

**FALL CONFERENCE TO
FEATURE PART-TIME
INSTRUCTORS' ISSUES**

The 2006 Fall Assembly of the Tennessee Conference, AAUP, will meet at the Vanderbilt Divinity School building in Nashville Saturday October 28. Two panels will identify issues arising from the use and misuse of part-time instructors in higher education in Tennessee and, with the assistance of members in attendance, design a fact-gathering campaign with a future report in mind. Conference members, including part-time instructors, and selected officials from Tennessee colleges and universities will participate.

Panelists will have in hand a page of comparisons of income data showing, among other things, that an extrapolation of TBR part-time faculty maximum compensation to a full-time work-load comes to \$10,500. The 2000 Census reported that the median household income in Tennessee was \$47,530; households having no earners had a median income of \$22,205.

Registration for the Assembly will begin at 9:00 a.m. Welcoming remarks and the working panels commence 10:00. After a lunch break, the Assembly will be called upon to take action on the issue of a designated lobbyist for the Conference; as of this writing, we are not free to publish the name of our prospective

lobbyist, who is yet completing another activity in Tennessee higher education. A stated policy on funding delegates to the national meeting will be sought. Committee and Chapter reports will be allotted time.

The Assembly will close with the first Conference presidential address of Anthony J. Blasi of Tennessee State University: "What Undermines What We are For." The plan is to invite suggestions from those attending for revising and extending the text of the address so that it may be sent to principal higher education policy makers in the State.

The Assembly meeting site is located on the east side of the Vanderbilt University campus, near 21st Avenue South. By car one should take Interstate 40 into Nashville and exit onto Broadway going west. Bear left as West End splits off of Broadway. Follow Broadway and turn left onto Grand to find street parking on such side streets as 18th and 19th. Or follow Broadway another block and turn left to park for a fee in the Wesley Place Garage, on the second level.

Lunch will be arranged separately from the Conference. Please send a registration fee of \$10.00 to Philippa Holloway, Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; make checks out to "Tennessee Conference, AAUP." Payment at the time of registration is possible, but advance payment is encouraged.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONFERENCE LOBBYING

In the fairly distant past, Conference member Norman Farris lobbied with the legislature and the two state boards on behalf of the professorate working in Tennessee's public institutions. When Professor Farris sought to devote more time to writing projects and party politics, the Conference hired a professional lobbyist, whose principal function was that of keeping Conference officers informed about pertinent legislative initiatives. The development of the internet enabled Conference members to track legislative proposals online, and the Committee on Government Relations did that without the services of a professional lobbyist, as well as organize a Capitol Hill day.

In the past year there was a plan to go back to having a designated lobbyist who could provide continuity over time and develop relationships with members of the legislature, as well as monitor the proceedings of the two state boards. Having such a person in place appears particularly important because proposals are expected to emerge in the coming years for the restructuring of public higher education in Tennessee.

SPRING CONFERENCE MINUTES

The Tennessee Conference spring 2006 meeting was called to order on April 1, at Tennessee Technological University, by President Katherine Osburn.

Dr. Bill Fischer of ETSU spoke about a conference for retirees held at Fall Creek Falls in November of 2005.

The availability of Konheim Travel Awards for the National meeting in Washington was noted.

Anthony Blasi, TSU, discussed the possibility of Saad Eddin Ibrahim addressing the Conference at some future date.

The assembly voted to fund a gift certificate for retiring Secretary Treasurer Gilbert Fernandez.

The results of the spring election of Conference officers were announced: President, Anthony Blasi (TSU); Vice President for Public Universities, Peter Stoddard (APSU); Vice President for Private Universities, Max Malony (Christian Brothers University); Secretary Treasurer, Philippa Holloway (MTSU).

The featured speaker was Lewis Laska (TSU), who discussed legal issues facing the professorate. Lewis and William Schrader had recently authored *The Courts & the Academy in Tennessee. The Law and Faculty in Higher Education*, published by the Tennessee Conference in 2005 (see the February 2006 issue of the *Tennessee Conference Newsletter* for a review of the volume).

Committee reports were presented in the afternoon session. Andrew Smith (TTU) reported for the Committee on Adjuncts and Part-timers that the committee was developing a survey to see what the needs of adjuncts and part-time faculty were. James Williams (MTSU) reported that National AAUP eliminated the separate category for graduate students and that they now pay \$43.00 and have full voting privileges.

Chapter Reports followed. MTSU raised concerns with the new Tenure and Promotion guidelines from TBR. Hope was expressed that raising the pay for

faculty overloads would help bring up part-time pay. They had a speaker on “patriotic correctness,” John Wilson; the talk was sparsely attended but helped raise the chapter’s visibility. They reported a problem of professors being hired at the associate level and then being made to apply for full professor immediately.

UTK was searching for a new vice-chancellor of academic affairs. The chapter was hoping to have more voice in the search, having been shut out in recent years. Their Faculty Senate is tracking changes in tenure and promotion policies from their governing board; there was a quandary over new “expedited tenure policies” for part-timers. There was also a problem of handbook changes made without faculty input—something the Senate Executive Committee naively allowed.

At TSU the Faculty Senate held a referendum on a new Senate Constitution that lacked provisions concerning representation. Meanwhile, a new administration was being installed; how faculty-friendly it will be remains to be seen.

APSU and TTU reported favorable circumstances. ETSU had a similarly positive report but expressed caution about greater publishing pressures absent reduced teaching loads.

NATIONAL MEETING

The national AAUP assembly was held in Washington, DC, June 8-10. Among the concerns that delegates shared were 1) the continuing corporate trend in administering universities, with a resulting decrease in emphasis on liberal education,

2) increased intervention by federal and state government in asserting what should be taught and how it should be taught (most particularly David Horowitz’s mis-named Academic Bill of Rights movement, with legislative efforts in many states and in Congress, 3) the rise in tuition rates for students, especially in public universities, occasioned by cutbacks in state funding but blamed on educators, and 4) the exploitation and over-use of contingent faculty as a stratagem for providing higher education on the cheap.

New Mexico Highlands University was added to the list of censured institutions. Meanwhile, five other institutions conformed to AAUP’s guidelines for acceptable practices in higher education and were removed from the censure list: Community College of Baltimore County, Des Moines University, Maryland Institute College of Art, Nyack College, and Westminster College. Extended consideration was devoted to the situation at Medaille College in Buffalo, New York; two tenured faculty members had been improperly dismissed, but the College set about settling with them and making appropriate remedies to its faculty handbook. There was local disagreement in Buffalo and in the New York Conference over the adequacy of the settlements and handbook changes.

The national AAUP board reported that the membership records appeared to be in disarray, a situation that rendered making a financial report impossible. Board members clearly wanted something to be done, and General Secretary Roger Bowen concurred. [Personnel changes in the office have since been made.]

DIRECTORY UPDATE

Conference officers, and committees are listed, with contact information, on the Conference website (<http://web.utk.edu/~glenn/AAUP.html>), which is generously maintained by Bob Glenn. The officers and contact information for the individual chapters are also given. Please check the website to make sure the information for your own local chapter is up to date and advise Bob of any changes.

FUTURE EVENTS

Present plans are to have the spring meeting at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and the fall 2007 meeting at LeMoyne-Owen University in Memphis. The 2007 national AAUP meeting is scheduled for next June in Washington, D.C.

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