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Pappas Receives Minnesota AAUP Award



State Senator Sandy Pappas received the Minnesota AAUP Friend to Higher Education Award at our Annual Meeting earlier this year. Pictured with Senator Pappas (middle) are Jeremy Nienow (University of Minnesota Graduate Student Caucus) and MN AAUP President Cecilia Konchar Farr.

Changes at the National AAUP Website

The national AAUP office is pleased to announce a phased rollout of their new Web site, and asks that members note that some frequently used links have changed. Among these are:

Membership info:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/involved/join/>

1940 Statement:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsresearch/policydocs/1940statement.htm>

Issues in Higher Education:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issued/>

List of AAUP Redbook statements:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsresearch/policydocs/>

AAUP Annual Meeting 2006 Report

Cecilia Konchar Farr, MNAAUP President

Three delegates from the Minnesota State Conferences attended the AAUP 92nd Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. this past June—Michael Livingston, Jeremy Nienow and Cecilia Konchar Farr. The meeting, June 8-11 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, focused on “The Public Image and the Private Reality of Faculty.” A successful first day of lobbying for higher education issues on the Hill was followed by three days of meetings (and a little sight-seeing on the side!).

In addition to the FDR Memorial (always good!), a highlight of the conference was the screening of “Howard Zinn: You Can’t be Neutral on a Moving Train,” an award-winning documentary, both inspiring and excellent, that traces Zinn’s history of activism and education. The state conference has purchased a copy of the documentary.

Professor Stanley Katz of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton delivered Friday’s keynote address on public perceptions of the professoriate. College professors, he noted, “have an 81% approval rating,” better than most professionals, and we need to direct this goodwill toward keeping liberal education “the very soul” of our work and maintaining the integrity of what we do as educators in the “battlefront against the commercialization of education,” the key issue facing our profession.



“The content of a university education should not be determined by demographics or politics.”

Academic freedom...“is one of the cornerstones of a free society, and it is a freedom worth defending.”

At the Plenary session on Saturday, Professor Michael Bérubé, the Paterno Family Professor in Literature at Pennsylvania State University, delivered a rousing defense of academic freedom in an unfriendly cultural climate. He reported that 20 states are considering legislation based on conservative activist David Horowitz’s inaptly named “Academic Bill of Rights,” with language about making public universities accountable to the public. But, he argued, “The content of a university education should not be determined by demographics or politics.” Academic freedom, he concluded, “is one of the cornerstones of a free society, and it is a freedom worth defending.”

Also on the agenda at the annual meeting was the rollout of the Campaign for the Common Good, the AAUP’s first ever capital campaign to build our endowment.



Please see the AAUP website (www.aaup.org) to find out how you can get involved.

The business portion of the Annual Meeting saw action on several Committee A items, some accounting complications to be sorted out, and the introduction of newly-elected AAUP President Cary Nelson. Details on these actions can be found in your latest issue of *Academe*.

Remarks and Report on the 2006 Annual Meeting From a First-Time State Conference Delegate

Jeremy Nienow

First, I would very much like to sincerely thank the state conference for sending me to the 2006 AAUP Annual Meeting held in Washington D.C. I thought I would attempt to show my gratitude by giving you a report on what I attended and participated in while at the meeting.

Friday morning I had the pleasure of presenting, along with Michael Livingston at the Assembly of State Conferences Executive Committee meeting. Michael and I spoke on the movement to incorporate more graduate students into the AAUP using the "Minnesota Model" as an example of a successful recruiting drive. After the meeting and throughout the remainder of the conference, Michael and I met with several AAUP members who were interested in recruiting in their states. Minnesota is spear-heading this effort, as Michael and I are both also on the national Graduate and Professional Student committee.

Just prior to our presentation to the ASC we had the opportunity to listen to Jonathan Knight, Director of the AAUP Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Shared Governance speak to the question of what is Committee A's process for investigations. This was an extremely informative presentation and issues that Jonathan brought up were again discussed during the Annual Meeting Plenary Sessions.

After the ASC meeting I attended a panel presentation on Faculty Life, Private and Professional. The panel discussed the rights of expectant and new parents in regards to hiring, firing, stopping the tenure clock, as well as both maternal and paternal perceptions. As a new parent, I found the panel well worth attending, especially in the areas of legal rights and the Family and Medical Leave Act. Directly after the panel, I jumped into the state lobbying networking meeting. This time was set aside for members to update others on various legislative efforts in their communities, with the Academic Bill of Rights and the Tax Payers Bill of Rights still the chief concerns of the day. During the meeting, it became clear that several members wanted national to direct them as to how they could interact with the political arena given our status as a non-profit.

Finally, Friday ended with the ASC business session where we elected new officers and presented a series of awards to various conferences and individuals for their collective efforts within academia. We again heard from Jonathan Knight in regards to the efforts of Committee A. Friday was a very long, but immensely productive, day with Michael, Ceil, and myself having dinner at 10pm!

Saturday was comprised entirely of the Annual Meeting Plenary Sessions. These included speeches from both out-going and in-going presidents, reports by several committees, and votes on the imposition and removal of census. At times, debate was very heated and extensive; however, overall the sessions reflected the long tradition that the AAUP has in terms of respect and fairness. I encourage everyone to go to the AAUP national website to learn more concerning the reports of the various committees as well as the changes in office and calls for new staff members at the national level.

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From the National AAUP Website: AAUP Issues Statement on Spellings Commission Report

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Statement of the AAUP Committee on Government Relations, regarding the report “A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U. S. Higher Education”

The Commission on the Future of Higher Education appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has issued its report, after a year of hearings and deliberations. Although the report raises important issues and has been improved through successive drafts, it remains seriously flawed in its fundamental characterization of American higher education. As the preeminent voice speaking for faculty, and on the basis of its historic commitment to the principles of academic freedom, shared governance, and higher education’s contribution to the common good, the American Association of University Professors must uphold a different vision of what American higher education has been and should be.

Principles of academic freedom and commitments to the common good are at the heart of the AAUP’s democratic vision of higher education. The AAUP affirms the central importance of higher education in enabling an informed citizenry to participate in civic and political life, the increasingly crucial role played by higher education in developing the knowledge and skills required for successful careers in an increasingly knowledge-based economy, and the key role played by academic researchers in creating knowledge that has direct consequences for economic innovation and successful public policy. The AAUP affirms that the independence of scholars in their research and teaching is vital for democracy. For these reasons, the AAUP has long advocated public policies that make higher education fully accessible to all those who are qualified to benefit from it, that aim to improve the quality of higher education based on academic values, and that adequately fund research to stimulate the growth and dissemination of knowledge.

Evaluated against these principles, the AAUP finds that the Commission on the Future of Higher Education’s report falls far short. To be sure, a number of issues raised in the report appear to be in accord with AAUP principles and concerns. Commitments to “access to all qualified students in all life stages,” concerns with the preparation of high school students for college-level work, a focus on the burden of higher education costs on students and families in the face of lowered levels of government funding, affirmations of the value of innovation in teaching, and the importance of accountability and transparency are all in agreement with the AAUP’s principles. Yet the report locates these issues in a framework that portrays higher education in deep crisis without establishing the grounds for this claim. Based on what David Ward, president of the American Council of Higher Education and Commission member, has called “a false sense of crisis,” the report portrays higher education as in need of thorough and drastic transformation. The report largely neglects the role of the faculty, has a narrow economic focus, and views higher education as a single system rather than in its institutional diversity.

What emerges from the report is a vision of higher education as a marketplace that should increasingly rely on uniform standards to measure outcomes and technological means to provide training in skills necessary for global economic competition. The process and quality of the educational experience, so central to the formation of a love of learning, civic virtues and social capital, are marginalized to the point of irrelevance. As Richard Brodhead, president of Duke University pointed out recently in the *Washington Post*, leaders of higher education in Asia admire America’s colleges and universities for fostering “initiative, independence, resourcefulness, and collaboration.” Unlike the commission’s report, these Asian leaders view American higher education as worthy of emulation rather than as a project for retooling.

Central Themes in the Report

Central to the report is an assertion that American higher education, while still excellent, is out of step with contemporary realities. In comparison to student achievements realized in other nations, American education, including higher education, is losing its competitive edge. As a result, the report claims that we are in danger of a decline in human capital resources that poses serious dangers for the future economic competitiveness of the United States.

According to the report, American higher education, like any other “mature enterprise,” is “risk averse.” It faces the potential future of other such industries, “from railroads to manufacturers,” that have failed. What is needed are “aggressive steps” to make higher education more efficient, including “cost cutting and productivity improvements.” Among the suggested improvements are reducing barriers for transfer students, instituting performance benchmarks, and encouraging new educational providers including for-profit institutions and long distance learning. The report suggests that an emphasis on degree programs and a commitment to classroom-based education no longer meet our educational needs. In this vision, the masses of student “consumers” would be better served by a “cafeteria approach” that emphasizes the learning of skills and focuses on “results rather than academic distinctions.”

The report formulates a sense of crisis in almost purely financial and economic terms. This acute crisis demands drastic transformation, especially in terms of cost containment, accountability and transparency based on measurable outcomes.

The report calls for a “value added approach” and incentives to make colleges and universities more accountable through better reporting practices that enable standardized comparisons. The crisis portrayed is one that demands intense managerial approaches to solve systemic dysfunctions through better measurement, market modeling and incentives, and institutional flexibility.

Faculty appear only once in this report, as a bullet under a heading that includes the recommendation that “higher education must change from a system primarily based on reputation to one based on performance.” The bullet provides a role for faculty in this performance-based vision: “Faculty must be at the forefront of defining educational objectives for students and developing meaningful, evidence-based measures of their progress toward these goals.” The role of the faculty is contextualized within a policy framework that aims at developing “interoperable outcomes-focused accountability systems designed to be accessible and useful for students, policymakers, and the public, as well as for internal management and institutional improvement.”

Specific Weaknesses in the Report

The report bolsters its claims and its vision with a variety of symbolic flourishes. It uses terms like “world-class higher education system” without ever articulating its features other than through vaguely described goals. The report seeks to disarm potential critics by comparing them to elitists who resisted such historical initiatives as the GI Bill. It has a long and largely unsubstantiated preamble that calls for “urgent reform” without adequately characterizing the institutions and relationships that constitute American higher education.

By strongly affirming an outcomes-based approach, the report is dismissive of the institutional foundations of American higher education. The report makes no mention of the de-professionalization of the professoriate that is underway, with inadequately supported contingent faculty having an ever greater role in “content delivery.” Rather, it takes for granted that “new providers and new paradigms, from for-profit universities to distance learning” will be “part of the education landscape” that enables higher education to “adapt to a world altered by technology, changing demographics and globalization.” The report does not attempt to square this affirmation of technologically-driven change and indifference to issues of institutional life, structure and governance with its call for higher education to “recommit itself to its core public purposes.” It does not consider that “public purposes” are articulated, debated and made real within academic institutions that have stability and continuity.

While the report calls for consolidation of federal support for students and for an increasing emphasis on need-based support, including a significant increase in the buying power of Pell grants, it does not call for more federal funding to accomplish these goals. Nor does the report adequately confront the decline in support for higher education by state governments. Given these omissions, it appears that the report is calling for a redistribution of federal funding rather than for the increased levels of funding by federal and state governments that would be required to meet student needs.

The report focuses on what it blithely refers to as a “remarkable absence of accountability mechanisms to ensure that colleges succeed in educating students.” It calls for creating a “consumer-friendly database” so that parents and students can compare institutions on “how much students learn in colleges or whether they learn more at one college than another.” Yet in its call the Commission ignores initiatives for assessment that accrediting bodies and campuses are already implementing across the country. It seems oblivious as to how its call for standardization could be formulated across the range of institutions and students that constitute American higher education, or the harm that such standardization would inflict on the diverse missions of our colleges and universities.

The report faults accreditation for its emphasis on resources, process and governance over an outcomes-based approach. Accreditation reviews, the report asserts, must be more “transparent” and should focus on “results and quality rather than dictating, for example, process, inputs, and governance which perpetuates current models and impedes innovation.” The institutional forms of higher education, the principle of shared academic governance, professional and academic relationships, and the centrality of academic community are dismissed as “impediments to innovation.” To be frank, this characterization ignores both the changes in the accreditation process that have already been underway for two decades and the historical foundations that produced the higher education system so highly prized both here at home and abroad.

Grounds for Future Discussion

Secretary Spellings and members of the commission have stated that their report should initiate a national dialogue on higher education. The AAUP, as a voice for all faculty, should be a full participant in this discussion. The future of higher education demands that state and federal governments provide adequate resources for students and for research; that the institutional integrity of higher education and the professoriate be recognized as core values for a society that venerates intellectual and academic freedom; that students be adequately prepared for success in higher education and that they not be burdened financially in ways that diminish their futures; and that higher education be held accountable in terms of its public purposes and multifaceted contributions to society. That is the discussion we must bring to the forefront, if our higher education system is to continue its vital role in our democratic society.

The Executive Committee of the Minnesota Conference of AAUP thanks Wayne Wolsey for his many years of service to the state conference and to the profession, and on behalf of the membership, wishes him a most enjoyable retirement.

2005-2006 Academic Year Report on Activities: Minnesota State AAUP Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure

There were few cases brought to the attention of Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the Minnesota State Conference—American Association of University Professors (AAUP) during the 2005-2006 academic year.

One case was brought to the attention of the Committee Chair during an early stage at one liberal arts college in the state. A former President of the AAUP Chapter at that institution referred an Assistant Professor who was under consideration for tenure and promotion. The Faculty member is a productive scholar with decent teaching evaluations. There were mixed signals from the direct superiors within his small unit of the institution regarding his tenure file. A split recommendation was forwarded to the institution's faculty personnel committee, which endorsed him unanimously for tenure. The highest levels of the institution reached a negative decision. A request for reconsideration was filed, and ultimately the Administration reversed its earlier decision.

A similar case involving a third year review arose from a second liberal arts college. In this situation, the faculty personnel committee meeting in concert with the Administrators arrived at a negative consensus decision. At this institution, appeals can only be made to a second faculty committee on procedural grounds. The appeals committee found that there were sufficient procedural errors to justify a recommendation to the Administration that the faculty member be permitted to go through another review in the 2006-2007 academic year. That recommendation was rejected by the Administration. An opinion was sought from the national AAUP office. The forthcoming opinion was that the case was not one which could be supported at the national level.

The Committee Chair was asked to make a presentation on professional ethics, from the AAUP perspective, to a class (graduate students in the Preparing Future Faculty—PPF program) at the University of Minnesota on November 21.

I wish to acknowledge the support and involvement of Professors George Chu (Music, Hamline University) and Paul Schons (Modern and Classical Languages, University of St. Thomas) over the past four years of the existence of the State Committee A. The support of the State Conference Executive Committee has also been much appreciated.

It is a pleasure to turn over the leadership of the Committee to Professor David Schultz (Graduate School of Management, Hamline University) at the termination of my service, as I enter into full retirement.

Respectfully submitted,
Wayne C. Wolsey, Chair Minnesota Committee A
Professor of Chemistry, Macalester College

Call For Nominations: 2007 Robert E. Sloan Award

The Robert E. Sloan award for Outstanding Contributions to Academic Freedom is given annually to one or more current or former AAUP members who have made a significant personal contribution in support of academic freedom and shared governance. The contributions may have been made either recently or over a longer term. The award is named in recognition of Bob Sloan's sustained commitment to the goals of the AAUP and his important contributions in support of academic freedom and shared governance. The award is presented at the state conference annual meeting.

Please help us to identify worthy recipients for this award! Send nominations to Dr. Cecilia Konchar Farr (ckfarr@stkate.edu). All nominations should include your name, institutional address and email. Please provide a brief description of the contributions you believe make your nominee an appropriate candidate for this award.

ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 1, 2006.

Consider nominating colleagues who have significant personal contribution in support of academic freedom and shared governance.

David Schultz To Chair Minnesota Committee A

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor David Schultz of Hamline University Professor to succeed Professor Wolsey as Chair of Minnesota Committee A (Academic Freedom and Tenure).

David Schultz's appointment at Hamline University is in the Graduate School of Management where he is the director of its Doctorate in Public Administration program. David also holds appointments in the Department of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science at Hamline University and at the School of Law and the University of Minnesota. He has a PhD and JD from the University of Minnesota and an LLM from the University of London. David was AAUP chapter president at Trinity University in San Antonio, TX, and has served as vice-president for both the Minnesota and South Texas Chapters of the ACLU. He has also served as the executive director, president, and lobbyist for Common Cause Minnesota. In addition to having taught at the University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, Gustavus Adolphus College, and Trinity University, Professor Schultz has worked as a city director of code enforcement, as a planner for a community action agency, and has done union organizing for the Communications Workers of America and the Teamsters. He is the author or editor of over 20 books and 50 articles.

Recruiting Graduate Students To The AAUP

Claire Kirchoff

In an effort to address issues of academic freedom for all workers in academia, the Minnesota AAUP is beginning a new effort to recruit graduate students, spearheaded by Jeremy Nienow. The graduate student recruiting effort for the coming academic year coincides with a faculty recruitment effort by Michael Livingston, which will include office visits to several campuses in Minnesota. Graduate students' work is vital to the daily operation of institutions of higher education, and research conducted by graduate students is the future of every discipline with graduate students. The AAUP recognizes that the protection of academic freedom and basic workplace rights should not be restricted to tenure-track positions, and with this in mind has taken steps to recruit more graduate student members to the organization.

A major component of the recruitment plan developed in our state conference is the distribution of information packets on the AAUP to graduate students. Graduate students should be more aware of how membership in the Association stands to benefit their future and present careers in academia. The folders include a copy of the AAUP's statement on graduate students, a letter from the Minnesota State Conference president, Cecilia Konchar-Farr, a mini Redbook, AAUP literature on graduate students and the organization in general, and a button (with AAUP logo!). One-hundred and fifty folders were distributed to students in Preparing Future Faculty courses at the University of Minnesota during spring semester. The State Conference also plans to develop similar information packets to help recruit faculty members. If you are interested in developing an information packet for use in your chapter, please contact a member of the executive committee.

"...the protection of academic freedom and basic workplace rights should not be restricted to tenure-track positions."

Visit the state conference website at

www.mnaaup.org

**for contact information, useful links to other sites,
and information on membership and events!**

How to contact the Minnesota AAUP

Visit us at our website <<http://www.mnaaup.org>> or contact one of the state executive committee members listed here.

President: Cecilia Konchar Farr, College of St. Catherine
ckfarr@stkate.edu or phone 651-690-6559

Vice President: Eric Wiertelak, Macalester College
wiertelak@macalester.edu or phone 651-696-6111

Past President: Michael Livingston, St. John's University
mlivingston@csbsju.edu or phone 320-363-3369

Treasurer: Dave Emery, St. Olaf College
emeryd@stolaf.edu or phone 507-646-3139

Secretary: Michael Mikolajczak, University of St. Thomas
m9mikloajcza@stthomas.edu or phone 651-962-5616

Director: Gary Engstrand, University of Minnesota
garye@umn.edu

Director: John Vaningen, University of St. Thomas
j9vaningen@stthomas.edu

Director: Karen Vogel, Hamline University
Kvogel@gw.hamline.edu

Graduate Student Representative: Claire Kirchhoff, University of Minnesota
kirc0021@umn.edu

How To Contact The Minnesota Committee A

You may contact the Minnesota Conference Committee A on academic freedom and tenure by getting in touch with the chair of the committee:

David Schultz, Professor
Hamline University
Graduate School of Management
570 Asbury Street
Suite 305
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104
651.523.2858 (voice)
651.523.3098 (fax)

How to Apply to the State AAUP Legal Defense Fund

The State conference legal defense fund has three thousand dollars available to members or chapters needing legal counsel. The maximum grant is \$1,500 per chapter and \$1,000 per individual. To apply for a grant from the legal defense fund, contact the conference president Cecilia Konchar Farr at ckfarr@stkate.edu.