

Overview

by *Harold S. Wechsler*

Harold S. Wechsler is a professor of education at the Margaret S. Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester. A former editor of NEA higher education publications, Wechsler writes on the history of minority access to college, efforts to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice on college campuses, ethnic studies, and education for business and for teaching. He is writing a history of efforts by the National Conference of Christians and Jews to combat campus prejudice.

Wechsler's upcoming publications include: "Eastern Standard Time: High School-College Collaboration and Admission to College," in *A Faithful Mirror: Reflections on the College Board and Education in America, an anthology of essays commemorating the centennial of the College Board; and a study of middle colleges—high schools for at-risk students, located on community college campuses, to be published by Teachers College Press.*

How fare faculty and faculty unions? The past year produced National Labor Relations Board rulings that eroded the *Yeshiva* Supreme Court decision at some independent colleges and universities. In October 2000, the NLRB also ruled that 1,700 New York University teaching assistants were employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act with a protected right to organize—the first NLRB ruling to permit TA unionization at an independent university.

In "Higher Education Collective Bargaining and the Law," Gregory M. Saltzman recounts the events leading to these NLRB decisions and discusses their implications for future organizing. Saltzman also notes key legal developments affecting faculty and staff unions, including privatization and bargaining rights, definition of the bargaining unit, duty to bargain and of fair representation, and enforceability of collective bargaining agreements.

Faculty salaries also scored positive gains. The \$56,022 average faculty salary in 1999–2000 represents a 3.2 percent increase over 1998–1999, report Suzanne B. Clery and John B. Lee in "Faculty Salaries, 1999–2000." Mississippi and South Dakota faculty members received the largest increases for two- and four-year public colleges, respectively. Engineering and public health faculty earned the highest salaries at public and independent institutions, respectively. Unionized colleges showed a \$2,667 salary differential over colleges without collective bargaining.

Can unions coexist with traditional faculty governance mechanisms, such as faculty senates? Yes, say Christine Maitland and Gary Rhoades, in "Unions and Faculty Governance." But more important, unions and senates can provide mutual support. Contractual provisions for faculty appointments, salary evaluations, and for participation in governance, Maitland and Rhoades conclude, "can well serve and strengthen the faculty role in many levels of decision-making."

State higher education funding scored a 6.5 percent gain in FY 2000, reports William Zumeta in "Higher Education Finance in the Nineties: Lessons for the New Millennium." This gain exceeded the increases for corrections and for Medicaid and outpaced the

5.3 percent overall increase in general fund appropriations, though it represented a 1 percent decline from FY 1999.

But not all the news is good. The attack on tenure continues, Henry Lee Allen notes in "Workload and Tenure Policies in an Era of Organizational Change." Allen analyzes the workload and tenure provisions governing faculty at a stratified sample of 241 four-year colleges and universities. Organizational conditions, he finds, affect the way workload and tenure are negotiated within an institution. Heeding Allen's call for a sophisticated understanding of the institutional context for policymaking could result in identifying colleges and universities where administrators are most likely to attack or support tenure.

This year, William Dale Crist joins the roster of *NEA Almanac* authors. Crist, professor of economics at California State University and president of CalPERS, the nation's largest public employee retirement program, was a charter member of the *Thought & Action* Review Panel and, later, author of "Early and Phased Academic Employee Retirement Plans," which appeared in that journal in 1989. Bill will write on issues related to faculty and staff benefits and retirement, a task ably handled by Jay L. Chronister since 1994.

Readers should carefully consider Crist's call for unions to bargain for long-term care insurance and for faculty and staff to contemplate the purchase of this insurance when offered. "We are living longer, but a longer life may not be enjoyable," he notes. "Unions must excite faculty and staff to acquire more knowledge and dedication than competing forces, and to band together to advocate for their common interest."

"Higher Education Support Personnel: Worklife Issues," by Linda K. Johnsrud, details the results of a comprehensive NEA survey of job satisfaction among support staff in clerical, technical/paraprofessional, service maintenance, and skill crafts positions. Wages that did not reflect changes in the job, chances for promotion, and downsizing, the survey found, were the sources of greatest dissatisfaction among support staff.

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A special thanks to Sam Pizzigati, who leaves NEA after a successful tenure as director of NEA publications. Sam nurtured the trio of higher education publications—*The NEA Almanac of Higher Education*, *Thought & Action: The NEA Higher Education Journal*, and *The NEA Higher Education Advocate*—from their birth through their present status as key voices for faculty and staff in American higher education. He fostered editorial excellence in all NEA publications and embodied a personal and professional commitment to NEA's progressive principles. We will work doubly hard to ensure that future *Almanacs* live up to his high standards.