

# Akron-AAUP Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER 20, 2009

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**Governance - The University Reconsiders:** After its initial Governance proposal, and a huge uproar from faculty, the University has recently submitted a revised Governance proposal that is very similar to the current contract article on Governance. This is a great improvement from their starting position, but there are still some improvements needed in Governance to keep it functioning as intended previously. For example, the lead administrative academic position at Wayne College, equivalent to a chair, which the faculty were authorized to evaluate in the first contract, has been eliminated. To give the faculty at Wayne the same rights they had in the first contract, the current lead academic position at Wayne – however designated - needs to be evaluated like any other chair.

**Call for Membership:** There has never been a more important time for faculty to join the Akron-AAUP! **First**, the Board of Trustees and its negotiating team have put a number of very alarming contract articles on the table, with more promised. These include a Retrenchment article giving the University carte blanche to retrench, furlough, and reduce faculty (including tenured faculty) at its “sole discretion.” Our current contract article has checks and balances; their proposal does not. Our current article requires that financial exigency be demonstrably bona fide.

**Second**, the Board proposes post-tenure review, a promised proposal on academic freedom (which last time was quite alarming), a claim that they own “all” of your intellectual property (such as your class notes), and a proposal for no raises (when their audited financial statements show recurring profits), among others. We've been waiting and repeatedly asking for their proposal on Academic Freedom since July 15th. We've seen nothing yet. The administration team seems content to let the threat of a serious revision of this article hang over the table. We find this "position" unacceptable.

**Third**, joining the chapter costs only about \$17 a month more for nine months than one's fair share fees. With that membership, one can vote on the contract, run for office, vote in chapter elections, be a member of the state and national AAUPs, and receive *Academe* (the AAUP's bimonthly magazine). Unless you have filled out a dues election form and returned it to the chapter treasurer, you are not a member of the chapter.

**There is no better way to show our collective resolve**, and to support the mainstream academic values reflected in our Akron-AAUP proposals, than to join the chapter. Our membership is at an all-time high, and continues to grow weekly! At the negotiating table, reasoned arguments alone will not win the day. Our reasonable proposals are supported by a unified and resolute faculty voice, as reflected in a growing membership. Join us!

**How does membership change the nature of faculty relationships with the administration and the outcome of negotiations?** The simple truth is that majority membership changes the balance of power.

- At Cincinnati State, almost 90% of the faculty are members of the AAUP chapter. When the Board proposed changes in faculty positions undermining tenure, virtually ALL of the chapter members showed up for a silent protest at the next Board meeting. Their Board did not act on their proposal. Such quiet resolve by a significant majority of faculty is invaluable.
- At Oakland University in Michigan, where statewide unemployment is the highest in the nation, their chapter, which has majority faculty membership, was able to force their administration back to the negotiations table with a 7 day strike. The result was a tentatively agreed to contract.

- At the University of Toledo and Wright State University, the majority faculty member chapters were able to refuse administrative proposals of salary give-backs and furloughs. Both were successful in maintaining these areas of compensation.
- These are precisely the kinds of proposals being made by the UA administration, and we can expect worse (i.e., post-tenure review, increased health care contributions, near zero pay increases, threats to academic freedom and intellectual property).

To join the Akron-AAUP, please see our membership page from the chapter website at (<http://www.akronaaup.org/membership/membership.html>) with a link to a Membership Form (in the right column) and a chart (<http://www.akronaaup.org/images/FSDues0910.GIF>) showing the difference between fair share and chapter membership. Your departmental/unit AAUP liaison for more information and a membership form.

### News from around the State and Nation:

- The **California Faculty Association** (<http://calfac.org/headlines.html>), representing 23,000 faculty on 23 campuses, is working tirelessly to resist furloughs and job losses as a result of deep budget cuts proposed by the governor and others. California state universities are very dependent on state funding. **CSU-Dominguez Hills** Chapter President David Bradfield has organized non-stop, almost daily activities for faculty, students, and local politicians, in response to extreme budget cuts, program elimination, and tenured faculty layoffs.
- Typical of the activities of this faculty union, **CSU-San Marcos** faculty walked out on their top administrator, who was outlining the university's response to the financial crisis, which included plans for layoffs, and a 30% increase in faculty workload. "After about 40 minutes of tense but cordial debate, the faculty felt that the administration remained unwilling to reconsider budget priorities or the consequences of a 33% workload increase on the quality of education. Expressing their frustration, the faculty stood as the President was mid-sentence, turned away, and walked out.
- **Collective Bargaining Congress Actions:** During the October 4<sup>th</sup> executive committee session, in response to significant increases in calls for unionization across the nation, the CBC voted to provide funding for a two additional full time organizers, in addition to the new organizer hired to cover Ohio and the Midwest. Currently, three campus card drives are underway at **Bowling Green State University**, **Sinclair Community College**, and **Ohio University**. If any UA faculty knows faculty on these campuses, we urge you to write letters of support for their efforts.

**Campus Equity Week:** The display cases in Bierce Library, located outside the first floor coffee shop and around the staircase, are honoring Campus Equity Week for the entire month of October. The books, articles, and documents on display there are intended to inform the campus community about the plight of contingent/part-time faculty at the University of Akron and around the country. Contingent faculty, hired on short and fixed-term appointments, now comprise the majority of faculty around the country, and their pay and working conditions are a scandal. In fact, a national organization called the New Faculty Majority has sprung up to give voice to the issues of contingent faculty. A number of the leaders of this movement work here at the University of Akron and at nearby Cuyahoga Community College. Among its many initiatives, the New Faculty Majority is working to amend Ohio's collective bargaining statute to allow part-time faculty and graduate assistants to organize under the protection of that statute. Next time you are in Bierce Library, stop by the display cases and read some of the information. There are also a large number of excellent books discussing the subject, many of which are on display.

**Nearing LAST CALL for ITL Faculty Grants:** Faculty Development Grants in the amount of \$400.00 or less, are still available through the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) as a result of a past grievance settlement with the University. We are happy to report that Faculty have been taking advantage of this fund, securing more than \$55,000 in total grant money. The remaining funds (less than \$10,000) will only be available until December 14, 2009. NO applications will be accepted after that date. This link - <http://www.akronaaup.org/documents/grievance/MeritGrievanceSettlement.pdf> will take you to the AAUP ITL Grant application and guidelines. When completing the application, be sure to

note how the money will be spent, and how this will benefit the teaching mission at UA. This narrative can be as brief as a few sentences. Once completed, send the form to Helen Qammar, who will approve the release of funds in the order that the proposals are received.

We encourage faculty who have not received one of the ITL grants in the past twelve months to apply. If you received an ITL grant before October of 2008, you can apply again. If several faculty from the same department wish to combine their \$400 grants they may do so, as long as a relevant rationale is provided. This is your money; apply for it!

**Akron-AAUP  
Communications Committee**