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Report of Survey Results, AAUP UW Chapter

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Authors: Bert Stover, Amy Hagopian

Contact bstover@uw.edu, 206-543-6548

**AAUP Survey Findings on Views of UW Faculty**

The University of Washington chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) conducted a survey of UW faculty in March, 2015, to assess their priorities and concerns. This is a summary of the results.

### Abstract.

In our second survey of University of Washington faculty, the UW chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has learned UW faculty feel state higher education financing remains the top policy goal of the institution. Among a number of strategic priorities, 87% of faculty respondents selected state higher education financing as the top issue. Faculty felt the best strategy for UW funding for the coming years was to increase Washington State public sector (tax-supported) funding, with 78% giving this method the highest ranking, followed by philanthropic donations (10%) and public-private partnerships with industry receiving (11%). There was also strong support for efforts to repair the UW’s faculty salary policy, with 62% of respondents giving it high priority. The 3rd and 4th highest ranked issues were to improve conditions for contingent faculty and lecturers (49%), and to ensure University administrative position searches are open to faculty participation (42%).

The typical faculty member raises 25% of his or her salary through grant-writing. Among those who raise at least some of their salary that way (nearly half, at 46%), more than half of their salaries (55%) are supported with grant dollars. Thirty six percent of respondents said AAUP should explore forming a collective bargaining union, while 32% were unsure about that and 32% said no to unionization. With the current proportion of non-tenured faculty personnel at the UW near 70% and increasing, 55% of respondents felt the UW needs more tenured faculty.

This year’s survey had 667 respondents. The large majority (85%) were working 75% time or more, with 39% at the full professor level and a 35% from the School of Medicine. Nearly half (44%) of respondents held tenure or tenure track positions. Males comprised 56% of respondents and the average age was 52 years. Finally, 8% of respondents were AAUP dues-paying members.

This year the AAUP survey included a section on child care needs, reported separately.

### Methods.

The anonymous survey was constructed electronically using the UW’s Catalyst WebQ program. We sent a reminder email to encourage survey response. We distributed the survey manually to a list of 6500 names, at least 130 of which were returned as invalid emails or emails not belonging to faculty. Aside from demographic questions, questions were included to address priorities for AAUP advocacy, unionization, higher education financing, and child care needs. The survey URL, available to all faculty with a UW net ID, is <https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/bstover/268746>

### Respondents

Most respondents (79%) said their primary campus affiliation was the Seattle campus, with another 7% or so saying their offices were in the Seattle area, but off campus. Five percent of respondents were from Bothell, and 6% from Tacoma. Thirty five percent of respondents were from the School of Medicine, with another 21% from Arts and Sciences. About 6% each came from Engineering, and Public Health. About 5% from Environment and Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, 3% responded from the School of Nursing, and another 1.5% from Dentistry. A large proportion (39%) were full professors, while 24% were associate professors and 17% were assistant or acting assistant professors. The proportion of lecturers was 16%. Only 10 clinical faculty responded. (This compares to a Faculty Senate report from 2013 that indicates 39% of UW faculty are full professors, 24% associate, 19% assistant, and 19% lecturers.) Most (85%) work at least 75% time at the UW. The typical faculty member raises 25% of his or her own salary with grant-writing, but after eliminating the 371 who are completely paid on state dollars, the remaining 296 faculty members raise close to 55% of their own salaries. Grant writing was characterized as a significant burden to 31% of all respondents, 25% reported it as a moderate burden, and 43% reported they did not spend time writing grants or it was a trivial amount of time. Regardless of paid FTE status, respondents worked an average of 55 hours per week including teaching, research, service and staying current in their field.

Most respondents (92%) said they were not members of the AAUP, although a full 15% didn’t know if they were members or not. Thirty four percent were subscribers to the AAUP list server, and about the same proportion 31% said they had visited the AAUP website.

### AAUP issues and priorities

The questionnaire provided respondents an opportunity to comment on the importance of the goals in the AAUP strategic plan. Respondents overwhelmingly (87%) said improving the state’s higher education financing scheme should be the highest priority. This issue received strong support across all ranks, and those who are AAUP members reported stronger support (96%) than others. The goal receiving the next highest priority was to “repair the UW’s faculty salary policy,” with 64% saying this should be a high priority. Female faculty provided stronger support (98%) than others.

Improving conditions for contingent faculty was a high priority for 49% of respondents, although it was a higher priority for lecturers (80%), women (57%), non-health sciences and AAUP members and list server subscribers than other respondents.

A significant number (42%) said it was a high priority to ensure UW leadership searches are open to faculty participation. This was important to all ranks of faculty, but more important to list server subscribers and AAUP members than others.

Advancing the concept of academic freedom in the UW faculty code was named a high priority by 35%, and was important to all types of faculty, but especially AAUP members and list server subscribers. Support was less among health sciences, business and engineering.

Other goals were to ensure faculty intellectual property rights are protected, while maintaining the public’s interest in investments in higher education 34% reporting this is a high priority, and to repair the UW’s faculty grievance adjudication system (21%). Finally, about 12% felt it was a high priority to provide better oversight to unpaid internships.

About 22% of respondents felt it was a high priority for the AAUP to explore faculty unionization, again more important to arts and science, AAUP members and list server subscribers. In a separate question, however, 36% of respondents said AAUP should explore forming a collective bargaining (union) organization at the UW, while 32% said they didn’t know. And a third (32%) thought it should not be explored. While 18% of full professors felt unionization was worthy of exploration, 28% of lecturers supported possible unionization.

Figure 1. Distribution of responses to the question: The UW chapter of the AAUP has the following goals in its strategic plan for 2013/2014. Please indicate whether you agree this is a priority item.

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**Contingent faculty** - Improve conditions for contingent faculty.

**Financing** - Improve the state’s higher education financing scheme.

**Unionization** - Explore the advantages and disadvantages of faculty unionization.

**Governance** - Examine the shared governance issues associated with the UW's move towards an online learning undergraduate degree completion program.

**Property rights** - Support the faculty Senate's committee on intellectual property to ensure faculty rights are protected while maintaining the public’s interest in its investments in higher education.

**Salary** - Support the joint faculty/administration salary policy committee in its efforts to repair the UW's faculty salary policy.

**Adjudication** - Work to repair the UW's faculty grievance adjudication system.

**Academic freedom** - Advance the concept of academic freedom in the UW faculty code.

**Internship oversight** - Work to increase the capacity of faculty to provide better oversight to unpaid internships and ensure they are academically valid.

**Leadership searches** - Ensure future university administrative position searches are open to faculty participation.