Adopted by UW AAUP Chapter December 2, 2015.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF the UW Center for Human Rights

The UW Chapter of the American Association of University Professors expresses dismay about the October, 2015, burglary at the UW Center for Human Rights, in which a computer containing sensitive human rights information disappeared. We agree with our colleagues at the Center that  it is suspicious and disturbing that the burglary of materials followed the UW filing of a lawsuit against the Central Intelligence Agency for withholding documents relevant to a massacre in El Salvador, and followed a UW-based conference on Access to Information as a Human Right.

The AAUP expresses strong support for the Center and its work in El Salvador. The AAUP’s mission is to advance academic freedom, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education and to ensure higher education’s contribution to the common good. We applaud UW administration for supporting its faculty in raising critical questions about what the United States government knew about atrocities being committed in El Salvador and about the history of U.S. involvement in Central and South America more generally.

Human rights work is by its nature a courageous endeavor.  State violence, often exercised in conjunction with paramilitary forces, aims at repressing popular movements, journalists, academics and anyone who speaks out against injustice.  Efforts to hold perpetrators accountable are an essential component of restoring democratic, rights-respecting polities that are essential to a free academy.