

Introducing *Three Days in October*

This past October, the faculty members of APSCUF (Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties) went on strike. APSCUF represents almost 6,000 faculty and coaches at fourteen state-owned and controlled Pennsylvania universities. This was the first time in the history of the organization (founded in 1937) and the State System of Higher Education (founded in 1983) that the faculty, unable to reach agreement on a Collective bargaining Agreement, went on strike.

David Downing, the editor of *Works and Days*, as well as a faculty member who participated in the strike, asked five of the local strike leaders at Indiana University of Pennsylvania to serve as guest editors for this special issue of the journal.

The purposes of this special edition are to provide an historical chronicle of the strike and to provide some guidance to our sister faculty unions/associations across the country who may be compelled to take a similar action at some time in the future. For that reason, we have included many documents pertaining to the strike, including a chronological series of thirty-eight APSCUF Press Releases, and we end the volume with some useful historical archives.

The faculty across the state spent months planning for what we hoped would not occur. We had never been on strike and while we believed we could be successful, if the call

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came, we had no prior experience to know for sure. From the perspective of the leaders of the State System of Higher Education, they had the opportunity to break the union if we could not deliver the vast majority of the faculty to the picket lines. If we were successful in getting faculty to the picket lines, could we sustain a strike over time? Would the students on the fourteen campuses actually support the faculty, or would we incur their wrath as well as that of their families? There were lots of unknowns. As the saying goes, “hope for the best, prepare for the worst.”

And prepare we did: meetings, meetings, and more meetings, months before the day of the strike; meetings at the state level with experts from across the nation brought in to school us on the “dos” and “don’ts”; and meetings on campus among the local union leadership to ascertain the “who” and the “how.” Who would assume responsibility to identify picket locations? How do we effectively close down the campus? How long would we picket each day, would it be around the clock or from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM? Since we could not go onto campus, where would the faculty park their cars during their picket shifts and how would they be shuttled to their picket locations? What about bathroom access? What about faculty who would attempt to cross picket lines? How would our relationship with local administration change once the strike was over? Etc., etc., etc.

We compiled pages and pages of material to answer these and all the other questions. As we started to answer the questions we drew closer and closer to a possible strike date. Would we be ready; could we actually pull off and sustain a strike? Only actually going on strike would answer these questions.

Each guest editor of this special issue of *Works and Days* played a pivotal role in the strike at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Nadene L’Amoreaux is the local chapter president; Erika Frenzel is the local chapter vice-president; David Chambers was the spokesperson for the faculty; Robert Mutchnick was a co-chair of the local strike committee; and

Jamie Martin is the state vice president and chair of the negotiations committee. In addition to all being faculty and union leaders, we are all friends.

We thank David Downing for this wonderful opportunity to have faculty from across the fourteen campuses share their experiences preparing and executing a successful strike. We only needed to be on strike for three days before enough pressure was brought to bear for our negotiation team, led by Jamie Martin, to obtain an acceptable collective bargaining agreement. Hopefully with appropriate preparation and demonstrated resolve our sister and brother faculty across the country can avoid having to go on strike. But, if not, maybe the information in this special issue of *Works and Days* can serve some useful purpose for those who may find themselves preparing and delivering a strike.

In Solidarity,

David Chambers

Erika Frenzel

Nadene L'Amoreaux

Jamie Martin

Robert Mutchnick

Pre-Strike