

# Negotiations stall, but students return to class

By TIM RICHARD  
Classes resumed for more than 8,000 Schoolcraft College students today although two major unions are working without contracts.

The Faculty Forum, representing 180 fulltime instructors and 190-200 part-timers, had its previous two-year contract expire Friday, Aug. 25. Both Faculty Forum President William Nickels and college President C. Nelson Grote agree little progress has been made in writing a new pact.

The Schoolcraft College Association of Office Personnel, representing 62 clerks and secretaries, has been without a contract for 14 months. Two major issues—salaries and insurance—are yet to be resolved, said President Dorothy Irving.

Both unions agree one will not sign a contract until the other has settled, too. Both hint darkly at "pressure" or "other alternatives" but decline to say what those tactics might be.

THE COLLEGE, meanwhile, has taken steps to thwart one possible tactic. In the event of any unusual absenteeism, absent employees will be required to submit proof of illness or injury before they can collect sick pay. There are complicated formulas for determining unusual absenteeism, but generally "these levels are three times normal absenteeism," said Gerald Munro, Schoolcraft's manager of personnel services.

Two years ago during prolonged faculty contract negotiations, one-third of the faculty called in sick on three succeeding days.

Educational unions have lacked substantial power to strike since the Crestwood School District court decisions of 1974-5.

A cloud over everything is the lack of a state appropriation for community colleges for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. Gov. William Milliken vetoed a legislative bill for \$120 million, not because it went too far in earmarking how local districts must spend money.

College officials say Milliken acted under intense pressure from the Michigan Education Association, which is the parent organization of both the Faculty Forum and the secretaries. The college says state teachers' union wants to bargain for the entire pot of

college money, without having portions earmarked for specific purposes.

THE SECRETARIES said many terms of a new contract have been resolved but the board refuses to implement them. College officials say its standard operating procedure not to implement portions of a new contract until the entire package is agreed to.

Mrs. Irving of the secretaries union said, "The board has offered a three per cent increase for each year of a two-year contract," or less than half the cost of living increase.

The college replied that "The board has offered improvements in salary and fringe benefits that total 14 per cent of new money for a two-year contract. Again, the union refuses to recognize monies spent on fringe benefits or monies spent on 'step increases' (seniority) in their accounting methodology."

The secretaries and the board are unable to agree on a board proposal that employees pick up part of the increase in health, major medical and dental insurance benefits.

Although the college in January stopped automatic union dues check-offs, Mrs. Irving said dues collections have held up, and only three members would accept the board's offer.

WHILE BOTH the faculty and college agree their negotiations are unusually slow, they differ on who is to blame.

Larry Chunovich, an state teachers' union consultant, told a recent membership meeting the board team seemed "to lack the authority to make decisions at the table." Forum team members said Munro and John Graves, college director of labor relations, appeared to have to check every step with President Grote, who is being labelled the "heavy" in union circles.

Nickels said that although the old contract expired Aug. 25, the college has yet to make an economic offer.

Grote said the Forum's own offer wasn't made until Aug. 22, or three days before the old contract expired. The college has hardly had time to analyze it, let alone make a counter-offer before the contract expired.

Grote said the Forum's demands would cost an additional \$1.4 million.

The present budget is \$11.6 million. Grote said the college team has been unusually well-prepared for bargaining this year, adding: "There's not a single board member spoiling for a fight."

AMONG FORUM demands are:

- Maximum class size of 28 students generally and 23 for English composition.
- A "professional growth fund" of \$150 per year per person for travel, professional commitments and memberships.

- Giving an instructor facing layoff due to insufficient enrollment priority in eligibility for sabbatical leave.
- Faculty participation in hiring new part-time faculty, formulation of departmental budgets and election of departmental chairpersons.

- A college-paid optical plan, increased life insurance, increased severance pay, an improvement factor in wages, an automatic cost-of-living allowance and increased incentives for early retirement, but no required retirement until age 70.

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## Obituaries

EUNICE LEAHY

Eunice Marie Leahy, 53, of Farmington Hills, died Aug. 23 in Aوندale Convalescent Home after a lengthy illness. Services were Aug. 26 in Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, with the Rev. Arthur Kidd of Washington Baptist Church officiating. Burial was in Oakland Hills Memorial Gardens of Oakland.

Mrs. Leahy was a housewife and 24-year resident of the community. Surviving are her husband, Walter; brothers, Russell and Max Cameron; sisters, Jane Schuneman and Violet Suder; five nephews and one niece.

## Farmington Observer

Published every Monday and Thursday by the Observer & Economic News-papers, 36251 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48150 Second-class Postage paid at Livonia, Michigan 48151 Address change at mail subscription, change of address, form 3579 to P.O. Box 2428 Livonia, Michigan 48151 Telephone 261-3890

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