

## Chapter 3: Lines of Communication

“Two monologues do not make a dialogue.”- J. Daly

### **Communication with Students**

Every professor is encouraged to develop a policy for communicating with students. Faculty preferences for communications from students should be included in every course syllabus. Outside of class, many faculty members communicate with students using computer-based communication, including email and the use of course software such as Blackboard Vista. In addition, all faculty members must maintain a minimum schedule of office hours as established in the Collective Bargaining Agreement:



#### **The Contract on Office Hours:**

##### **10.9 Office Hours**

Teaching members are expected to be available to meet their obligations and confer with their students outside of class. Each full-time teaching member shall be required to hold office hours appropriate to the needs of their students and their academic discipline. Each full-time teaching member shall schedule and hold at least five (5) office hours per week each semester. These office hours shall be scheduled in agreement with the department Chairperson on at least three (3) teaching days per week at times reasonably convenient for students. Such hours shall be posted on the appropriate departmental office bulletin board and reported by the department Chairperson to the appropriate academic Dean or Chief Academic Officer. If in the judgment of the Dean, the reported hours do not meet the standard above, the Dean may require that the Chairperson establish appropriate office hours. Alternate office hour arrangements for full-time teaching members with substantial off campus loads, or with alternate duties, may be made with the approval of the Chief Academic Officer. Office hour requirements may be temporarily increased by the appropriate academic Dean during registration periods.

The Board and CSU-AAUP agree that all students will be given adequate advising by members during registration and throughout the school year to assure the pursuit of sound educational objectives.

Part-time faculty shall make reasonable efforts to advise and counsel their students as needed.

### **Communication with the Department Chair**

Faculty members should communicate regularly with their Department Chair, a valuable resource for all faculty-related matters, whether this involves choosing a desired classroom, deciding whether a course should be overenrolled, or assigning funds and research space. The Chair should be the primary recourse for questions and concerns that have implications for the Department, students, fellow faculty members, and department staff. These issues include program or course problems, Department budget, and

resource questions. However, because Chairs are entrusted with many responsibilities, some of these responsibilities will occasionally be delegated to individual faculty members.

### **Communication with the Dean (or Directors, for some AAUP faculty members)**

Faculty members will periodically correspond with their Dean and his/her associates and assistants. The Dean's Office is a valuable resource for information regarding classes, workload, and other matters pertaining to faculty. Contractually, Deans are the entry point to the defined management of the University (Section 1.3). Deans play several roles including, but not limited to

- approving grade changes
- approving part-time faculty appointments
- corresponding/reviewing/evaluating faculty during hiring, renewals, tenure, promotion, special assessment, and professional assessment decisions
- determining class size limits
- checking Department By-laws
- evaluating health risks of the classroom with respect to temperature
- conferring support to those engaged as leaders of professional organizations
- approving travel
- evaluating special supervision credit for activities
- evaluating over/under-loads; appointing reassigned time credit
- scheduling of classes
- evaluating requests for market adjustments
- investigating and/or participating in grievance.

Clear and open communication with the Dean's Office is essential to the professional growth of faculty members, their Departments, their Departments' program, and their students.

### **Communication with the Faculty Senate, Curriculum Committee, and Graduate Studies**

The Faculty Senate and its many standing committees of the faculty are the recognized avenue for faculty participation in shared governance. Faculty representatives keep their colleagues informed of major motions that affect the faculty in the Department and should periodically act to build a consensus on motions in these committees. In addition to Curriculum and

Graduate Studies, many other committees report to the Senate. (See Chapter 4 for committee structures).

For every fifteen full-time faculty members in a Department, that Department is allowed a Faculty Senator. This Senator goes to approximately two Senate meetings per month and votes on resolutions and motions related to a wide array of issues. Issues are placed on the agenda by the Steering Committee of the Senate, which is hand-picked by the Senate President and confirmed by the Senate at its first meeting of the year. Other standing committees reporting to the Senate also rely on department-based representation, such as the Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee (for departments that offer graduate programs). Senate business mixes routine motions with policy changes that can radically redefine familiar procedures. Therefore, faculty members are encouraged to follow the Senate's agenda and note any items of interest to the Department and its Senator.

### **Communication with the Faculty Union**

Because any document, policy, or decision is open to interpretation, the Union is an indispensable source for information about faculty work as conceptualized in the CSU-AAUP/BoT Contract. The faculty union (AAUP) maintains staff who can help answer questions related to all aspects of the Contract. The staff for the CSUS Union is located primarily on the CCSU campus. The diagram on the next page illustrates the organizational chart for this union. The local CCSU-AAUP tends to deal with local issues, whereas CSU-AAUP has an Executive Council that addresses system-wide issues (such as compiling members of the contract negotiating team). For faculty members interested in an interpretation of the Contract, the AAUP staff is an excellent first step. However, additional help (e.g., filing a grievance) can also be sought from faculty members who currently serve in the Union.

**A Note on Email Etiquette and the Need for Civility**

“Is there no emoticon for the rage I am feeling right now?”

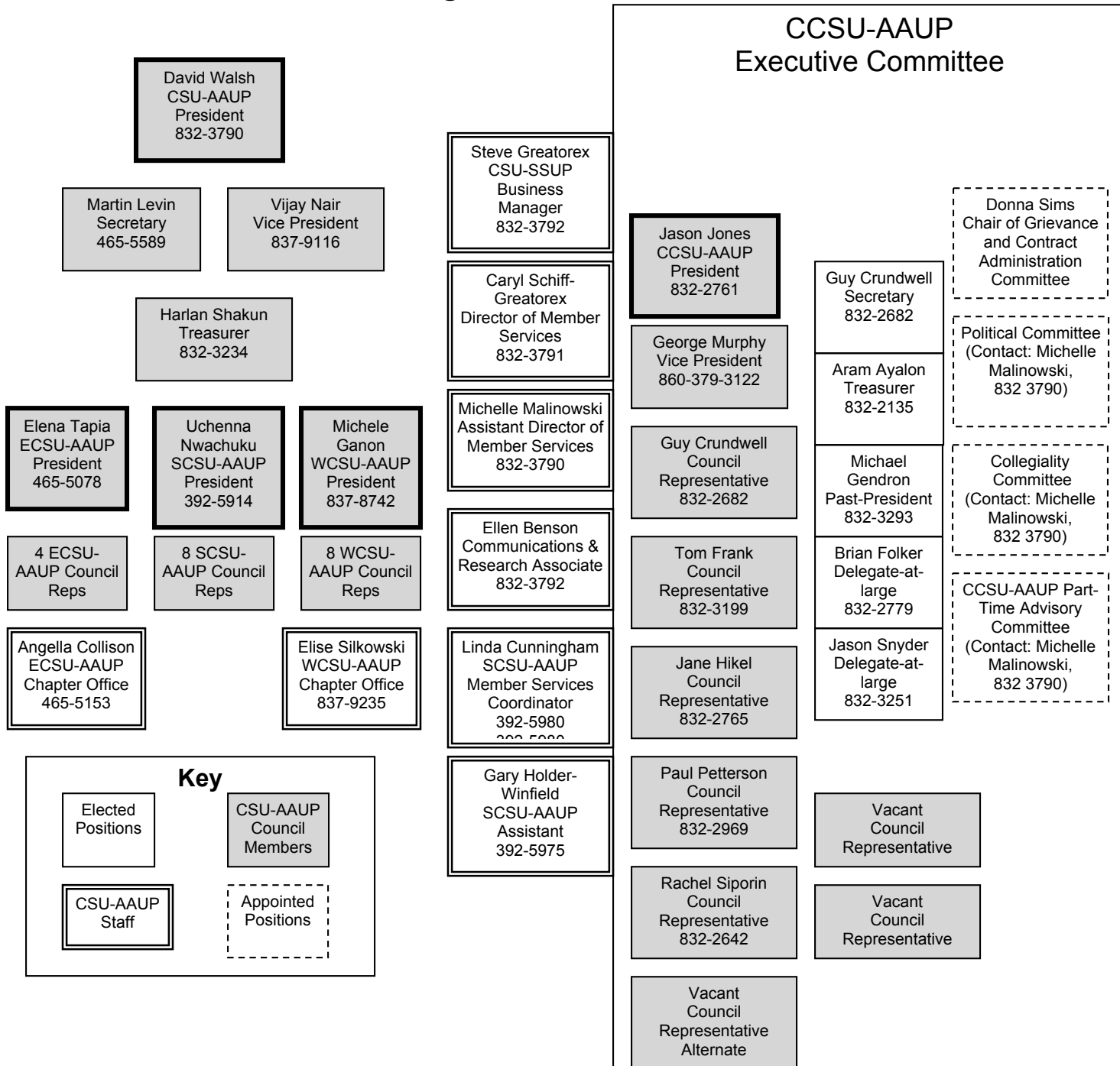
- The Comic Book Store Guy, *The Simpsons*

When communicating via email with students, colleagues, or administrative personnel, faculty members are advised to keep messages brief, collegial, and professional in tone and content. Attempts at humor in emails risk being misunderstood, and email tends to amplify emotional content. As a result, using email to convey sarcasm, impatience or criticism may have disproportionately adverse consequences. As a general rule, the more faculty defers communicating negative messages via email and the more effort faculty intentionally make to show consideration, empathy, and respect in their communications, the more faculty can collectively contribute to creating a culture of civility at CCSU.

**Organizational Charts of the University**

On the pages that follow, faculty will find organizational charts. These charts allow faculty to better understand the administrative layout of the University. In no way are the charts indicating a hierarchy among middle managers. The charts were designed to fit onto one page so in many cases they have been manipulated to fill space.

## CSU-AAUP/CCSU-AAUP Organizational Chart



**The President's Office  
2009**

