



► A Report from the LEO Annual Convention, October 22, 2011

Mohamed Daassa

LEO members from our three campuses came together for the Annual Convention on Saturday, October 22, 2011.

The convention began with a speech by Karla Swift, President of Michigan's American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

Swift stressed the importance of the current political climate for Michigan workers, and she highlighted the work done by We Are The People (WATP) and its objectives. "Government should work for the people, not the privileged and connected," Swift said. Swift underscored the importance of winning back the State House in November, 2012 and of passing a constitutional ballot proposal to preserve collective bargaining rights. She affirmed that we need to engage in conversations with people and leverage the key assets of campaign partners because the opposition has built a formidable base. A detailed report of her address is outlined in this issue's article by Joe Walls.

After the opening address, LEO members had the opportunity to participate in small-group discussions on how we should respond to what's happening in Michigan as we prepare for the next round of bargaining. The discussions centered on responses from the LEO membership in the public arena and on campus. There seems to be a consensus that LEO should come up with creative ideas to put forth to the administration regarding increased cost sharing of benefits and issues pertaining to performance evaluation.

Ian Robinson presented the results of a survey of the UM faculty population that examines the issue of fairness of faculty pay differentials. The results show

that 72% of lecturers and 30% of tenure-track faculty members surveyed think that the pay gap between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty in Ann Arbor is unfair. However, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty are in greater agreement that the gap between pay for administrators and pay for faculty is unfair. UM data not from the survey also allow us to examine lecturers' contributions to undergraduate tuition revenues. In Ann Arbor, lecturers account for instructing 25% of all "student credit hours" (meaning contact hours with students enrolled in UM courses) but make up only 16% of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) faculty. In Flint, lecturers account for instructing 50% of all student credit-hours but make up 44% of FTE faculty. The discrepancy between these percentages underscores the gap between instructional load and faculty status that exists for lecturers.

The survey also reveals that 55% of students think that instruction by lecturers vs. tenure-track professors does not adversely influence the quality of the courses they have taken. The survey shows that lecturers spend more hours devoted to teaching-related activities per class per week than do tenure-track or tenured professors, though the differences in time spent are not significant. In his report, Robinson concluded that "whether we use financial or teaching quality definitions of value or whether we use subjective student measures or objective course characteristic measures, lecturers either contribute more teaching value per FTE, or the differences are so small as to be statistically insignificant. Therefore, large differences in pay per course cannot be justified on the basis that the value of the teaching of these two types of faculty is significantly different."

Elizabeth Axelson highlighted the gains made by LEO as a result of the last bargaining round and identified some of the areas that need improvement. David Skrbina gave the audience

some background information regarding our next contract negotiation. He indicated that "LEO instructors are, relatively speaking, significantly underpaid," whereas "the University is not hurting for money." To support this statement, Skrbina compared the average salaries at UM-Dearborn to the top seven highest-paid public university Chief Executives, among them UM President Mary Sue Coleman. He recommended that LEO "make strong initial demands for the next contract" and that all LIIs and LIVs "be paid the same per course as an Assistant Professor." An Assistant Professor's average pay is \$58,000. Assuming a 3/2 teaching load with four courses representing a 100% load, an Assistant Professor can attribute 62% of his/her pay to teaching and 38% of it to research. This divides out to \$7,250 per course. Skrbina observed that "LIIs and LIVs should receive an immediate salary adjustment to parity," and "LIs and LIIIs should receive salary adjustments that bring them to 80% of parity (i.e. \$5,800 per course)." He recommends that we "avoid the risk of being too 'reasonable' or too deferential" as either can be interpreted as weakness. "We are not dealing with people," concluded Skrbina, "we are dealing with a corporation."

In the brainstorming session led by Janella James, we discussed the goals for the next round of bargaining in 2012. Finally, members began the process of identifying issues for the 2012 bargaining platform. Our next step will be drafting a member survey on issues. The membership approved the 2012 LEO budget and a procedural amendment to the LEO Constitution.

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November 2011

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Imagine...LEO will start negotiating our fourth contract at this time next year!

► Newly Elected AFL-CIO President, Karla Swift, Addresses LEO Members

Joe Walls

Karla Swift, recently elected President of Michigan's American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), was the featured speaker at the LEO annual convention, held on Saturday, October 22, 2011, at UM-Flint. LEO President Bonnie Halloran introduced Swift, mentioning her prior work with the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), We Are the People (WATP), and higher education unions. Halloran also mentioned that Swift's first rally in her new position was with the UM nurses.

Swift began by talking about organizing. Her goal is to move both the state and federal government to action in favor of Labor. Specifically, she wants Labor to express anger at the legislature regarding the appointment of Emergency Managers (EMs) that undermine elected officials, support cuts to education, and support the passage of one piece of anti-labor legislation after another. The AFL-CIO has identified more than 90 pieces of detrimental legislation that it opposes.

In May, 10,000 people in Michigan mobilized against the actions of the legislature to raise taxes on retirees, reduce taxes on businesses, and cut funding for education, but lawmakers proceeded to pass this legislation anyway. Republicans are pursuing their agenda despite what the people want, hence a strategic plan for winning needs to be developed and implemented. The AFL-CIO is working with WATP (<http://wearthepeoplemichigan.com>), a coalition of students, seniors, workers, and families, to accomplish its goals. The message is that politicians need to create jobs, invest in education, provide seniors with secure retirements, and oppose the transfer of wealth from children and seniors to CEOs and millionaires. Government should work for the people, not the privileged.

Swift also emphasized how important it is for the labor movement to stay on message. In 2004, Republicans labeled John Kerry a "flip flopper." Their message influenced the voting public and thereby helped lead to his defeat. We need to win back the Michigan house and to fight the "right to work" bill, Swift explained. We may not stop passage of the bill, but we won't stop lobbying. We may need to pass a state-wide ballot—a constitutional amendment to undo the law. We need to recruit a base of supporters who will adhere to a strong message and deliver it to everyone they know, just as the Republicans did in the case of Kerry.

Moreover, Swift explained that we need to mobilize the 700,000 labor-union members in Michigan—something we failed to do in 2010 even though we thought we had. To regain control of the state house, we need to win nine new seats and we need to keep all existing Democratic seats. This means we need to get 20,000 votes in each of 25 districts statewide. Swift observed that we can get these votes by identifying 51,000 activists (2,000 per district), recruiting and mobilizing 5,000 leaders, and communicating with 500,000 voters in each district. She believes that one-on-one meetings held during coffee hours and during district office visits, rather than TV and radio advertising, will best help us accomplish our goal.

In order to mobilize the populace, WATP has been holding action team workshops around the state. So far, there have been ten workshops. Participation has been comprised of roughly 60% community members and 40% union members. These workshops intend to recruit people who are "tired of yelling at the TV." The most recent workshop was held on November 11 in Lansing, the day before the Michigan Democratic Party Convention.

A piece of legislation we oppose is Senate Bill 729, introduced on October 6 of this year by Sen. Arlan Meekhof (R). The bill potentially establishes a "right to work" law for Michigan Education Association (MEA) school employees and would prohibit school districts from entering into an agreement that requires that employees be in a union as a condition of employment. Given that Bill 729 would apply to unions with more than 50,000 members (i.e., the MEA), it would establish a "right to work" law for most Michigan public school employees (Source: <http://www.michiganvotes.org/2011-SB-729>). This bill was introduced in retaliation for the MEA's financial support of the successful recall effort mounted against state representative Paul Scott of Michigan's 51st District. The recall cited Scott's support of cuts to K-12 education funding and taxes on retirement income as reasons for



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the effort (MLive.com). Although the bill was crafted to apply to MEA members, the UAW; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and the Teamsters all have over 50,000 workers on behalf of whom they negotiate contracts with public schools.

Swift noted that Governor Snyder has said that he opposes “right to work” legislation. Attendees at the convention were encouraged to sign a postcard addressed to Governor Snyder urging him to continue to do so.

In the Q&A session following Swift’s talk, one member asked what we could do to educate people about “right to work.” She recommended looking at an Economic Policy Institute study that was conducted by University of Oregon professor Gordon Lafer (<http://www.epi.org/publication/right-to-work-michigan-economy/>). She indicated that

documents about “right to work” were available from Julie Matuzak of the Michigan AFL-CIO (<http://miafclio.org/>).

Swift also mentioned that when representatives of “Working America” (WA), the AFL-CIO affiliate for non-union workers, had conversations with people about “right to work,” nine out of ten opposed the legislation. WA targets its campaigns to districts of senators who favor “right to work.”

Finally, there was a question concerning the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement. The questioner stated that OWS is not engaging in electoral politics and wondered how we could collaborate with them. Swift replied that the WATP workshops designed by experienced organizers who have a middle class narrative include exercises around the fact that income is not equal when compared to what it was 30 years

ago. This fact speaks to people. Organizers have been having one-on-one conversations with people and going out to Occupy locations to build relationships. They are emphasizing that Labor is supportive but does not want to take over the movement. Swift’s view is that the Occupy participants haven’t thought about how to change things even though they are frustrated. At this point, Labor is just trying to ride along. Our mission is to take action on legislators.

At the close of her talk, Swift was presented with a LEO scarf made by former member Lauren Kingsley as a token of our appreciation.



Get Organized!

Find an hour a month to meet lecturers from across campus—knock on a few office doors with other LEO volunteers!

It’s a fun way to expand your network and meet your lecturer colleagues.

Contact Janella to volunteer—janellaj@leounion.org

► Money Matters

At the LEO Convention, slightly over \$2000 was collected or pledged to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Michigan Political Action Committee (PAC). This marked the beginning of a major fundraising drive for the AFT Michigan PAC. Money raised will be used to help elect Michigan candidates who support public workers, collective bargaining rights, and full funding for K-16. LEO is asking its members to make an investment of at least \$52 in the fight to preserve public education and collective bargaining rights. That breaks down to a dollar week, about the cost of a cup of coffee or a donut. LEO members who teach part time are being asked to donate \$26.

As an added incentive, the names of all donors will be entered in a prize drawing on the last day of classes for a \$50 gift basket of Michigan products. Elections matter: please send in your donation now.



Enclosed is my donation to AFT Michigan PAC.

Name

Street

City Zip

Campus Amount enclosed

Clip this form and mail it along with your donation to LEO, 330 E. Liberty, Suite 3F, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Fill out the member survey that you'll find in your inbox early in 2012 to start the plan for the next round of contract negotiations!

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► **Annual Achievement Awards Presented at the LEO Annual Convention**

Marjorie Lynn interviewed the recipients of this year's achievement awards at the LEO Annual Convention on October 22, 2011. Here's what they had to say.

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► **Lifetime Achievement Award**

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Marc Ammerlaan, Ann Arbor

For dedicated service to the Ann Arbor Campus and the Union in general

Marc's extensive service spans over ten years. He started back in 2002 as a member of the original organizing committee. He also served as interim LEO Secretary, Strike Captain, and Campus Chair, a position from which he is now stepping down after four years of service.

What pulled you into working so hard for LEO?

At first, after teaching here for a number of years, I felt like I was not included in the conversation about teaching. I saw we needed an official voice and I was naïve enough to think [the University] would agree. I was shocked to see how mistreated lecturers were in other departments. We had to have a Union to correct those conditions.

What kept you going?

That commitment to a higher mission just grew. I saw things that needed to be fixed. Couldn't the University see that not providing a decent living for its workers was counterproductive to its mission?

What have been the rewards?

Oh, the people! The camaraderie, the people I've met. I've gotten a wider awareness of people on the other campuses.

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► **Three Outstanding Service Awards**

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W. C. Burgard, Ann Arbor

Art and Design Representative

What pulled you into working so hard for LEO?

My early organizing conversation with Ian Robinson before we were even a Union. I said, yes, I'd become a member and then volunteered to help get others involved. But when the Art School let all the lecturers go, [the work the union was doing] got even more exciting.

What kept you going?

I saw the need: people need to be able to communicate within departments. Before LEO, no one in the Art School knew what was going on with others, who was getting paid what, who was getting hired. LEO has given us a structure.

What have been the rewards?

All the results we've gotten. Amazing! Although we have not gotten every demand met, at least from the Art School, we got way more than we expected. Being able to be treated the way we ought to be treated feels good.

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Quentin Galerneau, Flint

LEO Finance & Technology Committee and Flint Hiring & Professional Development Committee

What pulled you into working so hard for LEO?

Curiosity. As a member of the Union, I wanted to know what was going on. It's better to be on the inside than on the outside. I got on the Major Review Committee because even though I was grandfathered in and didn't have to have one, I wanted to know what it meant.

What kept you going?

One thing led to another. When Jim Anderson asked if anybody was interested in being on the Finance Committee, I said, "OK!" And when Sandra Walls asked me about the Technology Committee, I said yes to that as well.

What have been the rewards?

Figuring out what's working, for better or worse. I enjoy doing it.

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Claudia Walters, Dearborn

Dearborn Scholarship Committee

What pulled you into working so hard for LEO?

The unjust conditions. I'm committed to education, and I wanted to make things right.

What kept you going?

The students! I saw the scholarship award as a way to help.

What have been the rewards?

Being in LEO, a group of people fighting for the right things.



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LEO Links

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