



## **UW Collective Bargaining Legislation To Be Re-Introduced**

ASPRO has learned that legislation to extend the “right-to-choose” collective bargaining to UW academic staff and faculty will be re-introduced this session.

Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) has circulated the bill for co-sponsorship, but, rumor has it, he could opt to introduce the issue as an amendment to the State Budget.

The legislation provides all UW System academic staff and faculty the right to collectively bargain over wages, hours and conditions of employment.

There would be separate collective bargaining units for academic staff and for faculty at each of the campuses. If approved by a vote of employees, any two or more units for academic staff may be combined into a single unit. The same would apply for faculty units.

However, faculty and academic staff would NOT be allowed in the same bargaining unit. **This separation is of great concern to ASPRO and the reason ASPRO opposed identical legislation last session.**

Academic staff and faculty have always been on equal footing with regard to annual compensation increases and employment benefits. This separation could lead to larger raises or increased benefits for faculty while academic staff units fight for the crumbs that remain.

ASPRO also has concerns with the uncertain role of governance under a collective bargaining arrangement.

ASPRO will keep you posted as we learn more about which track this legislation will take and its affects on academic staff within the UW System.

## **Meeting with the Devil**

**By Janet Swandby, ASPRO Lobbyist**

You are all familiar with the folktale where the children finally point out that the emperor has no clothes. I was reminded of the story when I met with Representative Steve Nass (R-Whitewater) this month. As you know, Representative Nass is the newly appointed Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities. Representative Nass’ name is recognized by most UW System personnel because he is frequently quoted in the media on UW issues. Indeed, System leadership has consistently portrayed him as a “critic of the University”, although I have heard even harsher terms used to describe him.

As I met with Representative Nass, I kept thinking that the “devil has no horns” (unless they are retractable). He reminded me that he has earned two degrees from UW-Whitewater and wholeheartedly supports the mission of the University. He admits to asking questions and noted that his “investigations” into mismanagement are always at the request of “insiders” who have shared concerns with him.

We discussed the role of academic staff, your vulnerability compared to the faculty and represented staff, and the independence of ASPRO relative to the UW Administration. He shared his disappointment that the words and actions (that is, the “spin” presented to the media) of the current administration had severely damaged trust.

On the issue of changes in sick-leave conversion, he predicted that legislators would first eliminate the benefit for legislators and possibly all state elected officials and some high- level appointees. He, in fact, discouraged his colleagues from eliminating the benefit for all UW employees or all state personnel. He doubts that the conversion credits that have been earned could be taken away, but noted that there are a number of options available to legislators if they want to pursue a change in how the benefit is applied in the future. He also doubted that the issue would come to his committee, but, instead, may be taken up by the Assembly Labor Committee.

Representative Nass encouraged ASPRO to stay in touch on all issues and noted that we all have the same goal – a first-class university system. I appreciated our frank discussion and have concluded that those who criticize are not always trying to do harm. Some are only pointing out that “the emperor has no clothes.”