From the President's Desk: continued from page 1
also other benefits. For example, this year (November 11th and 12th at D’Youville College in Buffalo) Hans-Joerg Tiede, the new Senior Program Officer in the Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance of the AAUP is our keynote speaker and we will be offering a 4-hr. Political Mobilization Training workshop put on at the AAUP Assembly of State Conferences (for more information and to register go to http://nysaaup.org/news/25/nys-aaup-conference-fall-2016). Keep in mind that you can also Chair or join a committee or run for office. If you don’t want to do that, consider other ways that you could contribute.

Accordingly, I am taking a closer look at our individual and collective roles and responsibilities at the state level. While we have certain rights and privileges if we hold an elected or appointed office, or we are hired to do the work of the AAUP, we also have responsibilities. What I have noticed is that, while there are a number of offices and committees at the State AAUP level on which people serve, historically there has been a lack of clear direction about roles and responsibilities.

In order to make this information more transparent, and everyone’s job easier, I have asked each of the individuals currently holding elected and appointed positions - Members-at-Large, Council Members, Chair of Committees, the Academe newsletter Editor, as well as our Executive Director - to submit a summary of what they believe their roles and responsibilities are and the tasks associated with their position (I, in conjunction with past Presidents, will be doing the same for my position). People will be planning on teaching their last semester before they earn the titles of being your President, I am honored to be and look forward to serving you as President of the NYS AAUP. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, issues, or comments. You can best reach me at sdcarleah@nysaaup.org. Also, please visit our website at http://nysaaup.org/.

What comes after censure of an executive administration by national AAUP? This is the question that Saint Rose’s AAUP chapter is now grappling with on the heels of national’s censure of the College’s administration last June for serious violations of tenure and shared governance.

The censure was the result of the College President Stafancio’s decision to cut 28 so-called “low-growth” programs (including Environmental Science, Sociology, and Spanish), and to lay-off 14 tenured and 9 tenure-track faculty members last December.

Over the intervening summer weeks since censure, the administration completed confidential settlements with the majority of the 23 faculty members who were issued lay-off notices. The settlements include several reinstatements (but not after senior faculty retired to preserve lines for their colleagues) and a couple of early retirements. Others negotiated pay-outs, contingent on non-disclosure and non-disparagement clauses. A few have found new jobs and moved on. And then there are those still pursuing settlements or simply planning on teaching their last semester before they enter the ranks of the unemployed. It has, obviously, been a time of great anxiety and sorrow at Saint Rose.

The question we now face is “What’s next?” All of the problems that existed before censure still remain: A lack of shared governance and due process, a draconian email policy that seriously limits communication and free speech within and between constituencies on campus, an administration and Board of Trustees that apparently does not respect tenure, a loss of confidence in the President (and increasingly in other key administrators and Board members), the elimination of benefits.

The agenda for the meeting can be found at http://nysaaup.org/library/16/nys-aaup-agenda-fall-2016.
Nassau Community College
at the Crossroads

By Timothy Strode, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

The College finds itself wounded and limping to a crossroads. And we ask: Who are we? And where are we going?

Now, an obvious objection to this argument, that NCC is at a crossroads, is that we were already there, and that a previous Faustian bargain has doomed us.

There is evidence to support this reasoning. With the departure of Dr. Sean Fanelli in January of 2010, NCC lost a president whose respect for faculty, respect for the college’s renowned system of shared governance, and widely recognized competence secured for NCC a national reputation for academic excellence and institutional governance. But with Dr. Fanelli’s exit, NCC began a perilous decline, and it is fair to assert that January 2010 was indeed the date we reached a crossroads in our institutional history.

Let’s look back. Dr. Fanelli’s replacement was Donald Astar. His tenure was marked by mass firings and attacks on faculty governance, ended with overwhelming votes of no confidence and a lucrative separation agreement. (Leston: don’t hire a leader from a “right-to-work” state). Life after Astar: a bungling Board of Trustees conducted three national searches for a permanent president. Dr. Kevin, a scientist, academic and mostly recently president of SUNY Farmingdale, brings to NCC a wealth of experience as a researcher, professor, SUNY administrator, and of course true governing expertise.

We look forward to productive collaboration with our new president as we work together at this critical crossroads.

The questions Who are we? and where are we going? are as yet unanswered, but we know what the answers should be. We are a community of scholars, teachers, administrators and staff that has redefined ourselves to providing our students with a world-class liberal arts education.

Let’s not make a bargain with the devil.

Hartwick Faculty Passes Vote of No Confidence

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service and some had even been Hartwick College graduates who were very loyal to the college community.

In July 2015, in an effort to show solidarity with college staff employees, the Hartwick College Chapter of the AAUP organized a meeting off-campus to discuss the firings. At that meeting a letter of censure against the president was drawn up. The letter, signed by a large number of faculty, was submitted to the administration and the Board of Trustees on August 11, 2015.

Faculty concerns expressed in the letter were summarily dismissed by the Provost and the Board Chair. Instead of taking our concerns seriously, the day following our submission of the letter of censure, twelve departments were notified by letter that they were “at risk,” defined as being short of majors and no other explanation.

It was no coincidence that nearly all of those departments who had members who were signatory to the letter of censure. The letter of censure was the college’s way to conclude, with no actions taken whatsoever. As a result it appeared that the whole purpose the “at risk” process was intimidation.

Meanwhile, Hartwick College students had also become increasingly unhappy with their experience at Hartwick College.

In November 2015 they convened a forum to chart their grievances. They produced a document which clearly outlined their concerns. A prominent member of the student body and honors student, took it upon himself to send the list of grievances to the members of the Board of Trustees and he did so anonymously. However, the Board Chair and the president decided to treat the message as some sort of violent threat to the campus Police.

They got the New York State and local District Attorney involved and even invoked the PatTEECA to force a major cellular service to give up information about the anonymous account from which the student sent his message.

This affair is richly documented in an article in the Harwick student newspaper. All supporting documents are included in the article (http://www.hilltopnewspaper.com/node/jager-explained). The college campus was never notified that there was a threat to campus, which was in violation of college policy.

The faculty continued to put forward resolutions against the “at risk” process, and tried twice to pass a vote of no confidence in the president during Fall Senate meetings. Both votes were narrowly defeated. However, a vote of no confidence against the president was organized at a special faculty meeting on April 11, 2016, and it passed by a substantial margin.

Again the Board Chair summarily dismissed our effort to communicate the faculty’s deep concerns about the president’s failure of leadership.

These concerns were outlined in detail in a message sent to the faculty on May 2, 2016, by the Secretary of the Hartwick Chapter of the AAUP.

This document was also dismissed in public, and on May 24, 2016, after giving the Board Chairman the Board announced that the Board voted to extend the president’s contract for another eight years.

This action indicates very clearly that neither the Board of Trustees or the president are willing to consider the important role that faculty play in the day-to-day operation of the college.

This dysfunctional situation will continue to undermine the efforts to secure a viable future for the college. Yet the renewal of the president’s contract has further galvanized faculty opposition, so it is uncertain how the new academic year will unfold.

Hartwick Community
What’s Next at The College of Saint Rose

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we restore shared governance and tenure. AAUP censure should not be something administrations and boards can simply shrug off. It should have real consequences and we must find ways to ensure that it does—at Saint Rose, throughout New York State, and nationally.

As President of our Sr. Rose AAUP chapter, I remind faculty it is only through collective action that we will be able to redress the national trends of corporatization on our campuses and preserve tenure and academic freedom. Without these foundational structures faculty will not be empowered to protect students and the quality of education they were promised during recruitment, and that they will need to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly-changing world.

As I have said many times, if our administrations are going to treat us as at-will employees, we must organize like at-will employees! Collective action is the only way to prevent when tenure is undermined and academic freedom is threatened.

The challenges are great—perhaps even daunting. But to accept administrative fiat regarding the curriculum, free speech and academic freedom, and the dismissal of tenured faculty would be to participate in our own oppression and to hasten the demise of tenure in higher education.

The Saint Rose experience shows that even the most collegial administrations can change rapidly with the arrival of a new President, Provost, or Board Chair. The moral of the sad Saint Rose story is to organize NOW and be proactive on your campus. If our administration is unscathed by their actions, other administrations may follow their lead and be emboldened to do the same on their campuses. Yes—this could happen to you too!

The Saint Rose faculty has not given up. But our struggle is difficult and not guaranteed to succeed. Still, we know we must try—the stakes are just too high to do otherwise.

Academe FALL 2016
NYSSAAUP Executive Director’s Report

By Tom Policano

I will be reporting the results of the spring election for our NYSSAAUP Conference Spring 2016 elections. The NYSSAAUP Conference Spring 2016 elections were held at Marymount Manhattan College in NYC April 15-16, the NYSSAAUP Annual Meeting June 16, and also our upcoming NYSSAAUP Conference Fall 2016 to be held at D’Youville College in Buffalo, NY. On November 11-12, 2016.

New York State AAUP Elections 2016

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If We Lose the Freedom to Teach, We Cannot Support the Freedom to Learn

By Ellen K. Boesenberg (SUNY-Binghamton)

The stage was set for the founding of the American Association of University Professors well over a century ago when an economist, Edward Ross, was dismissed from Stanford University. Ross’s views on economic reform (and economic policies of Leland Stanford) had provoked the wrath of Mrs. Stanford, who demanded his discharge. The university president yielded to her pressure, cloaking the dismissal with allegations that Ross lacked scholarly competence (Pollitt and Kurland, 1998).

Several years later in 1913, Arthur O. Lovejoy, organized some of his colleagues and initiated the organization that would become the AAUP. The work they carried out was crucial a hundred years ago and continues to be so today; especially as the trends towards the privatization of higher education have created a multiplicity of issues related to academic freedom.

What makes our situation different from that of Edward Ross and Mrs. Stanford is that now we must contend with a multifaceted opponent, one that promotes from that of Edward Ross and Mrs. Stanford, who demanded his dismissal, a multiplicity of issues related to especially as the trends towards the privatization of higher education have created a multiplicity of issues related to academic freedom.

Teaching as a holistic activity is now under dire threat due to the fragmentation of the teaching function and extensive outsourcing. One of the techniques of outsourcing is called “course redesign.” In effect course redesign bypasses a major aspect of the teaching function through the use of digital courseware, thus eliminating the need for a professor to give a live lecture or even to be present with the students at all. Instruction goes from being an ongoing operational expense (paying a professor’s salary) to a one-time capital expense (buying the courseware). Expenses are kept to a minimum by using contingent labor (graduate students and part-time, non-tenured faculty) to “deliver” courses. Course management has also come unbundle from the teaching function. Now considered an administrative matter, it offers another opportunity to use contingent labor as “course managers.”

The university increasingly comes to rely on contingent faculty, who now comprise about seventy percent of the total faculty positions. Contingent faculty members are paid less for their labor, and the situation is even worse for women when gender pay disparity is factored in (McQuail, 2014). As adjunct instructors are exploited and their numbers increase, and as the percentage of tenure and tenure track faculty decreases, so too does their professional status. Their authority over curriculum decisions, input concerning departmental affairs, and campus-wide decision-making are all diminished.

Not only is this a “lose-lose” situation on the teaching side, it also represents a loss to students whose instructors are overworked, underpaid, and underrepresented, and that is with a live teacher. Even more unfortunate are the students who do not have a live teacher—the absence of whom is bound to have consequences for student learning. Ravai and Wightling (2005), in their review of studies on alienation and the virtual classroom, cited a study by Flannery (1995) which revealed African-American participants generally felt more normless and had a lowered sense of a social and learning community than their Caucasian peers in an administratively White virtual classroom community. Their learning depended more on respecting communal values about knowledge, communication patterns, how learning occurs, and working together for the sake of community (Ravai & Wightling, 2005).

Fragmented course delivery and the use of course management systems are radically changing the types of interactions that instructors have with students and dictate how students are evaluated (i.e. frequent testing). At many institutions, even student advising occurs online, and e-advising does not stop at the undergraduate level.

The website, HigherEdJobs listed a job posting for a part-time Adjunct Dismissal Chair. They were seeking someone to guide doctoral students through the dissertation program in a “fairly compressed period of time” (Adjunct dissertation chair, 2014). In a real sense, students are not getting what they have come to expect from their educational experience, and considering that they are paying for an education with ever increasing tuition costs and future debt payments it is becoming a much less attractive endeavor. Yet we need not stand by while our freedoms are taken from us.

Teaching and Multicultural Education (NAME) in its position statement against educational legislation that will serve the interests of college students and their families (Citizens must act, 2014). The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) is an independent, nonprofit organization with a mission to make higher education more affordable and for people of all backgrounds. Their Project on Student Debt seeks to increase public understanding of student debt and its implications (About the Project on Student Debt, n.d.).

In “Disruptive Innovations for Adjunct Faculty: Common Sense for the Common Good,” Gary Rhoades (2013), addressed these difficult and exploitative labor practices, and offered several practical, disruptive innovations to counter them. For example, he suggested using departmental websites to make contingent faculty more visible and accessible, thus putting a face on “Professor Staff.” To counter the temenous and disconnected nature of “at-will” employment, tenured and contingent faculty must demand due process for hiring and renewal decisions. Rhoades (2013) noted, in most higher education settings, renewal decisions regarding Are the faculty members of primarily of part-time faculty, are characterized by an extreme degree of managerial discretion. There is extraordinarily little peer involvement or due process (p. 80).

He suggested using the Higher Education Contract Analysis System (HECAS) — an online tool that provides a searchable database— for contract templates. These templates can be used when new hires review their contracts with the university.

Dialogue about educational issues is vitally important. Technological advances (many of which originate in academia) are likely to become a permanent part of the educational enterprise. Yet it is vitally important to anticipate the consequences and ask questions related its use. Is technology being used to enhance the educational experience (thereby adding vancing the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach) or is it being used to undercut the labor involved in the teaching process (thereby thwarting the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn)? Educators who wish to counteract the trends that obstruct academic freedom must initiate conversations that offer possibilities, and they must actively work toward them. Many organizations are working toward those ends.

For example, the political action committee of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) in its position statement against educational published teacher performance assessments notes that it is: committed to respecting and appreciating cultural diversity, ending racism and discrimination, promoting educational justice, and developing curricula that are culturally responsible and responsive... Further, NAME rejects any incursion of outsourced, private, corporate interests into this sensitive and critical work, deeming it contradictory to our commitment to critical multicultural public schools that are responsive to the voices of the communities they serve, and seek to develop a socially and economically just world. (NAME Position Statement on the eTIPA, 2014)

As a society we know how important education is, and as educators we work toward providing the best education we can for our students. We struggle for academic freedom not only for our own sake as academic workers but also for the sake of our students who deserve the freedom to learn. The freedom to teach and the freedom to learn are inextricably entwined, and are vitally important to the institution of higher education and to society.