



the **AFSCME ORGANIZER**

A Newsletter of AFSCME Clericals – University of Minnesota – Crookston, Minneapolis, Morris & St. Paul

A Livable Wage! “It’s the right thing to do.”

- President Yudof, July 14, 2000 Regents Meeting

A huge thanks to the 100 plus of you who took time to be at the Regents Meeting on Friday, July 14. Our message was strong and positive. All University employees deserve to make economic progress. We filled the room and stood throughout President Yudof’s budget address. President Yudof responded saying a living wage is not only good strategy, “it’s the right thing to do”. We could not agree more. Below are union statements made to the press immediately following the Regents Meeting.

Remarks by Phyllis Walker, President, AFSCME Local 3800

We are here today to say that all University employees deserve to make economic progress. This is the message we carried to the Regents on April 28, through testimony before the Board. The Regents heard from a divorced mother of two daughters who told them she has to supplement her income because, after working at the University for 20 years, she makes only \$12.67 per hour.

They heard from a single parent who has raised two sons. Like many University clerical workers she has a BA degree. She has worked at the University for fifteen years. She talked about having to work as many as three jobs at a time to supplement her University income. She explained that it takes the majority of her two University paychecks per month to cover her rent. She said she would like to take advantage of the Regents Scholarship but cannot afford the books.

And there is another story worth telling. About two weeks ago I spoke to a woman who works for Rainbow Foods. After nine years with Rainbow Foods she makes \$18.00 per hour as a stock clerk. She puts cans of peas on the shelf. I work at the University’s Law School and am responsible for doing profit and loss statements, IRS 990 forms for non-profit organizations and administering five checking or savings accounts. Tens of thousands of dollars pass through my hands each year. I can tell you that after 17 years at the University I earn considerably less than the stock clerk at Rainbow Foods.

At the University, 75% of clerical, technical and health care workers earn less than \$15.00 per hour. Three years ago The Jobs Now Coalition issued a report stating that a single parent with two children needs \$15.37 an hour just to get by. This does not include movies, eating out, vacations, retirement savings or any entertainment. Everyone at this public educational institution deserves to make a living wage. I want to tell you how we define that:

- A living wage means not having to work 2 and 3 jobs
- A living wage means being able to pay your bills
- A living wage means being able to spend time with your children, being able to eat at a restaurant, being able to go on vacation without accumulating huge debt.
- A living wage means being able to save for your retirement and it means being able to own a modest home.

We’ve given you a copy of our Talking Paper on a living wage. I’d like to end by reading from it.

“We know that the University of Minnesota “should not be a corporation where the administrators are the executives, the professors the tools, students the products and low wage workers the expendable fuel that makes it all possible.” All employees contribute to the University’s efforts to make learning and teaching not only possible but enriching and rewarding. All employees should be assured of real economic progress. That’s why we are at the Regents meeting today. We make this University work. We are determined to make our economic well-being a University priority.

Remarks by Greg Knoblauch, Executive Board, AFSCME Local 3937

It took 139 years for the bureaucracy of the University of Minnesota to rise to the level of 678 administrators. Averaged out, that’s an increase of less than 5 new administrators a year.

In just the last 10 years, 1989-1999, that number had increased at an average rate of more than 6 new administrators each month, reaching a total of 1,437, 112% higher than 10 years ago! During the same 10 year span, the number of AFSCME bargaining unit jobs has plummeted by 30%.

Is anyone minding the store? And who’s watching the till? Because this administrative growth has not come cheaply. Conservatively estimated, this year over \$25 million will be needed to pay the salaries of those 759 new administrators. With more needed next year. And still more the year after. And on and on.

Who’s paying for this?

The Minnesota taxpayers are paying, University students are paying with their escalating tuition fees, and the members of our bargaining units are paying in the form of salaries that are far below what they ought to be, what they deserve to be, what they need to be.

In 1994 there were 311 salaries, University-wide, that were at or above \$100,000. By 1999, that number had swelled to 1,075. Those people already at the top of the University pay scale have seen their salaries climb substantially over the last 10 years, while those at the bottom of the scale have endured 10 hard years of slow economic suffocation.

A veterinary technician hired in 1989 and still working in the same job classification in 1999 is earning today, after adjusting for the cost of living, about 52 cents an hour more than he/she earned the day he/she was hired – up 4% after 10 years. Compare that with the Administrative increases seen in the lavender Talking Paper. And there are 20- and 30-year employees, people who have given their entire working lives to the University, doing important and necessary jobs, who are being paid \$11 and \$12 an hour. This is insulting, appalling and shameful!

We think that the time is long overdue for this University to reverse the wasteful proliferation of its bureaucracy, so that it has the funds to pay its clerical and technical workers the living wage they deserve!

University of Minnesota AFSCME Talking Papers on the Economics of Work at the University

Administrative Growth & Salaries – Should economic progress be only for a few?

A Living Wage – Are U of M employees among the working poor?

Call the Union office (612-379-3918) if you have not received a copy.

AFSCME Local 3800

Attn: Newsletter
1313 5th St SE, Suite 120A
Minneapolis, MN 55414-4502

PLEASE DELIVER TO:

“Just a Secretary”

Although we think this is an important discussion and thank the authors, we do not necessarily agree with every point they make.

*Researched and written by Jill Berkas, Mary Leitschuh, Sally Miles,
Jan Pearson, Janelle Willard, Millie Woodbury.*

How many times have you heard the term “just a secretary” or have, perhaps, used it to describe yourself?

With the advent of computers, the role of the traditional secretary has evolved to such an extent that the title has become obsolete. A committee has been formed in the Division of Epidemiology to research changes in job titles within the secretarial classifications. The committee presented the following rationale to the AFSCME Executive Board of Directors and we are interested in YOUR input.

RATIONALE FOR TITLE CHANGE OF THE SECRETARIAL CLASSIFICATION

1. A job title change would better reflect the nature and scope of the job duties.
 - It would recognize that greater job responsibilities are required than in the past for the secretarial classification.
 - It would recognize that we work more autonomously than traditional secretaries. We are members of a team versus an individual supporting a member of a team. “We work with individuals, not for individuals.”
 - The changing nature of the workplace has broadened our knowledge, skills and decision-making abilities beyond the traditional boundaries of a secretary:
 - extensive computer and software knowledge;
 - more detailed (vs. routine) work in everyday activities;
 - a shift in the traditional duties of typing and filing to more complex work, such as database management, graphic design, and communications liaison.
2. A job title change would make the University of Minnesota more competitive and attractive as an employer.
 - It has become increasingly difficult to recruit and target applicants using the secretarial title. Ads for administrative or executive assistants are far greater in number and more appealing to applicants.
 - In the private sector, the title secretary is rapidly becoming obsolete. Moreover, the term itself carries negative connotations that may unintentionally serve to diminish or minimize the actual value of the position and the individual within the workplace.
 - The title of secretary tends to carry a gender stereotype. In a profession that is thought of as a feminine job and, indeed, is dominated by women, a title change would promote a gender-neutral position.

If you are classified as a secretary, please send an e-mail to titlechange@epi.umn.edu and let us know if you: a) are in favor of a title change; b) are opposed to a title change; c) have no opinion; or, d) have any comments or suggestions. At this time, salary is not the issue. It is strictly a title change.

For additional information, check out these web sites!

http://www.quillcorp.com/business_resource_cntr/office_tips/BR712_001.HTM

http://www.iaap-hq.org/ResearchTrends/research_trends.htm

AFSCME LOCAL 3800 MEETING CALENDAR 2000

August 2000

**17 Executive Board, 102A U-Tec
5:15 - 7:15 p.m.**

**24 Membership, Room 125 Nolte
5:15 - 7:15 p.m.**

September 2000

21 Executive Board, ITV hook-up or U-Tec, 5:15 - 7:15 p.m.*

**28 Membership, 1114 Social Sciences
5:15 - 7:15 p.m.**

October 2000

5,6,7 Council 6 Fall Convention

19 Executive Board, ITV hook-up or U-Tec, 5:15 - 7:15 p.m.*

**26 Membership, Room 125 Nolte
5:15 - 7:15 p.m.**

**Location is unconfirmed. Call the local office at 612-379-3918 for current information. Be sure to leave a message if no one is in the office and your call will be returned as soon as possible.*

Council 6 Fall 2000 Convention

Thursday, October 5

Friday, October 6

Saturday, October 7

Radisson South Hotel, Bloomington, MN

Nominations and elections of delegates to the convention will take place at the next monthly membership meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 24, 2000 in 125 Nolte.

If you are not able to attend this meeting, but would like to attend the convention, please mail a signed note (NOT e-mail) to Phyllis Walker at AFSCME Local 3800, 1313 5th Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. For more information, call Phyllis Walker at 612-650-3629 (voice pager).

Know Your Rights. Weingarten Rights?

Do you know your Weingarten Rights? One of the most vital functions of a Union Steward is to prevent management from intimidating employees. Nowhere is this more important than in a closed-door meeting when supervisors attempt to coerce employees into confessing wrongdoing.

The rights of employees to the presence of Union Representation during INVESTIGATORY INTERVIEWS was announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975 and are known as Weingarten Rights.