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Disgruntled Professor Resigns

By Lucille Corto-Palmer

Complaining of harassment from his department chairman, an engineering technology professor resigned two weeks into the semester, leaving the division to cover his classes.

Dr. Mahmoud S. Audi said he left on Jan. 17 because Mr. William Aungst, chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Technology Program in which Audi taught "harassed me continuously and I couldn't bear to work around him any longer."

Aungst denied harassing Audi but admitted requesting him to do his job.

"I treated him as I would have treated anyone else who wasn't doing their job," Aungst said.

Aungst admitted his animosity towards Audi.

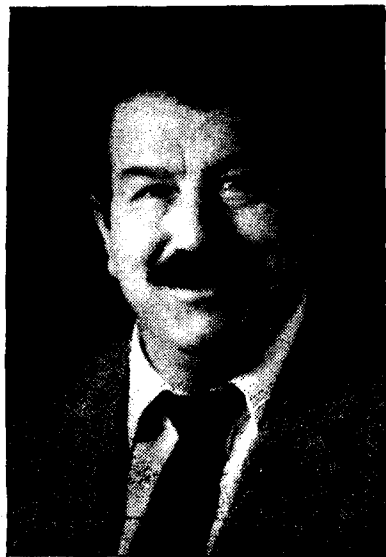
"It's best for the university that he is gone," Aungst said. "If it were up to me, Dr. Audi would have been gone long ago."

The differences between the two professors go back a long way.

"When Dr. Audi came on board five years ago, he ran into problems with Mr. Aungst," said Dr. William A. Welsh, head of the Engineering Technology Division.

Professional differences compounded the personality conflict, Welsh said.

The two men could not avoid each other because they taught a series of interrelated courses in mechanical engineering. They had major problems working together on programs, Welsh said.

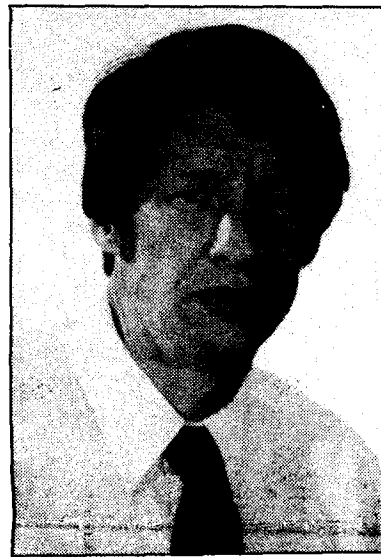


file photo
Dr. Mahmoud Audi, former engineering technology professor

"Aungst felt strongly that multiple-sectioned courses should have standardized tests and books but Dr. Audi wanted creative and professional freedom in teaching," Welsh said.

Audi's professional performance appears to have been satisfactory. He had passed his fourth-year review in the tenure process, Welsh said, adding, "he was a difficult person to work with."

The department worked hard to retain Audi "because he had a lot to offer," Welsh said, but he "felt that his working conditions under Mr. Aungst were intolerable."



file photo
Mr. William Aungst, Chairman of MET Dept.

"The chaos won't be missed, but his contributions will."

With Audi gone, Welsh swiftly found new instructors for Audi's two classes, Computer Aided Designs, and Thermodynamics. Students missed only one class from the Designs course.

Assistant Professor Donald L. Miller has taken over Computer Aided Designs, a course which he has not taught before.

"It's tough and will take awhile. This semester will be experimental until I get a feel for what the students can do in CAD," he said.

Masoud Tabatabai, assistant professor, is instructing in the Computer Aided Design lab along with Miller.

Aungst is taking over Thermodynamics, which he has taught before.

"It just adds to my workload," he said.

Students from these two classes appear to be adapting but with some discomfort.

Don McCue, an engineering student in the Thermodynamics class said he was "surprised and upset" when Dr. Audi just left and feels "a difference in teaching styles that is taking a while to adjust to."

Audi's position as chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee with the Faculty Council has not been filled. Dr. Murat K. Yurtseven, chairman of the Council, is in the process of finding a replacement.

Audi said he is looking for a new position in teaching or consulting.

Audi received his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Syracuse University in 1974. He taught and researched in his field for over 9 years before coming to Penn State. He is currently the treasurer of the local chapter of the American Society of Mechanical Engineering, and has published many works with both ASME and the American Society of Engineering Education.

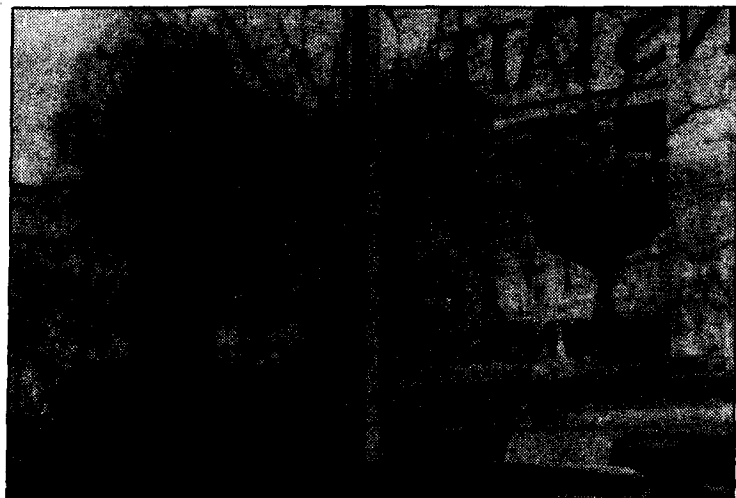


photo by Denina C. Benson
Downtown Center Coordinator Nancy Karlik

PSU Opens City Center

By Nathan Lee Gadsden

The Penn State University Downtown Center will strengthen PSU's presence in the area by bringing the entire system closer to state government, according to the center's coordinator.

One of the primary goals of the center is to "enhance the PSU working relationship with lawmakers and state agencies," said Nancy Karlik. She added that the center's location across the street from the capitol will make that task easier.

The center will provide many services, including the following: masters and doctoral classes in public administration; information about PSU programs; and meeting and working space for PSU faculty, staff and students.

Classes are scheduled for Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights with three classes being held each night.

"Currently we have only one class per night; two masters and one doctoral," Karlik said. She added that a total of 50 students are enrolled in the classes which began Feb. 3.

PSU interns in state government will also benefit from the center's location. Karlik said space is available for interns to work if they need to get away from their offices for a while. (Continued on page 2)