Faculty and Staff Take Issue With Forced Resignation

By Amanda Jantzi
Contributing Writer

They meet on Friday afternoons to discuss safety issues relating to sexual identity and diversity on the EMU campus. They are a group of about 20 faculty, staff and a handful of students.

Recently, though, their numbers have more than tripled. This was mostly due to a recent incident when a staff member was forced to resign after an anonymous phone tip to the administration that the employee was in a committed same-sex relationship.

A spokesperson for the group said the forced resignation “has shown the worst of EMU and Mennonite institutions.”

The action has also triggered a letter of concern from an alum, now a retired missionary, who told President Lapp he was disappointed that “an anonymous caller holding some kind of power over the institution could dictate such abrupt action.”

The group’s origin began in the summer of 1999 when several faculty and staff signed a welcoming letter printed as a full-page ad in the Mennonite Weekly Review (MWR). In this welcoming letter, a small group calling themselves the Welcoming Committee asked the church to be more open to gays and lesbians.

Groups such as the Supportive Congregational Network and the Brethren and Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns joined the Welcoming Committee in soliciting donors to pay for the page and for supporters to show their agreement in the form of signatures. They received over 600 signatures.

Included in the many supporters were several EMU faculty/staff. Within this group of about 20, 12 faculty and six staff chose to sign their names in support of the statement in the welcoming letter.

“We agonized over who should and shouldn’t sign. In the end about a dozen faculty decided to sign and we’ve been in trouble with administration ever since,” commented one involved member.

Sensenig, Good to Edit Weather Vane Next Semester

By Holly Scott
Co-Editor

The Weather Vane will change hands next semester with the arrival of a new editorial duo. Kristine Sensenig will stay on as Co-Editor-in-Chief and will be joined by Jeremy Good.

While traditionally the position of Editor-in-Chief changes each semester, Sensenig made the decision to stay because “it seemed like it would be a waste to leave now, after I’ve invested so much time this semester in merely learning the ropes . . . and it’s a great way to avoid homework.”

Sensenig, a junior, is a Journalism and Justice, Peace and Conflict Studies major. She has been involved with the Weather Vane since her freshman year.

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