

DAVID FRANK/staff photographer

Instructors at Oakland University hit the bricks this week in protest over wages and a provision that addresses due process. The union represents some 350 fac-

ulty members. These members were photographed outside the Rochester Hills campus.

OU faculty strikes; factfinder sought

By Teri Banas
staff writer

Oakland University's striking faculty union and the administration's team went back to the bargaining table Wednesday night after both sides met separately with a factfinder from the MERC (Michigan Employment Securities Commission).

"They're resuming negotiations at 8 p.m. They met with the factfinder all day today (Tuesday) and he was able to get them back together," announced university information Jim Llewellyn as of press time yesterday.

The latest development in the labor strife at the Rochester Hills-based campus came in the second day of a strike that had effected classes for an estimated 11,900 students this week.

The sessions with MERC (Michigan Employment Relations Commission) factfinder Walter Naussbaum took place Wednesday morning with bargainers for the 350-member American Association for University Professors and then later at noon with the administration team.

The dispute by the instructors group — resulting in the first strike in nine years there — peaked with bargainers failed to produce a work agreement after marathon bargaining over the Labor Day weekend.

Picket lines were drawn by 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, the first time official start of the fall semester, sending students into confusion over whether to attend their classes that day.

STATE MEDIATOR Leon Cornfield was called into the talks last week between OU and bargainers for the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

University administrators responded to picket lines at each campus entrance by putting together a telephone hotline for students.

According to Llewellyn, the phone lines were set up to encourage students to come to classes to learn first-hand whether an instructor would be present. About 100 instructors work part time and are not covered by the AAUP bargaining agreement.

TUESDAY'S scheduled start of classes was set into a tailspin as a result of the strike.

While some students took the interruption in stride — buying themselves by purchasing books and picking up financial aid forms — others traveled long distances to the primarily commuter school only to turn around and go home.

In many cases, according to students, instructors showed up for class Tuesday only to announce there would be no formal class that day. Administrators reportedly were sent to other classes to pass out syllabuses.

AT THE UNIVERSITY Drive entrance to the main campus, one striker explained that most of them were scheduled for 2½ hour shifts, carrying picket signs and passing out leaflets telling of the strike.

The presence of the signs also turned away some sympathetic delivery drivers.

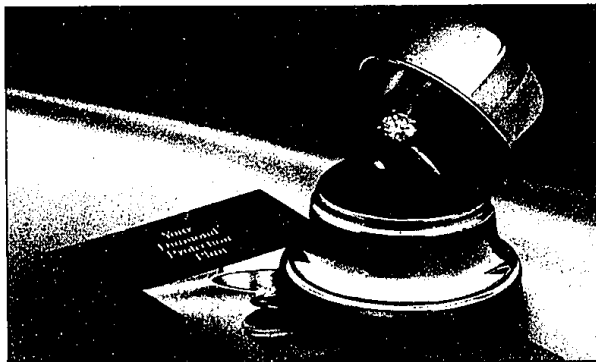
As striker David Housel passed out his leaflets, one car with two young men, apparently students, stopped to inquire. "How long you gonna be out?" said the driver.

Housel, an instructor with the school of Human and Educational Services, announced: "We don't know. They're really not budging on some of the issues."

BARGAINERS had been meeting since May to work an agreement — one that would replace a three-year contract that expired Aug. 14.

This is the third faculty strike at OU. The last walkout was in 1976 and lasted three days. The first strike lasted just over a week.

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