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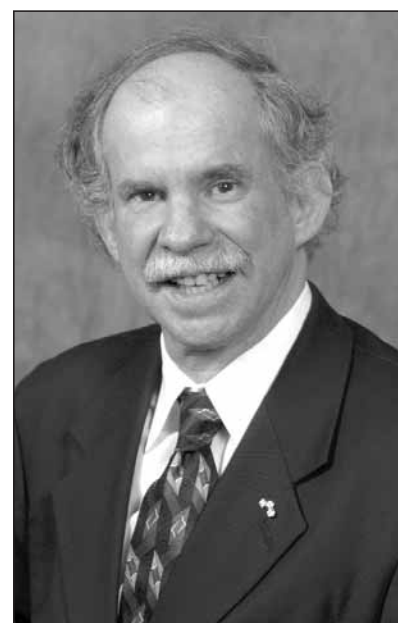
New York State Conference – American Association of University Professors

NEW YORK Academe

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From the President's Desk:

By Stephen Z. Goldberg, Adelphi University



As I read the AAUP statement "Freedom in the Classroom" (Academe, Sept-Oct 2007, pages 54-61, or <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm>) I made a mental connection to a quote I had heard a few days earlier. In his 2007 State of the University Address, Adelphi's president, Robert Scott, quoted an unpublished essay by Nicholas Muni:

...the prime function of Art is to disturb the status quo; the prime function of Entertainment is to confirm the status quo. One shakes up our world with the implication that things need to change. The other relaxes us with the implication that everything is okay just as it is.

These words apply not only to art, but perhaps even more appropriately to the entire academic enterprise. Education is, by its nature, a challenging endeavor.

Unfortunately, too many of our students do not recognize this. They think that higher education is an activity which requires no effort on their part and think of themselves as passive consumers of what we have to offer. They have not come to recognize that the acquisition of knowledge is very hard work indeed.

Even if as Woody Allen said, "90% of life is just showing up," it is the remaining 10% which makes the difference. If as our students progress through their academic careers they continue to view themselves as consumers whose tuition dollars entitle them to certain grades or degrees our institutions have failed them and have failed society.

If we are to be successful in our efforts to provide higher education we have an obligation to challenge our students. Sometimes those challenges simply involve the presentation of difficult material which students must master. At other times the challenges involve presenting ideas with which students might be uncomfortable. Those ideas may or may not be political in nature. If there is any meaningful orthodoxy in the academy it is not the orthodoxy of the left or of the right, but a commitment to the exchange of ideas and the search for knowledge and understanding. Just as the word theory has a different meaning in science than it does in common usage, so too in the university the meaning of liberal is different from the meaning of the same word in a political context.

As university faculty we must work assiduously to maintain communities which are open for debate so that good ideas prevail over bad, and that facts triumph over mere assertions.

Good scholarship should be respected no matter how uncomfortable it makes one feel. Similarly, poor scholarship should be rejected no matter how comforting it might be.

While the "Freedom in the Classroom" statement seems directed primarily towards attacks from David Horowitz and others on the right, we as a community of scholars should be equally concerned with attacks from other sources. Faculty and administrators should have a common interest in maintaining the integrity of our institutions. The recent, much publicized, case at DePaul and a situation developing at Barnard (New York Times, Sept 29, page B1) are just two which should be of concern to all of us. Are tenure decisions being made on the traditional criteria of teaching, research and service, or are new criteria being applied? The confident university will not admit extraneous criteria nor succumb to external pressures. The confident university, sure of itself and its processes, can state that it has sought appropriate expert opinions on a tenure candidate's scholarship, teaching and service, and will not give weight to unsolicited opinions submitted by others. The confident university will tell its alumni that its ability to provide the kind of education they received from their alma

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State AAUP Meeting Set for October 19-20

The fall meeting of the New York State Conference will take place October 19-20, 2007 at the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) headquarters in Latham, New York. All members are invited to attend.

Planning for the fall member is presently underway under the leadership of Executive Committee Ellen Banks (Daemen College).

The tentative agenda can be found on the Conference website (<http://nysaaup.org>). Suggestions for agenda items may be forwarded to Executive Director Tom Policano by e-mail: tpolicano@nysaaup.org.

Thus far, the agenda includes a discussion of Campus Equity Week that is scheduled for Saturday, October 20, and a discussion of the proposed AAUP re-organization.

A bloc of rooms is available at the Desmond Hotel (a union hotel) that is located a short distance away from NYSUT in Albany, New York. Reservations can be made at the rate of \$118/night (until September 28) by calling the Desmond at 518-869-8100.

The NYSUT headquarters is located at 800 Troy-Schenectady Road in Latham. Directions to NYSUT can be found on their website: NYSUT.org.

Campus Equity Week Set for October 29 to November 4

Campus Equity Week will be October 29 to November 4 this year, and local planning is underway.

Known as Fair Employment Week in some states and in Canada, it is designed to draw attention to the dramatic decrease in the proportion of professors who hold tenure-track positions—now only 35 percent of the faculty in the United States. Part- and full-time non-tenure track faculty are often subject to exploitative employment conditions, and the dwindling number of tenure-track faculty threatens the quality of higher education.

Campus Equity Week occurs biennially. During the 2005 week, faculty activists across the United States and Canada donned costumes, participated in hearings on university employment practices, gave awards to adjunct faculty, and hosted film screenings. Faculty design activities that best suit their local conditions, so goals and activities varied. Events were designed to put contingent faculty in touch with one another, support statewide legislation, inform campus communities about the exploitation of contingent faculty, or achieve specific change on campus.

In New York, the Rochester Institute of Technology AAUP Chapter will contact all RIT adjuncts and invite them to a get-together; will partially subsidize first-year dues for adjuncts who are not yet AAUP members and are interested in joining; and will encourage and support the formation of an adjunct coalition within the chapter. The chapter also proposes that adjuncts ask for a representative seat on the Institute Academic Senate.

The AAUP is a cosponsor of Campus Equity Week. For more information on Campus Equity Week activities and how you can mount your own, visit www.campusequityweek.org.

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NEW WEB SITE

The New AAUP New York State Conference Web Site is
www.nysaaup.org

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www.nysaaup.org

New York State and National AAUP News

US Department of Education Backs Down on Accreditation Changes

The Department of Education, under Secretary Margaret Spellings, had been continuing the work of its Committee on the Future of Higher Education by pushing for changes in the accreditation system. After the release of its final report in September 2006, the Department convened a higher education "summit" in March 2007.

It also set up multiple committees to continue discussion of different aspects of higher education. During the last week of April, a federally appointed panel considering rule changes to accreditation adjourned without recommendations due to inability to reach consensus in multiple areas.

The AAUP originally expressed its concern about the neglect of the role of the faculty, the narrow economic focus, and the view of higher education as a single system rather than in its institutional diversity.

The report formulated a sense of crisis in almost purely financial and economic terms. More recently, members of Congress publicly warned the Department not to overstep its boundaries in rule-making, as Congress prepares Higher Education Act reauthorization. Secretary Spellings acquiesced and affirmed in a letter that she would not push ahead with rule-making changes before Congress has a chance to pass legislation.

AAUP Nominating Committee Report

2007 National Officer Nominees

President

***Cary Nelson** (English), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Gregory Scholtz (English), Wartburg College

First Vice President

Jeffrey A. Butts (Biology), Appalachian State University

Siegfried E. Heit (Humanities and Philosophy), University of Central Oklahoma

Second Vice President

***Estelle S. Gellman** (Educational Psychology), Hofstra University

Julie Laskaris (Classical Studies), University of Richmond

Secretary-Treasurer

Howard Bunsis (Accounting), Eastern Michigan University

Rudy H. Fichtenbaum (Economics), Wright State University

2007 Council Nominees District VIII (NY)

David Linton (Communication Arts), Marymount Manhattan College

***Ellen Schrecker** (History), Yeshiva University

*indicates incumbent

Executive Director's Report

By Tom Policano

Welcome back to a new school year! The NYS AAUP Conference leadership looks forward to assisting your Institute faculty initiatives in this upcoming academic year. Please contact us with your needs and any chapter updates. We will again this year send out a survey to update your Institute information. Congratulations to Hilbert College for forming a new AAUP Chapter. They have built up their enrollment, completed their bylaws, and plan to submit their application to AAUP in the next few weeks.

The state conference leadership group is near full. Contact information for the chairs of our committees can be found on the conference website under the contact menu. Please forward to us the names of any members who might like to work with us on any of our committees. Also listed under the contact menu are the presidents or main contact person for the state chapters.

We welcome your suggestions for improving the functionality of the NYS AAUP web site. By our Fall Conference in October we hope to have an improved look to our new website (nysaaup.org). An application has been submitted to the Association of State Conferences for a Flexible Response Grant to help with our costs for upgrading our look.

Over the summer I met with Professor Emeritus of Niagara University, Frank Higman, who is a past president of our NYS AAUP Conference. We discussed the history of our organization. Frank has a wealth of knowledge and experience that we will continue to tap into. Frank and I will be compiling the conference history and it will be posted on our website.

Everyone is invited to the NYS AAUP Fall Conference that will be held October 19-20, 2007 at NYSUT in Latham, New York.

We have established hotel reservations at the Desmond Hotel (a union hotel as suggested by the membership at our Spring meeting). Call the Desmond Hotel (800-448-3500) to confirm your room for Friday Oct 19th @ \$118. The AAUP group I.D. is 11B4PK. These rooms will be held until Sept 28th.

Our meeting will be held at the NYSUT building: 800 Troy Schenectady rd. Latham. Directions from anywhere can be found on the website (NYSUT.org). Ellen Banks has graciously agreed to take the lead on assembling our agenda that will publish soon. Ellen did a great job of putting together our fall conference last year.

Also this fall, Campus Equity Week will highlight the concerns and issues of contingent Faculty and is October 29 - November 4, 2007. The purpose of the week is to bring attention to the poor working conditions of many contingent faculty members and to the threats to higher education posed by an increasing reliance on part- and full-time non-tenure-track appointments. Additional information and resources are available on the AAUP site (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/contingent/cewpage.htm>).

Jeff Kraus, our award winning NY Academe editor, will be adjusting the publication of NY Academe to better promote and report on State and National AAUP events throughout the year.

The new schedule will have fall, year-end, spring, and summer issues.. The end of year issue in

December will report on our October NYS AAUP Fall Conference and set goals for the New Year. The March spring issue will include the details and agenda for our April NYS AAUP Spring Conference. Our July summer issue will report on the April NYS AAUP Spring Conference, and the June Capital Hill Day and the National AAUP Annual Meeting. This schedule should inform our membership in a timely way and promote greater awareness of and encourage participation in our yearly activities.

I attended the AAUP Summer Institute held in Reno Nevada in August and I have to say that it was a very worthwhile opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from other states and to learn from our knowledgeable National Staff who conduct most of the workshops. Due to the Reno location, California Faculty Association members heavily attended Summer Institute. CFA is a very well organized and extensive collective bargaining organization for California faculty both tenure track and contingent.

In the workshops that I attended, which were mostly about growing membership, National gave lots of valuable advise to State Conferences on how we can better do our jobs. I wished that there had been formally scheduled opportunities for National Staff to collaborate with State Conference Leadership on ways that National and State Conferences could work better together.

Carey Nelson, President of AAUP, has announced plans for a major e-mail campaign to educate the professoriate about AAUP activities, to build membership throughout the country, and to help chapters launch membership drives. In addition to sending AAUP members two e-mails per month, they will send up to two e-mails per month to more than 350,000 faculty.

These communications will highlight some of AAUP's most important recent policy statements, reports, and investigations, as well as new legislative initiatives. It is worth noting that paying our AAUP dues has improved this year in two important ways. We can now renew our dues on-line where before it was only possible to join on-line. It is also possible to arrange for automatic monthly installment payment of dues directly to AAUP from your bank. Another improvement would like to see would be to have all members dues due during a yearly two week or so renewal period say in September. New member applications could still be accepted year round but would be prorated the first year to get into the renewal queue. This would be very helpful to state conferences, local chapter, and members as well for we would all know when and if renewals have lapsed and we could work together on following up on this efficiently.

AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure has released a new report, Freedom in the Classroom 2007 (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm>) to assess arguments made in support of recent legislative efforts to regulate classroom instruction.

The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure affirms that "teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject." This affirmation was meant to codify understandings of academic freedom commonly accepted in 1940.

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Fall AAUP Leadership Training Takes Place on October 26 and 27

The Assembly of State Conferences (ASC) is sponsoring the second annual Fall Leadership training on October 26-27, 2007.

Twenty new and emerging chapter and state conference leaders from around the country will come to Washington DC to meet with AAUP national leaders and staff, learn more about the AAUP, and exchange ideas they can apply immediately on returning to their home campus.

The weekend will feature the following topics: AAUP 101/102: a comprehensive introduction to the Association; designing and implementing a membership drive—with a special focus on issues-based outreach; strategic communication: tips on producing newsletters and websites, and how to talk to the media about AAUP issues & events, and a workshop on confronting the next legislative crisis.

The subject of this last workshop is to be determined. In Fall 2006 this workshop focused on how to fight "Academic Bill of Rights" (ABOR) legislation at the state level. This training is geared toward newly elected officers, as well as members who are looking forward to taking a more active role in their chapter or conference. AAUP staff and leaders will be available during breaks and meals to answer individual questions. The ASC will cover the cost of Friday night's hotel stay and most meals for attendees (except dinner on Friday night).

If you are interested in attending, contact the state conference.

AAUP: Taking Back the Classroom

Does a teacher of nineteenth-century American literature have the right to ask his or her students whether the character of the obsessed captain Ahab in Melville's Moby Dick could justifiably be compared with President George Bush? Would someone teaching Aristotle's views on moral virtue be justified in asking students to consider President Bill Clinton's conduct as a case study?

Many critics of higher education and opponents of academic freedom would answer with a resounding "No!" They want all class discussion to be limited by the course description.

In Freedom in the Classroom, a challenging new report released on September 11, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) answers "Yes" to these questions. The report defends the right of college faculty to make comparisons, contrasts, and analogies across the whole range of subjects and historical periods—no matter what course they are teaching. The report defends the life of the mind, the right of both students and faculty to make connections like those above. Indeed, the report argues, instructors have both the right and the responsibility to challenge their students' most cherished political, religious, and social beliefs.

Print copies of the report will be published in the September–October issue of the AAUP's journal of record, Academe. A link to an online copy of the report was e-mailed to over 350,000 U.S. faculty on September 11. Other countries are following suit. The Canadian Association of University Teachers will be distributing both English and French versions of the report to all its members. The AAUP expects worldwide distribution of Freedom in the Classroom.

Director's Report

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In recent years these understandings have become controversial. Private groups have sought to regulate classroom instruction, advocating the adoption of statutes that would prohibit teachers from challenging deeply held student beliefs or that would require professors to maintain "diversity" or "balance" in their teaching. This report is a response to these efforts.

The AAUP General Discussion List is a list serve that has been hopping with discussions about membership, communications and upcoming national elections lately. Many hope to see this forum focus more on issues related to the Academe and the Freedom in the Classroom 2007 report may be just such an issue.

To join these active and informative discussions go to <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/subs/>.

Deadline for National AAUP Nominations is December 15

Elections for AAUP national office will take place in 2008.

According to AAUP bylaws dated November, 2006, nominations by petition for AAUP Association Officers (president, first vice president, second vice president, and secretary-treasurer) and the Council shall comply with the provisions of Article V, Section 3, of the Constitution and must be received by the AAUP's national office on or before December 15.

Candidate(s) seeking to put forward their nomination must do so according to AAUP Bylaws and be mindful of the above date.

More information on the election procedure can be found in the AAUP Constitution, accessed at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/bus/constitution.htm>, and the AAUP Bylaws, accessed at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/bus/electionbylaws.htm>

SUNY classes resume with new faculty, but more are needed

As a new academic year begins, the president of the nation's largest higher education union says that SUNY is better equipped than it's been in years to handle the record number of students enrolled this fall, thanks in no small measure to the union's push for additional state funds.

William Scheuerman, president of United University Professions (UUP) and Chairman of the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) Higher Education Program and Policy Council, said the hiring of new full-time faculty enables SUNY to decrease the size of classes and offer students the courses they need to graduate on time. But Scheuerman emphasizes that much more needs to be done.

"As a result of prior years of underfunding, SUNY still needs 1,500 more full-time faculty to make up for the long-term loss of full-time faculty lines," Scheuerman said. He emphasized that ever-increasing enrollment makes the need that much more critical.

"The number of full-time equivalent students at SUNY's state-operated campuses has risen by about 30,000 since the late 90s," Scheuerman said. "Assuming that student enrollment continues to grow, the gains of the past couple of years will quickly evaporate unless faculty hiring keeps pace with enrollment growth."

UUP is looking to pick up where it left off, after two straight years of funding for more full-time faculty. So far, about 200 new full-time faculty have been hired, while 300 more positions are in the process of being filled.

President's Report

Continued from page 1

mater was dependent on its ability to assemble a faculty whose professional work had been validated by the opinions of their professional peers.

That same criterion is one that the confident university must continue to use. The confident university will not hesitate to be a site where speakers with important but unpopular points of view can express those views and have them challenged by those whose ideas are perhaps more mainstream.

Our organization, the AAUP, has members of all political persuasions. As a professional organization we have an obligation beyond our individual politics. We have a responsibility to educate the next generation of leaders and citizens so that when they are faced with complicated issues and difficult decisions they have the tools necessary to deal with them.

Given this responsibility, the term "ivory tower," which suggests a cool detachment from society, seems strangely inappropriate. If we are to be truly successful we must be the "crucible" where we and our students are constantly tested by fire and emerge stronger as a result.