To all BUFMs:

I'd like to share the following open letter to President Schrader that was sent to her by Rudy Fichtenbaum, Professor Emeritus WSU and current President of National AAUP, in response to her request for input on the future of our university.

Having an understanding of an institution’s history seems a prerequisite to understanding its potential. Rudy has been involved with AAUP-WSU since the chapter was formed, and he has a deep sense of how important AAUP-WSU has been to enhancing the contributions of our faculty to our students, to the university, and to the profession at-large.

Likewise, Rudy is acutely aware of how central AAUP-WSU has been to the efforts to insure that the university administration continues to make faculty working conditions, and student learning conditions, the major priority of the university.

Lastly, Rudy is justifiably proud of the ways in which AAUP-WSU has advocated for equal professional consideration and fair treatment of all of our faculty.

We hope that when President Schrader reads this letter, she will understand how important it is to work with our faculty, who by and large remain with the university. We remain, even as administrations come and go, and as the composition of the Board changes.

We are one faculty. And for our students, we are the heart and soul of the university.

Best regards, Marty
Marty Kich, President, AAUP-WSU

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NTE? TET? BU FM? CBA? RCM? What are all these acronyms? See this guide. The list of AAUP-WSU Executive Committee members is available on our officers page.

President Schrader,

What the University will look like in 10 years depends a lot on you. Right now WSU is at a crossroads. I say this not just because we are dealing with the most severe financial crisis in the University’s history, but also because there is a crisis of leadership or rather a lack thereof.

For years the University has had misplaced priorities and a lack of accountability at the highest levels and those problems have now come home to roost.

I must say that I am not optimistic about the future of WSU. It is telling that in the montage of words soliciting this response, the word faculty did not appear nor did the words union or AAUP-WSU appear anywhere on the page.

It is my understanding that you have elected not to meet with the President of AAUP-WSU until after a contract is negotiated and yet your administration and the Board show no signs of wanting to negotiate a contract. You have made a big mistake in not meeting with the President of AAUP-WSU, who could
have given you immense insight into the history of AAUP-WSU and what we have accomplished.

But instead you appear to have been taken in by forces determined to declare war on the faculty at WSU, forces that know nothing about faculty unions in general and AAUP-WSU in particular.

One of the things you might have learned if you had bothered to speak with AAUP-WSU is how we worked with the administration to transform the promotion and tenure system at WSU. Before we had a union there had never been a woman promoted to the rank of Professor in the College of Business. But because we negotiated criteria for promotion and tenure, we now have women who regularly get promoted to the rank of professor.

Criteria must be approved by a majority of bargaining unit faculty in a department and by the dean. In effect we negotiated a process that is truly collegial, as opposed to simply paying lip service to the principle of collegiality. This is but one of many examples of how AAUP-WSU has been a positive force at the University.

It was AAUP-WSU that first recognized that the current financial crisis was the result of overspending and a lack of accountability. The previous president kept on insisting we had a revenue problem and the Board was clueless. It was our analysis of WSU finances that revealed the problems we have were caused by over-spending.

The working relationship that we developed with the administration took years to develop, but in the same way that politics has degenerated on a national scale, it doesn’t take long to destroy what has been built at WSU and create chaos and disfunction. What you are doing in snubbing the union president is sending a message to the entire faculty that you don't care what they think because you and all of the vice presidents and lawyers that you have surrounded yourself with will provide you with the answers.

But the reality is that the faculty are the heart and soul of the University. Administrators, Board members and even students come and go but in the end it is the faculty who remain and it is the faculty who are charged with carrying out the primary mission of the institution -- teaching and research. If you lose the faculty then you lose the university. There are no great universities without great faculty. The fact that you have chosen not to meet with the president of AAUP-WSU or the leadership of the AAUP-WSU, the organization on campus that has the most significant impact on the daily lives of faculty, speaks volumes and it is the reason that I am pessimistic about the future of WSU.

But it is not too late change and begin working with the faculty to help rebuild WSU and help transform it into a University that puts academics and students' education first.

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