

To: Supporters of Organizing for Change

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Subject: State of the Association and Future Plans

It has been a bit more than seventeen months since members of the "Organizing for Change" slate took office as leaders of the AAUP. With the nominations process for elections in 2014 completed, now seems an appropriate moment to reflect on what has been accomplished over the past year and a half and what still remains to be done.

The Organizing for Change platform proclaimed:

Higher education in general and the AAUP in particular stand at a critical crossroads. Everywhere our profession and its values are under assault. Attacks on collective bargaining rights and shared governance, the abuse of non-tenure track faculty (both full-time and part-time) and consequent erosion of tenure, the misplaced priorities of politicians and many university leaders, and assaults on the free expression rights of both faculty and students are increasing. To meet these challenges faculty in general and the AAUP in particular must move beyond our traditional modes of defense, invaluable as these are. The current crisis calls on us to shift our focus and place our highest priority on organizing to defend our profession and genuinely reform higher education. AAUP needs to become a more powerful, articulate, and energetic force committed to organizing and mobilizing faculty in a broad variety of ways to fight for our profession.

To achieve this goal, however, the AAUP must change with the times. In 1971, the Association had nearly 100,000 members and the profession was about half the size it is now. Today our membership has declined to under 40,000 (about 48,000 if one counts the non-member fee payers who pay a portion of dues in those collective bargaining chapters where this is permitted by law) and, despite our best efforts, is still falling. Yet the profession has not only doubled in size, it has changed dramatically in nature. Today over 3/4 of the faculty are in contingent positions, the largest group among them working part-time. The economic status of the profession has deteriorated, in some places dramatically. Our salary survey shows that, adjusted for inflation, salaries of full-time faculty have dipped by nearly 3% since the early '70s. Salaries of part-time faculty are, by and large, much, much lower. The reasons behind our membership decline are many and complex, but this changing economic status is surely a factor. Moreover, the character of our membership has changed. Nearly 3/4 of AAUP members are now also part of AAUP-CBC and AAUP-affiliated collective bargaining units. By contrast, advocacy membership has been falling steadily despite our best efforts to reverse that decline.

What does this mean for the AAUP? For one thing, it means that we are no longer an organization that can appear to privilege tenured and tenure-track faculty. We must recognize the transformation we have all experienced in our profession and we must respond to and meet its challenges. We represent *all* faculty and academic professionals, from tenured full professors in elite research institutions, to part-time instructors in community colleges, to academic professionals and graduate student employees in all disciplines. Our job is to unite everyone behind our common dedication to our profession and to the value of quality higher education. We are the only organization that can and must speak for all these diverse groups. AAUP has in fact been a diverse organization for some time, but often others do not recognize us as such -- and sometimes our members too think that we represent only tenured faculty. But such an approach, such an image, is no longer tolerable. To be sure, our time-tested principles of academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance remain relevant, but we must and can do more than simply defend these principles. If we are to succeed we must expand their reach and to do so we need to build our organization and reverse the decline in our membership by reaching out to the profession as a whole.

In the pages that follow we want to report more specifically on what we are doing to achieve such success and what challenges we believe must still be overcome.

Finances

Our current situation, especially our still-declining membership, means we must pay close attention to our financial status. Membership dues are overwhelmingly our principal source of revenue. For at least a decade we have been operating on very thin margins between revenue and expenditure, occasionally flirting all too closely with fiscal disaster. We are in the black right now and, thanks largely to a settlement with a big chapter that owed us considerable back dues, we were able to provide salary increases to our staff. But our fiscal health remains precarious; our positive budget is to a great extent a result of not filling open staff positions. And while we have made efforts to deal with our accounts receivable problem, we still face major challenges in this area that constantly force the Association to draw on its line of credit just to make payroll. Most of our chapters do end up paying what they owe us, but not in a timely manner, compelling us to expend precious resources just trying to collect receivables. These resources could be used to provide better services to our chapters and conferences but instead are diverted just so we can pay rent and make payroll.

For nearly two years we did not have an Executive Director (formerly titled General Secretary). We were fortunate to hire Julie Schmid as our new Executive Director and she began work on October 1 shortly before Martin Snyder retired. The long-open position of executive assistant to the Executive Director has now been filled, but as a result we have a new vacancy in our legal department staff. We have had other vacant positions and in fact, our ability to operate in the black has been largely because we have held open a number of positions.

The organization cannot continue to function this way. If we are to address the formidable challenges to our profession, on multiple fronts, we will need to hire more staff -- immediately more organizers (we are already gravely under-staffed for our needs in the Department of Organizing), but as soon as feasible more researchers, people in government relations, and more people in our Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance (DAFTG). But to do so we will need to find a way to actually pay them. This means, to be sure, searching for new sources of revenue (which, by the way, if we are serious will likely mean eventually hiring at least one full-time fund-raiser/development officer for the Foundation), but it also means prioritizing recruitment and retention of members.

As of January 1, the old AAUP, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, went out of existence. (Actually, the formal dissolution of the old Association was only completed by the Council at the annual meeting in June.) We are now organized -- in response to the demands of the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Labor -- into three interlinked entities: AAUP, a 501(c)6 professional association; AAUP-Collective Bargaining Congress, a 501(c)5 labor union; and AAUP Foundation, a 501(c)3 charity. Although we have been preparing for it for some seven years, the actual restructuring has posed significant and still continuing challenges. A great deal of our time and that of our staff has been devoted simply to implementing our restructuring plans, dealing at numerous points with unforeseen challenges.

But restructuring has also created exciting new opportunities. Simply ascertaining the financial status of each entity has permitted us to get a firmer grasp on the Association's budget. In the middle of this process our previous Chief Financial Officer left the Association, but we have been fortunate to obtain the services of our auditors in assisting us in developing more transparent and effective financial policies and practices that should serve us well in the future. We are in the midst of improving our billing procedures and have successfully negotiated financial settlements with several of our affiliates and chapters that were delinquent in payments owed the Association. The process, however, continues, and we expect that within a year conferences, chapters, and members will begin to see real benefits from these time-consuming efforts.

Our financial situation has also been improved by the decision of the AAUP-CBC membership meeting in June to increase CBC dues from \$5/member annually to \$20/member annually. These increases will be used to fund more aggressive and extensive organizing campaigns, as well as providing important services to our existing chapters.

As a consequence of these measures, last month the AAUP Council was able to adopt a budget for next year that includes funding for five additional staff positions, which include both currently open positions and new positions, about which more below, and still come out several hundred thousand dollars in the black. But, of course, a budget is only a plan and fulfillment of this plan will depend on resolving our cash flow issues through the more timely receipt of dues.

We have also begun to develop plans for the still developing AAUP Foundation to more actively seek alternative sources of funding, especially to support our policy and legal work on behalf of the profession as a whole. Under Susan Michalczyk's leadership the board has recruited two enthusiastic and well-connected outside members, but we are still compelled to deal with a series of complicated legal and financial issues stemming from the restructuring. The Foundation Board has approved in principle a proposal to establish a "Friends of Academic Freedom" group open to non-faculty who wish to support our mission. Those funds will likely be earmarked entirely for the kind of work done in DAFTG. We have also begun plans for a major fundraising and publicity initiative in conjunction with the AAUP's centennial year in 2015, which include publication of a special centennial edition of the Red Book, being edited by Joerg Tiede.

Organizing

But the central task remains organizing. If the AAUP is to meet the challenges we face -- indeed, if we are to survive as a significant force in higher education -- we must move more aggressively to expand our membership and to retain and support those who join our ranks.

We are pleased to report a series of collective bargaining organizing victories at Bowling Green State University, the University of Illinois-Chicago, the University of Oregon, the Cleveland State University law faculty, the University of Connecticut Medical Center faculty, and Wright State University, where our local chapter is poised to sign a first contract for full-time non-tenure track faculty that gives them almost all of the protections of tenure. Our joint collective bargaining campaign with the AFT at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign continues and just recently 70% of nearly 200 full-time non-tenure-track faculty at the University of New Hampshire submitted cards seeking representation by the AAUP, which already represents tenured and tenure-track faculty there. Other campaigns are under consideration in Oregon, Ohio, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. We are in the process of reaching out to the United University Professions (UUP) at SUNY to see if they are interested in re-affiliating with the AAUP.

When the Organizing for Change slate was elected to lead the AAUP, many on the staff and some members thought that the only organizing we cared about involved collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is a vehicle, today perhaps the best vehicle, to defend our core principles of academic freedom and shared governance and to insure "a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability." However, we all recognize that not all faculty members have the right to collective bargaining and that we cannot afford to abandon our brothers and sisters who work in states and for institutions where collective bargaining is impossible to achieve at this time. We are therefore encouraged by the growth of advocacy chapters at both small and large institutions. Our chapter at Pennsylvania State University grew from 20 to 90 members in little more than a month, and a new chapter at Purdue University's Calumet branch campus grew from just four to over forty members within a week after the administration threatened faculty layoffs justified by a bogus financial crisis. We have also organized several new advocacy chapters, including five new

chapters at private institutions in California. While these chapters are often small, their initiation -- often without any formal organizing activity -- suggests expanding opportunities for growth and activism. And we have begun discussions with independent faculty advocacy associations at the University of California and in the California community colleges about ways we can work together more closely, which we hope will lead these groups to affiliate with AAUP.

To support this activity we have taken a number of steps to strengthen our Department of Organizing. Former Director Angela Hewett has decided to pursue other opportunities and is now on leave and we will be looking to hire a new director of organizing early next year. We are striving to build support at the local level by developing a network of regional organizers, who will be in position to have more direct contact with local chapters and individual members. Craig Flanery, who represented the AAUP on the west coast, has departed, but we have hired Scott Clifthorne as our Northwest Regional Coordinator, serving Oregon and Washington state, and Jason Elias as our Western Regional Coordinator, with responsibilities in California, Nevada, and Arizona, both of whom are highly experienced organizers. We are currently seeking an experienced organizer in the Midwest as well as an entry-level organizer to help our chapters in Michigan meet the challenges of the terrible new right-to-work law in that state, as well as to assist our efforts at UIC, where we are still fighting for a first contract. These organizers in the Midwest will also help with our campaign at UIUC and with a number of possible organizing targets in Ohio. We are seeking additional organizers for the mid-Atlantic region and a replacement in the D.C. office for Christopher Simeone, who now heads our newly created Department of Chapter and Conference Services. We are also partially funding state conference organizing positions in Oregon and Nevada, about which more below.

Organizing and, for that matter, collective bargaining are not goals in and of themselves, however. This means that our organizing is designed not simply to pad our membership rolls and our treasury but to transform our Association into a stronger, more visible, and more vigorous vehicle to advocate and fight for its members and for faculty everywhere. Organizing is a tool to mobilize faculty to fight back against the corporatization of higher education, which is well on the way to destroying tenure and shared governance and turning our profession into a low-paying occupation that provides economic insecurity simply by eliminating tenured faculty lines and replacing them with contingent faculty. In addition, the work of the faculty is being unbundled and many activities that formerly were controlled by faculty have now been turned over to academic professionals, another group without the protection of tenure. For years the AAUP all but ignored these developments.

One way that we can address the escalating demands placed on AAUP is to devolve some responsibilities now undertaken by the national staff in D.C. to conference and chapter activists and staff. This is a complex issue, however. Some conferences and chapters are more developed than others. And in general the AAUP does not have a history of strong state-level organizations. To empower conferences and chapters we will need to provide them with support, especially initially. We have therefore begun pilot programs with individual state conferences. In Nevada, we have worked with our state affiliate, the Nevada Faculty Alliance,

to strengthen their organization by providing support for a new executive director/organizer with clear organizing goals. A similar pilot is under development in Oregon. It is our hope that national investment combined with local responsibility will create renewed strength at the state and local levels. Similarly, a newly revitalized state conference in California has, with national support and in cooperation with our affiliate, the California Faculty Association, begun to build a greater presence in the UC system, the community colleges, and in private institutions.

Strengthened chapters and conferences will also be in a stronger position to resist challenges to academic freedom and shared governance at both collective bargaining and non-collective bargaining institutions. Much of the case work now conducted by the DAFTG staff might, with the appropriate training and support, be accomplished more effectively by conferences and chapters, as has been the case in, for example, Colorado, where the state conference created the Colorado Committee for the Protection of Faculty Rights to serve the needs of individual faculty members who lack the protections of a strong collective bargaining agreement.

Membership

Restructuring means that our staff no longer simply serve some abstract profession or set of principles. They work for the members. To be sure, most, if not all, AAUP members -- both advocacy and CB -- did not sign up to be part of some narrow business union or association that only takes care of its own. They want their staff to defend our principles as broadly and as vigorously as possible. Our policy work, our legal work, and our legislative work are crucial to our brand of unionism and the kind of professional association we must remain, and we must find ways to strengthen this work. These efforts make us unique and they are why organizations who have resources that we can only dream about turn to us as partners in organizing faculty across the United States. However, like it or not, the overwhelming majority of faculty today will not pay the level of dues required to support the AAUP without receiving services in return.

It would be dishonest and unproductive to try to disguise the fact that for years now the AAUP's leaders have been bombarded with complaints and criticisms from a significant portion of our membership that we do not provide enough support and services. Some have argued that many of our members are really "conscience members," who expect nothing directly from the organization but happily pay dues as a matter of principle. The idea of "conscience members" is fine in so far as it goes and we hope to use the occasion of our centennial to encourage senior members not only to share their experiences and become lifetime members, but to join a renewed effort to reach out more aggressively to junior and contingent faculty and to graduate students so we may recruit individual members and supporters in greater numbers. However, for every potential individual "conscience member" there are a half-dozen or more actually existing members and especially chapters clamoring for more services. Some major faculty organizations that previously were affiliated with the AAUP have terminated their relationship with us, complaining that they receive little in exchange for the dues money their members provide us. To respond to these complaints we must find ways that our staff, our committees,

and our leaders can provide our members with the kinds of services they demand. Some examples of this response can be using the Salary Survey more effectively or developing a contract database that members can easily access and gain value from. Our staff has also begun developing new webinars on topics of interest to our members and we hope to be able soon to offer these on a regular basis.

Almost since its inception, the AAUP has sought to support beleaguered faculty members regardless of whether they are AAUP members or not. In particular, our DAFTG staff devotes the majority of its time to such "case work," often in support of non-members. As admirable as these efforts are, however, we simply do not have the resources to continue acting as if we are the grievance committee for our entire profession. As much as our members support our efforts to stand up for our principles wherever they may be challenged, they do not want the staff to provide services to non-members on an equal basis with members. Moreover, they do not believe the staff should get to pick and choose when they provide services to members and when they provide such to non-members. No one would suggest that we should only respond to serious challenges at those institutions where we have existing chapters. Indeed, often it takes a particular outrage at a given institution to afford us the opportunity to organize and recruit new members and activists. However, we must work together to more clearly define what services we will provide to members and what services we will provide to non-members and when it is appropriate and how we can most efficiently do so. This is an area that still needs further attention from both staff and leadership.

Planning and Services

One important initiative we have begun is a process of strategic planning, which, under Michele Ganon's leadership, has engaged the Executive Committee for over a year. Based on this process and on considerable and helpful input from AAUP leaders and members, the November Council meeting unanimously adopted an expanded organizational mission statement, adding protection of faculty's "economic security" and advancement of "organizing," and considered a series of general and specific goals, objectives, and strategies. The new mission statement was also endorsed by the CBC Executive Committee. Under Julie Schmid's leadership, staff is now in the process of developing implementation plans.

This process has pointed out that we cannot devote resources to every issue and problem that may arise; we must prioritize our efforts. It is our belief that we are better off choosing a few strategic campaigns and doing them well rather than pretending that we can do everything that we believe needs to be done. As previously noted, the AAUP simply does not now have the staff that it needs to meet all the demands placed upon us. All of AAUP, its staff and its activists, must make some difficult choices. It is not so much a matter of doing "more with less" or "less with less" but of striving to build the Association, serve its members, and support our profession and our principles as effectively and efficiently as our resources allow, even as we aggressively seek to expand those resources.

At our last Committee A meeting the idea of developing a campaign to have our chapters actively try to get our language on contingent appointments into faculty handbooks and collective bargaining agreements was suggested. This would be a campaign that would involve a collaborative effort between DAFTG, Organizing, and our new Chapter and Conference Services department. Members of Committee A and staff all supported this idea and Council endorsed it at its November meeting. This is the type of effort that can involve chapters and conferences in organizing activity on campuses and help us send a clear message that we understand that the central issue facing our profession has been the growth of faculty working on contingent contracts.

In addition to rethinking how we do our work we have also reorganized the D.C. office, creating a new department of Chapter and Conference Services. We are in the process of streamlining and improving our processes for tracking membership, billing chapters, and communicating with members, chapters, and conferences. Restructuring has provided an opportunity for us to rethink how we carry out these tasks and both the Executive Committee and senior staff are devoting considerable time and effort to this problem. We hope that we will be able to report significant improvements soon.

One other new initiative, begun independently of our efforts but certainly worth mention, has been the *Academe* Blog. Aaron Barlow, who began his service as Editor of *Academe* at roughly the same time as we took office, initiated the blog, which provides a forum for individual AAUP activists and members, as well as others, to comment on events of the day in academia and beyond. Traffic on the blog has been increasing and some postings, on such issues as President Obama's plan for higher education, the accreditation struggle at City College of San Francisco, and the exposure of Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels's attempt when he was President of Purdue University to censor the work of historian Howard Zinn, have attracted widespread attention. If you have not done so yet, we encourage you to visit academeblog.org, read the postings and, if you like, consider contributing.

The success of the *Academe* blog points to the pressing need for AAUP to work harder at getting the voice of faculty heard in a timely manner. In the world of the 24-hour news cycle it is no longer adequate to respond to events only with carefully researched and written statements and reports, as essential as these remain. We must learn to react quickly to challenges to our core principles and make it clear to all in the higher education community -- and to the public at large -- that we speak for faculty and that our ideas cannot be ignored. Our communications staff has done excellent work in publicizing our statements and policies, maintaining three interlinked websites, and developing an AAUP presence in social media like Facebook and Twitter. Both Rudy Fichtenbaum and Hank Reichman have written op-ed articles for media ranging from insidehighered.com to the London *Times Higher Education Supplement*. But we need to find ways to more systematically involve activists and members in such efforts and we need to continue to find additional ways to respond rapidly to changing developments-- and to create some media events of our own.

Staffing

It is hardly a secret that there has been considerable controversy in AAUP over the relationship between elected leaders and the national staff. And we cannot deny that there continue to be some members of our national staff as well as a few members of our elected leadership who seem skeptical of our commitment to the AAUP's traditional values. Some leaders have sought to distort our views and sow dissent in our ranks. While we are open to honest differences of opinion, some actions by former leaders seek to undermine the new course that we have charted for the AAUP.

Our national staff work hard on behalf of the AAUP and, like most of our members, they are hardly paid what they are really worth. While we have had differences with some staff members, the changes in staff along with the hiring of a new Executive Director have created new opportunities for staff to work with each other and work collaboratively. We recognize that we have no monopoly on truth and we are eager to learn from those with whom we may disagree. There must be and is room in the AAUP for diverse viewpoints and dissenting voices, both among members, leaders, and staff. However, disagreement is one thing, but when decisions are made we must all work honestly and cooperatively to make them succeed.

Finally, we would be derelict not to note that in the past the AAUP's national staff has not always reflected the full diversity of both our members and the profession as a whole. If we are to speak to and for the growing numbers of younger faculty, especially at community colleges and in primarily teaching institutions, we will need to hire staff members with similar experiences and who reflect the ethnic and gender diversity of our rapidly changing profession.

In working with the staff we are excited by the Council's decision to hire Julie Schmid as our new Executive Director. Julie has experience in AAUP but comes to us from the front lines of the battle to defend public education in Wisconsin, where she was a leader of the state's AFT. Martin Snyder did remarkable work for more than two years as Interim Associate General Secretary, for which we are all profoundly grateful, but we now look forward to the benefits that will come from having a permanent executive director who will bring new energy and new perspectives to the organization. We are hopeful that both members and staff will work with her to help the AAUP meet the great challenges it faces.

Working with Others

Today the AAUP can no longer claim, if it ever really could, that it is the sole organization representing the interests of higher education faculty. National and local unions and independent faculty associations are also important players. If we are to succeed we must work cooperatively with these groups. In the past, the AAUP has sought alliances with groups associated with university and college administration. These have sometimes been fruitful and where they serve the interests of faculty should continue. But today our strongest allies will be other unions and grass-roots faculty organizations. Our national organizing agreement with the AFT, recently renewed for three more years, has already borne fruit for both organizations and,

more importantly, for faculty at institutions where our combined efforts have won real gains. We must work to strengthen and improve our cooperation with the AFT, but we must also be open to opportunities for joint organizing with other unions.

And grass-roots faculty organizations today are not limited to unions. At many institutions independent associations of faculty are seeking the kind of broader national perspective and support that we can and should provide. Among faculty in contingent positions both COCAL and New Faculty Majority have proven to be important contributors to advancing our goals and we have and will continue to seek ways to work more closely with them.

Both national AAUP and many of our state conferences and chapters have participated in the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education, initiated by the California Faculty Association. While it is important for the AAUP to maintain its independent voice, the Campaign provides a promising vehicle for bringing together a variety of organizations and individuals under principles wholly consistent with those of the AAUP. As a consequence we have been active participants in the Campaign's annual meetings and its other activities and continue to encourage state conferences and chapters to participate as well.

The Future of the AAUP

Nothing would please us more than to report that after a little more than eighteen months we had met all the ambitious goals in the Organizing for Change platform. But that would be utopian. We believe that we have made considerable progress in transforming the AAUP into an organization that can better address the extraordinary changes and challenges in higher education today. But there is much, much more to do. In the coming year we hope to expand further our organizing efforts, to provide greater support to members, to strengthen ties with other organizations, and to set out clear priorities and goals for both our activists and our staff.

It is for these reasons that all four of us have decided to run for re-election and we are asking for your endorsement so that we can continue the changes we have started that we believe will help us build a bigger and stronger AAUP.