JOB OPENING

Executive Director for the NYS Conference of the AAUP

The NYS Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) seeks an Executive Director. This is a part-time consultant/contract position which could supplement other sources of income.

Since the NYS Conference is run by volunteer faculty leaders and there is no centralized office, the Executive Director is not provided an office by the Conference and office expenses are not reimbursed.

Approved travel expenses are reimbursable.

Primary duties include: maintain NYSC AAUP administrative services, records, and data bases/website; monitor information relevant to the work of the AAUP; the NYSC AAUP, and its members; engage in contact with AAUP, shared governance, and union work; experience working on political issues and/or with government officials/aides; and experience organizing large-scale meetings.

Applications are asked to submit the following with their application:
1) cover letter indicating the applicant’s experience with and/or interest in serving in an executive director capacity; experience with website management and maintaining records and data bases; familiarity and involvement with the AAUP, shared governance, and union work; experience working on political issues and/or with government officials/aides; and experience organizing large-scale meetings,
2) a resume/CV and
3) a list of three (3) professional references.

Applications must be received by 5/1/17 for full consideration.

Please send applications to:
sdearhealeyaaup@gmail.com
and write “ED Job Application” in the subject line.

The NYSC AAUP is committed to equal opportunity principles.
The AAUP’s Annual Conference will take place June 14-18, 2017 at Washington’s Mayflower Hotel. Among the meeting’s highlights are Capitol Hill Day, the Conference on the State of Higher Education, and includes panel presentations and plenary speakers. The 2017 conference will focus on the rights and freedoms of students. Other events taking place include the AAUP-CBC Reception, Annual Meeting, and Dinner; the Assembly of State Conferences Business Meeting, and the State Lobbying Networking Meeting.

Friday’s plenary speaker is Bram X. Kendi, assistant professor of African American history at the University of Florida and winner of the 2016 National Book Award for Nonfiction for his book. A definitive history of racism ideas in America.

Friday will conclude with a Film Screening and Panel Discussion for A Time to Stir, a documentary film about the Columbia student revolt of 1968. The panel will include the film’s director, Paul Cronin, Ellen Schrecker, journalist Juan Gonzalez (who was a member of the Strike Coordinating Committee), and AAUP President Henry Reichman, a student at Columbia during the revolt.

The 103rd Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday. This is the time when the organization takes up matters such as recommendations for censure, policy resolutions, and other matters brought to the body for its consideration.

Our presenter will be Joshua Guy Lenes, Lead Organizer and Campaign Specialist at AAUP National. Since joining the staff in 2013, Josh has worked with AAUP chapters and state conferences to build membership and increase their capacity for organizing.

As the campaign specialist for the AAUP national office, he has extensive experience working with members and leaders to create comprehensive organizing and campaign plans and he specializes in building and deploying sophisticated databases and modern web, and social media campaign tools to support organizing campaigns.

This program should be of tremendous benefit to members of AAUP Advocacy and CBC Chapters as well as our colleagues at colleges and universities who may be interested in starting an AAUP Chapter.

PLEASE JOIN US!

And when you feel you could use a quick break (3:42), be sure to check out Kris Kristofferson’s version of “Don’t Let the Bastards Get You Down” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yAW1ddYXD4.

AAUP Releases Statement on Targeted Online Harassment of Faculty

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Available for support.

In grave crises it will be expected to serve as a champion. Although the action to be taken by it will usually be on behalf of the president, the faculty, or the student body, the board should make clear that the protection it offers to an individual of the president, the faculty, or the student body, the board is a responsibility shared by all components of the institution.

Our commitment to academic freedom is a responsibility shared by all components of the institution: governing board, administration, and faculty.

Recommendations

1. The AAUP urges administrations, governing boards, and faculties, individually and collectively, to speak out clearly and forcefully to defend academic freedom and to condemn targeted harassment and intimidation of faculty members.

2. The AAUP recommends that administrations and elected faculty bodies work jointly to establish institutional regulations that prohibit the surreptitious recording of classroom discourse or of private meetings between students and faculty members.

NOTES


2. “Academic Freedom and National Security in a Time of Crisis,” Academe, November–December 2003, 37. The Association publicly rebuked the John Birch Society. Accuracy in Academia, and Campus Watch, calling them, respectively, “the very antithesis of the scholarly community,” “antiethical to the freedom of faculty members to teach and of students to learn, as well as a threat to the freedom of the academic institutions themselves”; and “a menace to academic freedom.”
The President's Letter

The Faculty of Handbook; An Opportunity for Organizing and Strategizing continued from page 1

administrators.

And, while organizations such as The Drake Group (www.thedrakgroup.org) have dedicated themselves to academic integrity in collegiate sport, and the AAUP was concerned enough to publish The Role of the Faculty in the Governance of College Athletics (https://www.aaup.org/report/role-faculty-governance-college-athletics), who fights to outline the roles and protect the needs and rights of faculty as they balance serving the higher education needs of their students and the increasing demands and derisive, as well as personally and professionally destructive and demoralizing behaviors and activities of college and university administrators and administrations?

While I honestly believe that the AAUP, as well as ‘sister’ organizations such as the AFT, UUP, COCAL, PSC, CGEU, NYSUT, SEIU and others are trying to do their best, it has become painfully clear that each of these organizations have their own limitations and gains - despite years of proposals, discussions, and attempts at shared governance- have been quite modest.

This realization provides us with a perfect opportunity to discuss what I see as a major drawback to faculty governance, a lack of understanding and respect for what is known as the Faculty Handbook.

At a recent meeting at Siena College, hosted by the College of St. Rose AAUP Advocacy Chapter, we talked about whether or not faculty handbooks were enforceable contracts.

Many of us have been led to believe that if faculty had a well-written faculty handbook, they were protected. This is not necessarily true. In fact, the AAUP reports that each year they receive numerous inquiries about the legal status of faculty handbooks.

In response the AAUP wrote Faculty Handbooks as Enforceable Contracts: A State Guide, which outlines state-by-state the benefits and limitations of faculty handbooks (https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/Faculty%20Handbooks%20as%20Contracts%20Complete.pdf).

According to this Guidebook, “Courts are often asked to decide whether a faculty handbook - which includes policies, rules, and procedures under which professors work - also establishes a contractual relationship between a professor and an institution” (v).

While the Guidebook offers various points of discussion and examination, most concerning is the question of enforceability, e.g. “What is the legal effect of a disclaimer in a faculty handbook in which a college or university disavows any intent to be contractually bound by the contents” (v & vi).

In other words, the faculty handbook can be expertly written and cover all the crucial points, but if the administration wants to insert a disclaimer such as, “The handbook is provided as information only; it is not a contract.” The University reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, regulations, practices and procedures described in this handbook, with or without prior notice to employees,” faculty really don’t have a leg to stand on.

For example, as with the case of Ricippio v. County of Suffolk, et al., 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 18979 (E.D.N.Y. March 4, 2009), “The federal district court disagreed, noting that the Handbook states that it is a ‘guide and does not substitute for existing practice’; that the Handbook reserves the Trustees’ right to change the personnel policies ‘as they deem appropriate’” (28).

In turn, faculty members may find themselves totally at odds with, and disillusioned by, an institution they have invested years of their life supporting. They may start asking, ‘What’s the point?’ ‘What am I going to do now?’ and ‘What does this all mean for me, my career, and my family?’

When we find ourselves at that precarious place, our initial impulse may be to either give up and quit (flight) or stick with it and decide that you aren’t going to ‘let the bastards get you down’ (Illigetimi Non Carborundum) (flight). Either way it is really a prime opportunity to step back and regroup our thoughts and feelings.

This is also a time to recognize and draw upon our individual and collective strengths. If we decide that we aren’t quite ready to hand in the towel it is the perfect time to move forward, organize and strategize!

One of the ways to do this is to connect with like-minded colleagues who share your energy and determination.

Another great idea is to connect with members, chapters (Advocacy and CBC), and leadership of the NYSC Conference of the AAUP!

A good place to start is the NYSC AAUP website which can be found at http://nysaaup.org

Not only will you find all sorts of valuable information about the NYSC Conference, there are lots of FAQs, News and Events information, a Library containing useful information on

The National AAUP Releases a Statement on the Targeted Online Harassment of Faculty

The statement includes recommendations for administrations, governing boards, faculty bodies, and individual faculty members to defend academic freedom, condemn targeted harassment of faculty, and to prohibit surreptitious recordings of faculty and students.

The statement is printed in its entirety below:

Targeted Online Harassment of Faculty

The 2016 election has exacerbated a political climate that was already inimical to academic freedom. Six years ago the American Association of University Professors released a statement addressing increasing concerns about efforts to intimidate and harass faculty. The Professor Watchlist website, claiming to identify professors who “advance leftist propaganda in the classroom” is one example of such efforts.

No Surprise: “Skinny” Federal Budget Undermines Science, Education and the Public Good

President Trump released an initial budget proposal March 16 containing deep cuts that would severely damage scientific research, the arts and humanities, and access to higher education.

The budget proposal includes a cut of nearly 20 percent to National Institutes of Health funding and deep cuts to research programs at the Department of Energy, Department of Education, and other government agencies.

It deicates funding for climate change research and programs within the Environmental Protection Agency and completely eliminates the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The repercussions of these cuts, if enacted, would be very serious for faculty, our students, and the public.

Cuts to student aid are also severe, and disproportionately affect students of color and working class students.

The proposal slashes work-study programs, grants for leading colleges and universities, and programs that prepare disadvantaged students for college.

It robs Peter to pay Paul by moving $3.9 billion in surplus Pell Grant funds to non-educational uses.

While the AAUP is not surprised by this proposal–just one in a series of politically motivated attacks on higher education–we are dismayed by it.

This is not a design for the world class system of higher education that Americans have come to expect.

It is, instead, a design that will undermine the world’s finest system of higher education and further harm low-income college students. It is not in the interest of the American people.

The AAUP has long supported teaching, research, and student access to higher education, including expanding opportunities for students of color. We believe that colleges and universities are a public good and learning and the search for truth are vital for a functioning democracy.

To sign an open letter opposing the budget, go to: https://actionnetwork.org/forms/trump-budget-undermines-education-public-good

On January 31, 2017, the AAUP released a statement addressing increasing concerns about efforts to intimidate and harass faculty. The Professor Watchlist website, claiming to identify professors who “advance leftist propaganda in the classroom” is one example of such efforts.

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Six years ago the American Association of University Professors released a statement addressing increasing concerns about efforts to intimidate and harass faculty. The Professor Watchlist website, claiming to identify professors who “advance leftist propaganda in the classroom” is one example of such efforts.
such lists or singled out elsewhere have been subject to
target them.

Since the election, we have seen a
resurgence of politically motivated witch hunts against
academ ic scientists working in fields such as climate change
and fetal tissue research, where the implications of scientific
findings are perceived as threats by entrenched interests and
partisan ideologues.

In addition to the “danger zones” for academic freedom enumerated in 2011, issues related to racial justice have also
come to the forefront in the course of the last two years and
played a prominent role in the most recent election.

Against this backdrop, ongoing and new efforts by private
groups to monitor the conduct of faculty members have
heightened concerns about the impact of the political climate
on academic freedom.

Thirteen years ago the Association’s Special Committee
on Academic Freedom and National Security in a Time of
Crisis remarked that such groups, “parading under the banner
of patriotism or acting to further a specific cause, have been
making monitoring academic activities and have denounced
professorial departures from what these groups view as
acceptable.

A private project called Campus Watch, for example, has
subjected professors of Middle Eastern studies to such
scrutiny.

Antecedents to these efforts can be found in the activities
of the John Birch Society in the 1960s and of the Accuracy in
Academia movement in the 1980s.

Today, their descendants can be found on websites such as Campus Reform, College Fix, or Professor Watchlist.

A website like Professor Watchlist, which purports to
identify faculty who “discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom”
and which had initially also aimed to identify those who
“promote anti-American values,” lists names of professors
with their institutional affiliations and photographs, thereby
making it easy for would-be stalkers and cyberbullies to
target them.

Individual faculty members who have been included on
such lists or singled out elsewhere have been subject to
threats of physical violence, including sexual assault, through
hundreds of e-mails, calls, and social media postings.

Such threatening messages are likely to stifle the free
expression of the targeted faculty member; further, the
publicity that such cases attracts can cause others to
self-censor so as to avoid being subjected to similar
treatment. Thus, targeted online harassment is a threat to
academic freedom.

Commenting on the distinction between governmental
interference in academic freedom and the activities of
external faculty monitors, the Association’s special committee
made the following observation about the latter:

As private entities, these groups are protected by the First
Amendment from state censorship or sanction as long as they
stay within lawful bounds.

They are sheltered by the same freedom of expression that
we seek for ourselves, and they are equally subject to public
rebuke.

Insofar as a particular professor might be thrust into the
rough and tumble of the public arena, the law demands, as a
prominent legal scholar once put it, a certain toughening of
the mental hide. Such is the price of free speech.

While it may indeed be wise counsel for those
who have been thrust into the public arena (willingly or
unwillingly) to steel themselves against harsh criticism,
surely such advice does not extend to threats against faculty members’ lives or those of their family members.

In 2011 “all-right” publisher Andrew Breitbart posted a
surreptitiously recorded video clip of a labor studies class at
the University of Missouri that had been edited to distort
the context of the classroom discussion, an action that led to
death threats to the instructors.

In response to Breitbart’s action, the AAUP observed:

“When students voice their views in class, they should not
have to fear that their comments will be spread all over the
Internet. When faculty members rightly explore difficult
topics in class, they should not have to fear for their jobs or
their lives.”

The AAUP does not dispute the First Amendment rights
of these organizations, nor does it call for government
censorship or sanction against them.

It does, however, condemn efforts to intimidate or silence
faculty members, and it urges others to do so as well.

Governing boards of colleges and universities have
a responsibility to defend academic freedom and institutional autonomy, including to protect institutions from undue public
interference, by resisting calls for the dismissal of faculty members and by condemning their targeted harassment and intimidation.

As the AAUP’s Statement on Government of Colleges
and Universities asserts: “When ignorance or ill will threatens
the institution or any part of it, the governing board must be
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by Irwin Yellowitz, Chair, New York Conference Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure

Academic freedom protects all faculty members, tenured or untenured. If a faculty member in New York State has
experienced, or is threatened with, a violation of academic freedom, or of the tenure rights which sustain it, the members
of New York Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure are ready to help.

We are prepared to receive complaints and provide advice about possible courses of action.

Our first function is to discuss the issues and actions
involving the faculty member. This involves telephone
communications, e-mail exchanges, and a full examination of
the available documentary record.

In personnel actions, or any issue that has implications
for academic freedom, faculty members should keep
accurate and complete records of all relevant correspondence,
telephonic and electronic communications, and meetings with
colleagues and administrators.

Our counsel is based on AAUP guidelines and our own
experience.

We offer advice on whether the procedures of
the institution meet established academic practice, and whether
they have been applied properly.

We offer advice on whether the actions taken or
contemplated have a prima facie aura of discrimination or
malice.

Our advice helps faculty members understand their
situations better, allows them to maximize the effectiveness
of internal institutional procedures, and clarifies the realistic
possibilities for outside action.

When NY Committee A believes that a violation of AAUP
policies or standards has occurred, it may

try to arrange a settlement;

investigate the matter;

refer the complaint to national AAUP Committee A with
a recommendation for a full investigation and appropriate
action.

As Chair of NY Conference Committee A, I deal with an
inquiry, or assign it to a member of the Committee, who then
contacts the person and takes responsibility in the matter.

The full Committee makes all decisions on how to proceed
once the facts and issues have been established.

Our actions are based on AAUP’s principles as stated in
AAUP’s policy statements, and on our judgment of how a
particular situation fits with those standards.

How to Maximize Help from AAUP Concerning
Academic Freedom and Tenure Issues

If you have an issue that concerns academic freedom and
tenure, AAUP is available to consult with you. The following
protocol explains how to maximize the help we can provide:

1. If there is an AAUP chapter, you should first approach it.

The leaders of the chapter know the situation on campus,
and they may be able to mediate the situation.

They also can provide valuable advice. If there is a collec-
tive bargaining agreement in place, the grievance procedure
may cover the issue. This will provide an important source of
support.

2. If there is no AAUP chapter, or should the chapter be
unable to help, you may approach New York Committee A on
Academic Freedom and Tenure.

We will be available to discuss the issues fully, and to offer
advice. NY Committee A also may recommend to National
Committee A of AAUP that it consider your issue.

3. Finally, at any time, you may approach National
Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

However, once you do, NY Committee A will step aside.
It is the policy of NY Committee A not to become involved in any matter
that has been reviewed, or is under review, by National Commit-
tee A.

4. Thus AAUP offers a variety of means for a faculty mem-
ber to get valuable advice, and perhaps ultimately to have
AAUP intervene in a case. If you follow the steps outlined
above, you will best take advantage of the resources offered by
AAUP in this critical area.

If you have reason to consult with NY Commit-
tee A, contact the Chair of the Committee:

Irwin Yellowitz, Chair, NY Committee A;
e-mail: iyellowitz@aol.com

We Can Help You Defend Your
Academic Freedom

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