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OAKLAND ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE FACULTY SAFEGUARDS

Administration Threatens Checks and Balances

ROCHESTER, MICH. – The role of Oakland University’s faculty in helping make decisions about OU’s future is the key that is preventing professors from returning to their classrooms this morning.

“The issue that has broken down the negotiations is governance,” said Karen Miller, vice president of the OU chapter of the American Association of University Professors. “The administration wants the AAUP to have no voice in the governance of the university.”

Labor Day talks between the two sides continued until 4:30 a.m. today. Hundreds of faculty members planned to be back on the picket lines at 7:30 a.m., protesting what they say are the university’s unfair labor practices.

Classes had been scheduled to start Sept. 3. The faculty and administration negotiated during the three-day holiday weekend and made progress on several other issues, the AAUP said.

Traditionally the faculty plays a major role in making decisions at American universities. They direct course offerings, class sizes, the hiring of colleagues and the tenure system, academic freedom in the classroom, and research initiatives.

At Oakland, faculty elect colleagues to the University Senate while students select representatives to Congress. The Congress helps decide how student fees are distributed and special speakers and programs are funded.

According to the administration’s Tuesday morning take-it-or-leave it offer, “No issue of governance could be contained in the AAUP contract,” Miller explained.

“Presently, the only mechanism we have for challenging administration failure to follow governance procedure is through the AAUP grievance system,” Miller said. “It would mean that they could treat the Senate and Assemblies with total contempt,” Miller said.

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The AAUP will have a press conference at 10:00 Tuesday, September 8, 2009. This will take place at 617 Spartan Drive, Rochester Hills. Please call 248-659-8179 for further information.