

St. Louis Contingent Faculty Conference Highlights Problems, Possible Solutions

Over sixty full- and part-time college teachers, students, administrators, and others interested in the increasing use of adjunct faculty attended the St. Louis Conference for Contingent Faculty. This full-day meeting was held April 8 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Clayton.

The AAUP had a substantial presence at the conference not only with members attending, but grants from both the Missouri Conference and the national Assembly of State Conferences. In addition, Gwendolyn Bradley, from the AAUP national office, attended the conference and led a session on professional evaluation.

Three St. Louis-area adjuncts provided varying perspectives on contingent faculty issues. Claudia Hilton (Saint Louis University) discussed the types of benefits available at her institution and at other area schools; Jan Gippo (Webster University) spoke on the right to formal organization from his perspective as a full-time member of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and chair of its negotiating committee. Bridget Hurd (St. Charles Community College) tackled several real-life issues for adjuncts when she asked the audience at one point, "How many of you have pawned something recently? How many of you need to go to the dentist?" In both cases, several of those attending raised their hands.



Joe Berry, a contingent faculty member at Roosevelt University and author of the book, *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower*, was the featured morning speaker.

photo by Linda Golden

Reclaiming the Ivory Tower

Joe Berry, an adjunct at both Roosevelt University and the University of Illinois, was an invited conference speaker. The author of a new book on the subject of contingent faculty, *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Organizing Adjuncts to Reclaim Higher Education* (2005), Professor Berry spoke about the process of labor organization. Berry also led an earlier conference session specifically for those interested in becoming adjunct advocates.

An Administrator's Perspective

Following lunch, Dr. Edward Macias, Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, was the featured speaker. Dr. Macias reviewed policies and initiatives at his institution regarding adjunct faculty. Workshops were held in the afternoon on planning for retirement, insurance options for

part-time faculty, open, unstructured discussions, and a showing of the video *Degrees of Shame*.

In addition to the AAUP, the conference was sponsored by the NEA, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and Saint Louis University. Other sponsoring organizations included local AAUP chapters and the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates.

St. Louis Association for Contingent Faculty

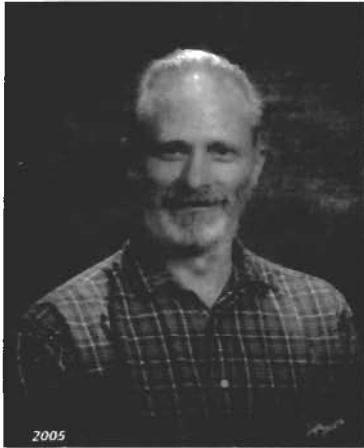
As a follow-up to the conference, a meeting was held on June 10 to establish the *St. Louis Association for Contingent Faculty*. An organizing committee has been formed and a second meeting will be held on Saturday, September 23 to initiate a listening (information gathering) project among adjuncts in the St. Louis area. For more information on this open meeting, please see stladjuncts.org. All interested parties are welcome. ■

Inside this Issue

Report on National AAUP Meeting	3-4
Stuart McAninch	
Legislative Update	2, 6
John Harms	
In Memoriam, Mark Nordstrom	2
Membership Information	5

In Memoriam Mark Nordstrom

Our friend and colleague, Mark Allen Nordstrom, died from cancer on May 13th at the age of 53. Professor Nordstrom studied journalism at Ohio State University and had a successful career in radio, print, and broadcast journalism for twenty years before deciding to pursue a career as a journalism teacher.



Professor Nordstrom began his career at Bowling Green University in Ohio and later taught journalism at Lincoln University and Truman State University. His area of expertise at Truman was media writing and mass communication. In addition, he served as advisor to several student publications. Mark's other

academic interests were quite varied including website communication, high definition television, and the development of mass communication in Germany in the years following World War II.

According to Heinz Woehlk, dean of the division of language and literature at Truman, Mark "truly enjoyed working here at Truman. His time here was very happy because of the people he worked with and the students whom he taught. He was with us at Truman for only a short time, but he illuminated all of us with his professionalism, volunteerism, and positive outlook."

Mark served as editor of *Missouri Academe* for the last several issues. Missouri AAUP President John Harms said, "Mark's sudden illness and death shocked all of his AAUP colleagues. It is very sad and ironic, for it was Mark who graciously stepped up to take over running the Conference newsletter after [former conference president and AAUP National Council member] David Gruber died from cancer. Mark's generosity and dedication were appreciated and respected by all who worked with him, and he will be missed."

The Missouri Conference of the AAUP has made a memorial donation to the college fund for Mark's daughter. A contributions to the Truman State University Foundation Journalism Fund is an additional way of honoring Mark. Send your check (print "for Mark Nordstrom" on the memo line) to the Advancement Office, Truman State University, McClain Hall 100, 100 East Normal St., Kirksville, MO 63501-4221.

A memorial service at Truman is being planned for Fall, 2006. ■

MISSOURI LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

by John Harms
President, Missouri AAUP

Our lives as teachers and scholars are increasingly affected by forces off campus—especially legislative actions. Here is a brief summary of this year's legislative activities that affect higher education in Missouri. First, HJR 48 did not pass the House. This legislation is part of a "taxpayer's bill of rights" (TABOR) which would limit appropriations and put further strain on the state budget, just as the Hancock Amendment did earlier with revenue

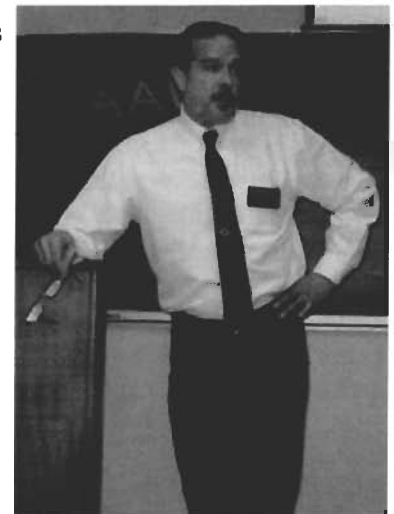
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limits. Along the same lines, a TABOR ballot initiative was ruled to be invalid due to procedures used to collect and report signatures. So, for now at least, the TABOR threat is not an immediate concern.

Proposed MOHELA Sale

In an attempt to address the financial needs of higher education in the State, Governor Blunt proposed selling part of Missouri's Higher Education Loan Authority

(MOHELA), the State's student loan agency. This idea became a political "hot potato" as both the Senate and House attempted to modify the governor's plan. In the end, the MOHELA sale was held hostage by the House to push through Rep. Bearden's Higher Education Formula bill—HB 1865 in the Senate. This bill contained a scholarship that functioned like a voucher plan, put limits on raising tuition, and further limited state appropriations. The House made passage of HB 1022, MOHELA appropriations, conditional on the Senate passing HB 1865. The Senate did not pass HB 1865, and the MOHELA sale stalled. The Governor said he planned to continue with the MOHELA sale without legislative approval. Right now the MOHELA sale is up in the air.



MO AAUP President John Harms Discusses Legislative Issues at the Annual Meeting in Columbia

See "Legislature" on page 6

The 92nd Annual Meeting of the AAUP

June 8-11, 2006

by Stuart McAninch

What was most striking to me at the various Assembly of State Conferences (ASC), plenary, breakfast, and committee breakout sessions I attended was discussion of what President-elect Cary Nelson referred to as “culture war issues”: in particular, the ideological and political struggle between David Horowitz and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), on the one hand, and the AAUP and allied academic and civic organizations, on the other. Other issues pertaining to the organization and financial state of the AAUP were also frequently addressed in sessions.

Attack on “Procedural Liberalism”

“Culture war issues” as a central theme was illustrated by the choice of speakers. Michael Berube, the Paterno Family Professor of Literature at the Pennsylvania State University, spoke at the luncheon on Saturday on what he described as the current attack by the radical right on “procedural liberalism.” “Procedural liberalism,” as he defined it, is characterized by classical liberal commitments such as those to rational inquiry, a marketplace of ideas, and balanced and limited government.

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This brand of liberalism, he pointed out, is necessary for an open society and academic freedom. Differentiating between conservatism and the radical right, Berube argued that the agenda of the radical right is the negation of “procedural liberalism” in universities and in government.

Free Exchange on Campus

The address by Anthony Romero, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, at Saturday’s Recognition Banquet illustrated the alliance between the AAUP and ACLU on issues of academic freedom. Both organizations serve as coalition members of Free Exchange on Campus, which has formed to oppose adoption by states of the “Academic Bill of Rights” and distorted characterizations by Horowitz and others of faculty members as dangerous radicals intent on indoctrination.

Romero replaced Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan on the schedule since for the second year in a row he was unable to attend the annual meeting after having his work visa rescinded by the United States government. In an

immediate sense, the invitation to Ramadan (who did address the 2005 meeting via audio and video link) illustrated the AAUP’s opposition to the government’s denial of visas to academics on political grounds. In a letter to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Homeland Security in February, Roger Bowen, AAUP General Secretary, had expressed “deep concern” about the revocation of the visa of Waskar Ari, a Bolivian scholar appointed to a faculty position at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the prevention of 65 Cuban scholars from participating in an international academic conference in Las Vegas. Bowen concluded that there is “a troubling pattern emerging in which foreign scholars offered appointments at American universities or invited to attend academic conferences are prevented from entering the United States because of their perceived political beliefs or associations.”

Restricted Access

As the last quotation suggests, “deep concern” about U.S. government actions extended beyond denial or revocations of visas for foreign scholars. AAUP members, for instance, expressed opposition to reclassification of previously declassified government documents as well as the implementation by government departments and agencies during recent years of policies for review of documents which impede declassification and thereby severely restrict scholars’ access to the information necessary for accurate analysis of the history or current state of American foreign policy and intelligence activities. A resolution presented by the Resolutions Committee affirmed that “in these critical times the need is for more, not less, freedom of inquiry and expression.”

Neutrality on a “Moving Train”

The centrality of “culture war issues” to the current work of the Association was further illustrated by the multiple screenings on Friday of the documentary *Howard Zinn: You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. The film traced Zinn’s political and academic coming of age, his work in the civil rights and anti-war movements, and his critique of traditional top-down historical narratives and subsequent focus on the contributions of grass-roots movements in his writing and teaching. His work as a mentor to young black civil rights activists while serving on the faculty at Spelman College, his vision of a just and democratic society which can only be realized through informed grass-roots activism, and his own integration as an academic of political activism, teaching, and writing over the course of half a century were particularly noteworthy. As the film title indicates, Zinn’s approach to scholarship has been characterized by a fusion of analysis and action informed by a distinctly political set of values and commitments.

Campaign for the Common Good

In his remarks at a meeting of state conference representatives, Cary Nelson explained the significance of the Campaign for the Common Good, whose goal is creation of a \$10 million endowment for the AAUP, in terms of the organization's concern about serious threats to academic freedom. While Roger Bowen would in a later meeting matter-of-factly describe the endowment campaign as an effort to make the organization better able to manage its finances in the face of annual fluctuations in dues revenue

"Campaign for the Common Good" is an AAUP endowment project with the goal of raising \$10 million "in defense of academic freedom."

and grant money, Nelson stressed that a successful campaign was necessary to strengthen "ASC structures" in defense of academic freedom in case the American public tolerance should weaken in the event of further terrorist attacks. Nelson also made it clear at the meeting that he would vigorously exhort AAUP members to each donate \$1000 to the endowment fund (typically by credit card over the course of a number of months).

Contingent Faculty and Graduate Issues

There was some attention in various sessions to contingent faculty and graduate student issues. Michael Livingston, Chair of the Committee on Graduate and Professional Students, requested in his presentation at an ASC session that AAUP members recruit graduate students as a means to counteract the lack of familiarity with the AAUP and consequent difficulty in recruiting new faculty members. Reference was made to the transformation of the academic labor force in recent decades—one characteristic of that transformation being an increase in the percentage of courses taught by graduate students. Reference was also made to the extension by the AAUP of voting membership to graduate students.

President Jane Buck spoke in a plenary session of her and Cary Nelson's arrests at a demonstration earlier this year in support of the New York University graduate students' union. A National Labor Relations Board ruling in 2004 that graduate student employees are primarily students reversed a NLRB ruling in 2001 which granted legal recognition to the union. This reversal enabled the administration and governing board to deny recognition of the union. Graduate employees subsequently initiated a strike in November. Buck noted that exploitation of graduate employees undermines the profession and faculty governance. An article in the June 9, 2006 issue of *The Chroni-*

cle of Higher Education ("A Tenured Radical Takes Office") suggested that the NYU action represents a high priority for Cary Nelson as incoming president: "In a couple of ways, the NYU rally exemplifies Mr. Nelson's vision for the AAUP. First, he hopes the group will start paying more attention to graduate students. Under his watch, he hopes, it will craft 'a more elaborate statement on graduate-student rights, procedures, and responsibilities,' he says."

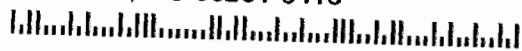
In the same session, David Hollinger, Chair of Committee A, reported continuing work with the Committee on Contingent Faculty and the Profession on a document laying out policy recommendations and principles for extension of protection for contingent faculty in the areas of dismissal or nonreappointment. According to the report of the Committee on Contingent Faculty and the Profession, "[t]he proposed recommendations will be published for comment in a future issue of *Academe*."

Given attention to graduate students' and contingent faculty's issues, some attendees raised questions regarding the expense of the AAUP Annual Meeting. Nelson was asked why, given "the practical and symbolic consequences," the meeting is held in such an expensive city and hotel—especially given the emphasis on recruiting graduate students, who often make "little more than bus boys." A partial answer provided by the Association leadership was that the Omni Shoreham Hotel is unionized—a response which left a number of us to wonder if there were in the area less expensive unionized hotels which could accommodate the meetings.

Leadership Training Workshop October 6-7

Flo Hatcher, Chair of the ASC, announced leadership training workshops scheduled for October 6-7 in Washington, D.C. which would constitute "a pilot program" for developing a generation of leaders in the Collective Bargaining Congress and ASC (although the emphasis seems to be initially on providing intensive training for state conference and advocacy chapter leaders). According to Hatcher's report, "[t]his innovative training experience will offer an expanded version of AAUP 101 from the summer institute; a course on designing and implementing a membership drive with a special focus on issue-base organizing as that seems the most fruitful in the advocacy context. Additional offerings include the basics of chapter and conference management, and a workshop on a current issue of importance that for fall 2006 may be on how to fight ABOR [Academic Bill of Rights] legislation at the state level." Attendance will be limited to 25 participants. Money to subsidize travel and participation is available through the ASC. ■

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"Legislature" from page 2

"Intelligent Design" and Other Issues

Representative Cooper introduced HB 1266, The Missouri Science Education Act, which is an Intelligent Design bill. HB 1266 made it through committee, but was not placed on the calendar for a vote. Hopefully, that will be then end of this bad idea.

HB 1619, legislation to eliminate the corporate franchise tax passes in the House but never made it to the floor of the Senate for a vote, and was not passed. If passed, it is estimated that the State's General Revenue Fund would lose \$125 million a year.

Finally, the governor signed House Bill 3, providing a \$20 million or 2.3 percent increase for higher education institutions. The legislation increases state funding

from \$856,729,163 in FY 2006 to \$876,718,746 for FY 2007. This includes an increase of \$17.2 million for public four-year colleges and universities and \$2.7 million more than last year for community colleges. This bill also includes an additional \$2.5 million for student financial aid. While the increase is a step in the right direction, the state has yet to make up for earlier cuts, and is still below FY2001 funding levels.

Viewed as a whole, higher education dodged a number of bullets this legislative session, but the atmosphere in the Capitol is still one where higher education funding is, at best, precarious. ■

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Visit the Conference Website at

www.moaaup.org