The Search For Profs
Mennonite Faculty Harder to Find
By Karie Smucker
Contributing Writer

A steady decrease in the percentage of Mennonite students at EMU, as well as persons with Mennonite ties applying for faculty positions, is bringing up many questions as to how the school will handle diversity while still maintaining a Mennonite identity.

Next year at least three faculty positions will become vacant at EMU. Assistant Professor of English Patty King will be leaving to attend seminary, and both Assistant Professor of Spanish Ray Horst and Chemistry Professor Glenn Kauffman will be retiring.

Undergraduate Academic Dean Marie Morris has received over 40 applications for the three positions thus far, none of which cite obvious Mennonite ties. This raises questions as to whether or not fewer Mennonites are available for faculty positions and how the university will handle the lack of Mennonite applicants. According to EMU’s bylaws, at least 75 percent of full-time permanent professors must be Mennonite or Mennonite-related.

Morris believes that “if we can be dis-tinctively Mennonite in our mission statement and purpose and then hire persons who can support those then I think we can continue to be a wonderfully Mennonite–with a healthy dose of diversity–uni-versity.”

Diversity has also been a keyword recently in our traditional Mennonite constituency that we have no control over. Lapp cites many factors as influencing the steady decline which has been occurring over the past few years, including less loyalty to the denomination by Mennonite students.

“I think it is a sociological and a cultural issue,” said President Joseph Lapp of the decrease. “I think many factors are influencing the steady decline which has been occurring over the past few years, including less loyalty to the denomination by Mennonite students and heavy recruitment of non-Mennonites by other students.”

“The number where 50 percent of Mennonites going to college are choosing to teach at public institutions.”

According to Morris, other Mennonite institutions are experiencing the same challenges at EMU, the Mennonite Education Agency is working on a faculty calling project to help identify prospective Mennonite faculty. Morris personally tries to work at increasing the pool of Mennonite faculty by “putting a bug in the ear of students who I think have the potential to be future faculty.”

Currently, Morris is attempting “to find committed Christian professors who can support the mission and purpose of EMU and the Mennonite faith tradition.” She believes that “if we can be distinctively Mennonite in our mission statement and purpose and then hire persons who can support those then I think we can continue to be a wonderfully Mennonite–with a healthy dose of diversity–university.”

Not A Piece of Pie: The CA Life
By Sherah-Leigh Zehr
Contributing Writer

“I walked into the room and my jaw just dropped. I couldn’t believe what I was looking at. She had ripped up pictures and strewn them across the floor. There were chunks of plaster missing from the wall where posters were removed. All of her stuff was packed. Just when you think it can’t get any crazier...” her voice trailed off.

While this may be an extreme case of “roommate rage,” it can be part of everyday life for a community advisor (CA) at EMU.

“I just stared at the girl in disbelief,” said an anonymous CA to Angie Payne, residence director of Northlawn, in a private meeting where they formed an action plan to deal with both the physical damage and the emotional repercussions of the conflict.

“For many of students, it is the first time that she or he has lived in a small space with so many people,” said Payne. “It is that midpoint between living with your parents and being completely on your own. You learn almost as much living in the residence hall as you do in the classroom.”

According to Ellen Miller, director of Residence Life, the current Residence Director and CA staffs have a lot to offer the residents. “They have lots of energy and dedication,” she said. “I also appreciate that we have a group with a diversity of gifts and styles.” These gifts are the tools with which CAs impact the campus community.

CAs are charged with the responsibility of building a community on whichever hall they are assigned to live. Planning regular activities that involve a social, spiritual, educational or service focus, mediating conflict, enforcing the lifestyle agreement, helping students with adjustments and problems and being “on-duty” regularly are all part of the job. Payne insists that potential CAs have a sense of humor. “We look for honest, go-get-em types.”

“Planning programs isn’t as easy as you think. You can do a survey and plan something everyone says they will come to, but then when the time arrives, they...”