**UWAAUP**

**Strategic Agenda 2017-2018**

**Approved April 5, 2017**

Preface: During our Jan 13 retreat we discussed strengths and weaknesses of the UW AAUP organization and began to sketch out priorities. Those efforts provide the basis for this two-year strategic agenda.

UW AAUP organization is best known for and through our list server. We provide a widely appreciated forum for issues and concerns across all three campuses. Our list editor has taken steps to ensure that divergent views are welcomed and repetition is avoided. We believe that in doing so, our list has become more successful as a public watchdog. Our strategic plan recognizes that simply providing this space for public commentary is often enough to spur appropriate responses. This is critical for our strategic plan as it allows us to focus on areas we believe require our attention.

Given limited resources, we seek to become a stronger organization by directing our energies towards endeavors directly related to our mission. In addition to building organizational capacity, our two-year agenda prioritizes actions against three threats to academic freedom at UW:

1. Build a climate safe for academic freedom amidst increasing political polarization
2. Roll back the divisions of academic labor that weaken professional independence
3. Restore university funding while resisting privatization

1. Building a climate safe for academic freedom amidst increasing political polarization. Academic freedom includes the right of all individuals to speak their minds. However, freedom of speech is not absolute license. AAUP will promote forums that aid us in distinguishing between rights and duties, speech and actions, learning and disruption, and the permissible as opposed to the required. Academic freedom is intended to encourage the widest expression of speech. However, where legally permissible speech shows potential to harm individuals or undermine the fundamental purposes of the academy, UW AAUP will advocate for resources that prevent or mitigate harm.

2. Rolling back the new division of academic labor that weaken professional independence. Academic freedom relies upon the professional independence of faculty. Traditionally this has been achieved through the institution of tenure, which has been a bedrock issue for AAUP. However, we recognize that academic labor is increasingly divided by off-tenure titles and ranks. i. The independence of lecturers hired on short-term contracts is undermined by insecurity. In research institutions, responsibility for instruction is increasingly invested in lecturers who are eligible for tenure. ii. Similarly, significant numbers of research faculty are given no or only partial tenure. They are dependent upon corporate, philanthropic, or state funding that may undermine their ability to build an independent research agenda. iii. Finally, tenure track lines now support only a minority of faculty who now work in work in an environment where genuine independence is the exception rather than the norm. AAUP stands ready to investigate and advocate for the independence, security and academic freedom of all faculty.

3. Restoring university funding while resisting privatization. Academic freedom has survived over centuries because institutionalized peer-reviewed prioritizes evidence over profit or politics. While peer review has survived numerous threats and has succeeded in public and non-public institutions alike. Real or imagined, fiscal crises of state have spurred a raft of policy innovations that challenge the academic integrity. Especially is this so because the public university is a primary bulwark in the fight against inequality, providing critical access to educational resources for less advantaged, diverse and low income-students. UW AAUP will actively monitor policies at the state and federal level, as well as university policies such as Activities Based Budgeting and the Self-funded degrees that threaten key public benefits and open worrisome pathways for corporatization.

4. Organization. Our immediate goal is to build the capacity of UW AAUP for effective advocacy. We seek to expand list readership and local membership through more effective outreach. Events will be designed to respond to widely expressed needs. We will seek greater involvement in planning and activities from our board, our members, and our list readers.