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Los Angeles:

Some meetings were just a blur?

Until the bar opened, liquor and conversations freely flowed and the awards were announced: (Photos on Page 2 and 3)

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Dawn.Rothe@uni.edu
And any negative comments to:
Christopher.Mullins@uni.edu
From one lifer to another

Congratulations Ray
You have deserved this award for a very long time.

Congratulations Tracy and Lisa:
We, as a Division are very proud of your accomplishments.
More Photos from the DCC Social

Objects intentionally blurred to protect identities ???? If you believe that, we have ocean front property for sale in Iowa—just call either of the editors. Cash only.
“Corporations, Workers’ Rights, and the Public University:

The Case of EMU”

Gregg Barak

Professor of Criminology & Criminal Justice

For more than three decades, national economies have become increasingly integrated into, and subordi-
nated to, global markets for money and commodities, under the increasing guidance of transnational corporations, monetarist policies, and neoliberal ideology. “Globalization,” as this process has come to be labeled, has been driven by private corporate and financial capital and the quest to escape effective regulation and taxation by states, to exploit cheaper, often unwaged forms of labor, and to realize greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness from transna-
tional forms of corporate organizations, such as outsourcing networks or the vertical integration of productive and distributive operations. These processes of globalization have established new, concrete interconnections among the declining hegemonies of the advanced industrial centers, bringing about in their wake a reorganization of “corporate-driven” societies increasingly based on international or transnational relationships, accelerated not only by an age of information and instant communication but also by the decentralization of capital away from the “core” nation-states and toward the “peripheral” nation-states, primarily into countries of Southeast Asia.

For example, the well-known structural adjustment programs of “free trade” as opposed to “fair trade” created by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other transnational corporate organizations have led to the proverbial “race to the bottom,” where standards of living for workers worldwide are continuously re-
duced, where labor gets cheaper and cheaper and multinational companies get fatter and fatter, and where state governments have become increasingly subservient to multinational interests. Take the case of Massachusetts, where organized labor and other environmental groups were trying to put laws in place to prevent or restrict
transnational corporations based in Massachusetts from doing business with regimes around the world that violate people’s various human rights. These “fair trade” advocates were going up against a coalition of 600 major corporations that went to court and argued that such proposed legislation was unconstitutional and violated the rights of corporations to engage in “free enterprise.” One guess how the court ruled. Yes, the court ruled in favor of the corporations. In short, the judges agreed, in not exactly the same words as mine… that corporations have a basic or fundamental legal right to exploit workers, to use child labor, to operate businesses under sweat shop-like conditions, to ignore toxic environments, to employ undocumented workers, and so on and so forth.

Here in Michigan, of course, we see how these global transformations are playing out in the ongoing decline of the auto industry, in the privatization of the public sector, in the shrinking tax base of the state, in the declining expenditures on public education, especially higher education, and in the rising tuition costs that have doubled for EMU students in less than a decade. Now then, time does not allow me to delve into very much detail, so allow me in the limited time that I have left to highlight four of the most obvious consequences of these global changes in terms of the quality of education that is slowly but surely being abandoned, reduced, downsized, or whatever, at EMU.

First, there is the very important issue of FACULTY EROSION. When I arrived at EMU as Head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology in the fall of 1991, 70% of all instruction on this campus was taught by either tenure track or tenured professors, the remaining 30% by part-time faculty. Today, tenure track or tenured professors teach 55% of instruction on this campus. Part-time instructors or full-time lecturers teach the other 45%. On average, the full-time lecturers are paid less than half of what tenure track and tenured professors are paid. Hence, the Union has been seeking a contract that will halt this erosion, because if the current trends persist for say 10 years, then 75% of instruction on this campus will be carried out by lecturers rather than professors. Of course, in the process EMU will be turned into some kind of educational institution that, at best, will only resemble a regional university as we know them today and, at worst, will become a four-year “community college.”
Second, there is currently **NO FACULTY INPUT IN THE HIRING AND EVALUATION OF ADMINISTRATORS** and **NO ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITMENT TO A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**. In other words, to rectify the state and the quality of the buildings where the bulk of our teaching and your learning take place, the full-time faculty union of professors has been bargaining for contractual language to deal with the health and safety of deteriorated, dilapidated, and depressing classrooms. In response to this globally related problem of scare dollars for public education and an abundance of dollars for the private accumulation of transnational capital, that we have in the corporate-state of Michigan vis-à-vis the Republican controlled EMU Board of Trustees, various dreams of privatization of health care, social security, or what have you, busily privatizing public education. Such globally “dictated” public policies make more dollars available, for example, to build new prisons and to refurbish old prisons than they make available to replace or refurbish such buildings as Pray-Harrold, Mark Jefferson, or Strong.

The third point has to do with **FACULTY REMUNERATION OR THE SALARY AND COMPENSATION PACKAGE OFFERED BY THE BOARD AND THE ADMINISTRATION**. The unsuccessful strike by the faculty at EMU also had to do with our fair and just compensation in relation to our peers at other institutions here in Michigan, if not around the country. In brief, the salary and health care package that the administration offered us before the contract expired and before we began the strike was to take an overall cut in salary and benefits on average of -1% for five years, at a time as you know when your tuition has gone up substantially, and when the state had provided the University with a 2.7% increase in our allocation for this fiscal year. This offer occurred when our faculty’s average salaries already rank 11th out of 14 institutions of higher education in Michigan, and when our peer institutions, such as Oakland University, Northern Michigan University, or Central Michigan University were all settling new contract negotiations this summer that were averaging 4% increases for their faculties compared to our 1% decrease. To justify their low offer the Administration boldly lied to the public and came up with a phony scheme about how EMU professors work 8/9th of an academic year compared to our peers. In fact, all of the institutions of higher education in Michigan work essentially the same 30-week calendar or academic year.
Only after we went out on strike did the university come up with their so-called last and best offer, that brings us up to essentially neither a loss nor a raise for five years, at the same time that the rate of inflation or consumer price index is around 4.2%. Do the math and you can see why the Board and the Administration’s offer was one that we could refuse, in the short or long run. More significantly, as the bulk of the tenured professorate at EMU retire over the next 10 years, the trends of replacing them with underpaid and exploited workers or lecturers, who teach more classes, earn substantially less money, and engage in relatively no research or scholarship will only escalate. As for those faculty who will be hired in the relatively privileged and plum tenure and tenure track positions of a projected future, well, personally I believe that if current trends prevail, then both tenure and academic freedom as we know them will become history at this institution. Even if I am wrong, those faculties who EMU will attract will consist of those who missed out on faculty positions at our higher paying “peer” institutions.

My fourth and last point has to do with the LACK OF DEMOCRACY AND THE VANISHING LANDSCAPE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM. As many of you are well aware, our negotiations were about the lack of faculty input in administrative decisions. Of course, such an organizational framework for conducting the affairs of a university, without the active participation of its faculty, reeks not only of an anti-democratic ideology, but placed into the historical canons of universities at large, it is against the very raison d’etre of our academic existence, that is to say, one of collegiality and a mutually, cooperatively, shared governance. In order to reverse the current trends in our contracting field of academic freedom here at EMU, it calls for a struggle to change the composition of both the Board of Regents and the University President. As the so-called CEO of EMU, this President has already demonstrated that he has not the vision, competency, or leadership that is required to effectively run this institution. Moreover, he stands squarely in opposition to the democratic ideals of the academy. Simply put, he is a technocratic pawn in the goings-on of privatizing public education in America.

In both summing up and concluding, let me begin by saying that in the larger global scheme of things, this Board and Administration are in the process of trying to break this union and the right to collective bargaining, not only here in Michigan where EMU represents a labor stronghold among professors, but all across the USA.
In other words, as part of the larger class struggle to depress wages worldwide while corporate-management salaries continue to escalate through the cash ceilings, on the one hand, and to expand the corporatization, privatization, and race to the bottom of higher education in America, on the other hand, this Board and its Administration serves neither the interests of its students or its faculties as it helps to establish a beachhead of sorts for destroying viable public unions like EMU-AAUP. Serving the interests of capital rather than the interests of people or public education, the objective here is to decimate public unions, academic or otherwise, so that they too will be history like that of private unions.

Many faculty members here at EMU thought that the Union had lost the propaganda war. On the contrary, despite the obvious conservative biases of the local media, radio, TV, and print, especially the Ann Arbor News and even the so-called liberal Detroit Free Press, like virtually all mainstream rags in this country, these two are anti-labor and the public interest as they defer always to the interests of private enterprise. Moreover, as part of the 24/7 PR propaganda machine for corporate America and global capital, the hegemonically owned and controlled mass media squashes any real semblance of free speech and public debate, no differently than the treatment of this Board and its Administration, who has stooped in these negotiations so far to trickery and to deceit, to misleading statements, including outright deception and misrepresentation to the public, and last but not least, they never, from day one, bargained with the faculty and its union in good faith.
I am not saying that better spin wouldn’t help, but I am arguing that it really was beside the point in terms of suspending or breaking the strike. No, the reason that this strike failed is simple. It is as basic as the “old divide and conquer” approach to most things. Even though we had 90% of our faculty members go out on strike, lecturers and part-time faculty were teaching some 50 percent of all classes. Had the lecturers’ union supported our strike too, then only some 10% of courses would have been up and running. This would not only have brought the Board and its Administration to their proverbial knees, but it also would have resulted in a fair, just, and affordable contract for the faculty. But in order to have accomplished a lecturer walkout in solidarity, the different unions on this campus would have had to come together historically in a way that they have not yet done so.

A couple of final remarks that bring us back to locating Michigan in the larger market place of contemporary advanced capitalism, and to the urgent need to articulate and to develop a compelling alternative to the existing profit-driven, corporate-planned and managed, global economy. Now then, tenure track and tenured faculty at EMU are not oblivious to the hardship that Michiganders are experiencing, what with a 7.1% percent unemployment rate, a dying auto industry the backbone of yesterday’s economy, and the demise of the private, industrialized unions as we knew them. However, we educators also know that the way out of the present dilemma, if in fact, there is a way out, depends on the nurturing of social capital and on a highly educated workforce. This is the time, if Michigan is once again to prosper and not become a victim of globalization that the powers that be in Lansing step up to the plate and deliver the real thing rather than what is rapidly becoming, higher education light for most institutions in Michigan, and especially for EMU, which traditionally receives one of the lowest if not the lowest allocations year in and year out. Hence, it is time for the state of Michigan in general and this Board of Higher Education and its Administration in particular, to get it house in order by balancing its priorities or allocations of monies toward both developing its economies and its institutions of higher education.

This means that faculty salaries in higher education should not be dropping now or in the future as the value of education continues to rise. On the contrary, the relative salaries of all faculties of higher education, whether they
be tenure track, tenured professors, lecturers, or adjuncts should be moving up or ahead as the value of education in a world of technology and services is increasing. However, for the past 25 years, with the exceptions of the top fifty or so elite institutions of higher education in the U.S., all faculty salaries have been losing economic ground. If the value of higher education has been going up based on nothing more than the rise of tuition, then based on what logic can one rationalize the downsizing of the quality of education at EMU other than from the point of view of multinational capital. Without even thinking about the possibility that they may not really understand this thing, called higher education, our Board of Regents and its Administration like their journalistic and political counterparts, i.e., Republican candidate for Governor Dick DeVos, rationalize and justify their actions on the grounds that “gee, these are tough times in Michigan, so let’s punish those faculty members who have the ware with all to supply our citizens with the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century.” So it is very unfortunate, not to mention frustrating and depressing, to watch those in charge of this institution with so little understanding of the costs and consequences of their actions on the quality of education here at EMU.

Finally, we do not need to stay the current course for it is one racing to the bottom of higher education in America. What we need, practically speaking, is a democratic, market-based, community-serving alternative to the unappealing choice between a governmentally administered and centrally owned state economy or a capitalist economy privately owned and centrally administered by an elite class of wealthy financiers and corporate CEOs. As David Korten, author of numerous books including *When Corporations Rule the World*, *The Post-Corporate World*, and *Globalizing Civil Society* explains: “The key distinction between a capitalist economy and the market alternative is that a proper market economy operates with rules, borders, and equitable local ownership under the public oversight of democratically accountable governments.” Of course, we are probably light years away, assuming that we don’t destroy ourselves first, from a democratic, market based global economic system based on local ownership and control, as well as on equity and social justice for all.
Then again, as Marx would say, welcome to the world of class struggle. There is no escaping it. Though plenty of folks are possessed of “false consciousness” about this social reality, and many more simply deny this social reality, like our Board of Regents and our President, preferring to move blindly in lockstep with the capitalist neoliberal drummer.

Thank you,

Gregg
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As always, we thank those that have contributed to the newsletter

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