings and comments of your co-workers quickly, and with complete information, to guide the negotiating committee
- ✓ Follow-up with co-workers who do not respond as we don't want anyone left out
- ✓ Inform your Executive Board reps of your co-workers' work status changes
- ✓ Encourage co-workers to become full members by signing a union membership card.

To find out more or to be a CAT, contact Cherrene Horazuk, Vice President and Organizing Chair at [cherrene@umn.edu](mailto:cherrene@umn.edu) or (612) 625-3522.

# Will U be “Top Three” for Clerical Workers too?

by Patricia Bass

As an intern for ASFSCME, I've had the opportunity these last few months to look into the administration's desire to join the top three public research institutions. Clearly, this objective has put pressure on the math and science departments of the University, but I was curious what implications it had for clerical and technical workers. Does aspiring to “the top three” imply a higher level of compensation to employees to reflect the increased prestige and quality inherent in the label? Or does aspiring to “the top three” imply shafting the workers on wages in order to fund the research and development pet project of the regents?

I looked at the current top three public research institutions – UC Berkeley, UCLA, and U of Michigan at Ann Arbor – and compared them to their state counterparts in order to see if it "paid off" to work for one of the top three research institutions. Specifically, I compared two sets of wages for each institution – Administrative Assistant I and Executive Administrative Assistant – to get an idea of the range of salary for clerical workers. I also looked at the amount of tuition remission offered by each institution.

Below are the results. The California State system

(which includes CSU LA and CAL State East Bay) is admittedly less “prestigious” than the UCs, yet it pays its workers far more. They also offer greater tuition remission than the UC system – with two courses in Undergraduate or Graduate work costing only \$3.00, and over two courses in Graduate work costing \$437.00 total. In the same vein, Metro State University in Minneapolis will fully waive your tuition for 16 credits a year if you have worked in the Metro State system for 3 years, and before 3 years are up they will reimburse 75% of the tuition costs for 8 credits a year. Of course, the lessened tuition fees of these “non-top-three” institutions may reflect the fact that the courses were cheaper to begin with. On the other hand, the state institutions also offer higher wages to their clerical workers (see data below), thus showing that working for one of the “top three” does not literally pay off.

Thus, the top public research institutions do not set a precedent of appreciating the staff who comprise the backbone for their services. Let's hope the U of M does not follow in that example, and instead gains their prestige through supporting staff more, not less.

*Patricia Bass interned for AFSCME Local 3800 in Fall 2006.*

	<b>Low-Level Admin. Wage</b>	<b>High-Level Admin Wage</b>	<b>Cost of Living</b>	<b>tuition remission</b>
<b>Minneapolis</b>	<b>29,598</b>	<b>38,303</b>	<b>124.5</b>	<b>most fees and registration</b>
<i>Metro State Minneapolis</i>	<i>36,544</i>	<i>83,201</i>	<i>124.5</i>	<i>Full waiver after 3 yrs 75% reimbursed before 3 yrs</i>
<b>Berkeley</b>	<b>34,086</b>	<b>44,304</b>	<b>204.8</b>	<b>2/3 tuition waived</b>
<i>CAL state East Bay</i>	<i>36,192</i>	<i>44,436</i>	<i>204.8</i>	<i>All waived but \$3.00-\$437.00 in fees</i>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>37,788</b>	<b>43,974</b>	<b>153.9</b>	<b>2/3 tuition waived</b>
<i>CSU LA</i>	<i>36,192</i>	<i>44,436</i>	<i>153.9</i>	<i>All waived but \$3.00-\$437.00 in fees</i>
<b>Ann Arbor</b>	<b>(data not available)</b>	<b>(data not available)</b>	<b>114.6</b>	<b>3/4 tuition waived</b>

Sources: CUE website, Metro State AFSCME contract, U of M AFSCME contract, Ann Arbor HR website, federal Department of Labor

# Union Membership – Why Be a Full Member?

by Linda Kingman

Union Membership – why be a FULL member? How much more does that cost? The above questions are ones I get asked a lot when I approach someone new to the University about filling out a membership card to be a “full” member of our Union. The two most important reasons to be a full member are:

**Reason #1**, (and the most important to my way of thinking) is that the higher the number of members we have in our Local, the stronger we are when we are negotiating with the University. If we had a 90-100% membership roster the University would have to think, wow, they could really hurt us if we can't agree on a contract. There would be the potential of a 100% walkout of all clerical staff. Just think about that. The knowledge that this could happen should be enough to keep the University negotiating with us honestly and in good faith for as long as we can maintain our numbers. The thought of this happening should keep us from ever having to strike again! And that would be a very good thing. Remember, “The University works because WE do”!

**Reason #2**, full membership gives you a “full” voice in the Local. You get to vote on contracts and all matters that come before the membership. This

way you get a voice in the direction YOUR local takes. The vote may not always go your way, but at least you had the opportunity to express your voice and then you can complain vociferously when it turns out you were right and the rest of the membership wrong! “Fair share” fee payers are represented by the union in negotiations and by union stewards, but don't have a vote in union matters and policies that come before the membership.

How much does it cost to be a full member? Dues are calculated at **1.38% of bi-weekly gross salary with a cap of \$19.37** (this will go up slightly in 2007). What does this mean? Members pay about a dollar over their hourly wage out of each paycheck. This will vary slightly since our local's dues are on a progressive sliding scale – those below the average clerical wage pay a little less, and those higher on the scale pay a little more. Fairshare fee-payers dues are 85% of what members pay, which ends up being a difference of about a dollar per paycheck.

There are many more reasons to be a union member, but I think the above reasons should be compelling enough to encourage those of you who have not filled out a membership card to do so. Contact union president Phyllis Walker at 612-251-9895 if you have questions or would like to sign a membership card. **Solidarity=Unity=UNION!**

## CLERICAL WORKERS ACTIVE IN MORRIS AND CROOKSTON

### U of M Morris Report by Laura Thielke

Morris AFSCME members visited with UMM Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson for the second time on January 23. She began her position as UMM's fifth chancellor on August 1, 2006.

At the meeting with the chancellor, AFSCME members gave her a list of all the UMM & WCROC clerical and technical workers that listed our years of service at Morris. It also included education and experience information. Morris clericals have an average of 12.3 years of service at UMM or WCROC.

The Campus Assembly passed a resolution of support for UMM's Strategic Plan at a special meeting on October 24. Chancellor Johnson has also started a program review at UMM, “a systematic campus-wide look at what we're doing and how we're doing it.”

### U of M Crookston Report by Anne Burke

We have twenty-seven AFSCME Clericals on our campus – many wear different “hats” – being stretched with time constraints to get it all done. We have been active with monthly meetings during the school year and have an average of 15 attending meetings.

Three went through the JEQ process and were approved going from Principal Office and Administrative Specialist to Executive Office and Administrative Specialist. We do not have any grievances going on but problem solving issues are being addressed with clericals who have two supervisors, working overtime issues, and another part time wanting more hours.

#### Clerical Union Contacts

**President** - Phyllis Walker - (612) 251-9987

**Chief Steward** - Kelly Ahern - (612) 281-9010

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