

# STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, SSHE Chief Negotiator Michael Becker said that SSHE had made its final offer, cancelled negotiations until October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and told APSCUF negotiators to have fun with their little strike authorization in Monroeville. It is now time for West Chester University faculty to support our negotiation team by authoring a strike. There is an important difference between a strike authorization and a strike vote. Strike authorization gives union leadership the authority to call a strike, should that prove to be necessary. Although we have never struck, we have given our leadership strike authorization on several occasions.

The real issue is not the consequences of authorizing a strike, but of withholding authorization. Without authorization, the bargaining team has no choice but to settle for whatever terms management offers. Acceptance of SSHE's offer will result in

- A major reduction in faculty hospital and medical benefits, and lower quality medical plans—all at an increased cost to faculty!
- Elimination of limits on class sizes (In other words more “cash cows” as a SSHE negotiator called large classes.)
- No more limits on the number of temporary instructors—which not only means fewer tenure-track hires, and an even heavier workload for permanent faculty.
- No step increments in the first and third year of the contract. For the 40% of West Chester faculty currently moving through steps, this represents a major pay cut that will reverberate throughout your active career and through retirement.
- 0% base pay raise for two years for all West Chester faculty. (Our reward for the Chancellor's \$15,000 pay raise?)
- Science and allied health faculty paid two-hours load for a three-hour laboratory. So, again, more work for less pay. And what about the next contract?
- Students teaching labs without faculty supervision or evaluation.
- Summer pay stays at Fall 1999 level. Can you imagine getting paid at the 1999 rate for work in the summer of 2006?
- Overload pay stays at 1995 levels—through 2006.
- Twenty-five years service to qualify for retirement health insurance. (Now faculty who reach the age of 60 qualify for retirement health insurance after 10 years of service.)
- Faculty who retire will no longer retain the health care they had when they retired.
- Cancellation of local agreements: local campuses would be prevented from reaching agreements on local practices. This would include agreements on sabbatical policies, statements of expectation, advising, class sizes, regular part-time hires, promotion and tenure policies, and other longstanding local agreements that have served the university well. Bottom line: decision making moves to that seat of academic wisdom, Harrisburg.

To avoid a strike, you need to help our team convince SSHE that we will strike if necessary. It is clear that the Chancellor's Office believes we will accept an unacceptable offer and are too spineless to strike. Let's call their bluff! We need a decisive authorization with high participation to show them how wrong they are.