

# TENNESSEE

# CONFERENCE

October 2011

# NEWSLETTER

## The Fall Meeting at a Glance

### Safeguarding Academic Freedom and Tenure

The Fall 2011 Meeting of the Conference will be held at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. In order to accommodate those traveling from some distance, the meeting will begin later than usual to preclude the need for a hotel stay on Friday night.

The organizer of the Fall Meeting is Jim Williams, Secretary of the Tennessee Conference. Dr. Rich Rhoda of THEC will provide updates on the implementation of the Complete College Tennessee Act. Dr. Walter Nichols, the newly appointed TBR Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges has agreed to join us and share his vision for Community Colleges in Tennessee.

Join us for presentations, workshops, discussion and a view of the future of higher education in Tennessee. Lunch will be provided, please indicate your intention to attend by **emailing your RSVP to [Jim.Williams@mtsu.edu](mailto:Jim.Williams@mtsu.edu) by Monday, October 31.** See the meeting program information on the right.

The conference meets in the **James Union Building, Room 100** at MTSU. For directions, visit <http://www.mtsu.edu/~aaup> .

## Travel Grants to the Fall Meeting

The following resolution has been passed to provide travel assistance. "Any campus that sends 4 or more faculty (broadly defined) individuals (2 of whom have never attended a state conference meeting) can be reimbursed up to \$200 from the state conference for expenses." A simple request for reimbursement including a list of expenses and names of meeting participants from the campus can be provided to the secretary and treasurer at the fall meeting.

### Safeguarding Academic Freedom and Tenure

#### Fall Meeting Program Middle Tennessee State University Murfreesboro, TN

#### Saturday, November 5

**10:00 am:** Social time as members arrive.

**10:30 am:** Welcome

*Special guest Dr. Warren Nichols, TBR Vice Chancellor for Community*

**11:30 am:** AAUP Member **Dr. Rich Rhoda**, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

#### LUNCH:

**1:00 pm:** Workshop on contingent faculty in Tennessee.

**1:30 pm:** Workshop on *Garcetti v. Ceballos* and its effects on academic freedom in Tennessee (Dr. Alfred Lutz, MTSU).

**2:00 pm:** Conference updates, chapter reports, and other issues.

#### Phone Access to the Program and Meeting

**Teleconference Number (877)820-7831**

**Room Number: 9865579#**

**(the pound key must be entered)**

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## Coley's Corner

Coley McGinnis  
Government Relations

In this first academic year of implementation of the Complete College Tennessee Act, a lot of questions loom. At this point that's really all we have: questions. The Comptroller's Office is undertaking an audit of higher ed as the act requires, and it will make its first report to the legislature in January. We have made an effort to suggest some issues that the audit should examine, such as the increasing proportion of money being spent for non-instructional purposes. That office has submitted information on the various issues it is examining to the Education Committees of the legislature, but thus far we have been unable to obtain the document because it is being treated as an "internal work product." House Speaker Beth Harwell did respond to an inquiry by saying that she was confident most of our concerns were reflected in the submission. We shall see.

THEC Executive Rich Rhoda, a long-time AAUP member, will again join us at the fall meeting, and we have asked him to give us his perspective on CCTA implementation at this stage. The core curriculum and graduation requirements have pretty much been developed. The impact of the new funding formula should become clearer as next year's budget numbers begin to emerge during the fall.

Another major provision in the CCTA required the creation of a new "community college system"

within TBR. Dr. Walter Nichols, the recently-appointed Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, has accepted our invitation to speak at the meeting about how that is going to work. We hope that number of our CC colleagues will take advantage of this opportunity to hear the person who will be responsible for implementing that provision. What decisions will be made by the "system" and what will be left to the campuses could significantly impact faculty rights and responsibilities?

TBR Vice Chancellor Paula Short has been engaged in two initiatives of direct interest to the Conference. Largely at our suggestion last spring, she created a Task Force on Adjunct Faculty. Flora Setayesh of NSCC has done a terrific job of representing us on that task force, and its proposals appear to reflect our positions on the major issues. Please see the *Proposals by the TBR Task Force on Adjunct Faculty* on the next page. The next stage will be committees to develop mechanisms to implement the recommendations. Flora will bring us up to date on that at the meeting. As always, the initial steps look promising, but the devil is in the details.

TBR had also been developing a policy covering the power of instructors to assign failing grades for cheating, especially what offenses would justify failing a student in the course. This obviously raises questions of academic freedom. At this stage each campus is supposed to be in the process of developing its own rules in keeping with the TBR policy. I expect questions about this to be raised at the meeting.

Coley McGinnis  
Conference President and Director of Government Relations  
[coleymac@comcast.net](mailto:coleymac@comcast.net)

## Tennessee Conference Committees

The conference is seeking additional members who will actively participate on each of its committees. The fall meeting will be a great opportunity for you to learn about the various committees and request to become a member of one. We seek broad representation from various institutions across the state in each committee. A list of the Conference committees follows:

Committee A (Academic Freedom and Tenure)  
Committee on Membership and Dues  
Committee on Part-Time & Non-Tenure-Track Appointments  
Committee on Government Relations  
Committee on College and University Government  
Committee on Junior and Community Colleges  
Committee on Status of Women  
Claxton Award Committee

### **Proposals by the TBR Task Force on Adjunct Faculty: July 2011**

1. That the definition of “adjunct faculty” in TBR Policy be clarified, revised as needed, and used consistently throughout all relevant TBR policies and guidelines.
2. Given that the most recent revision to the TBR guideline that addresses adjunct compensation was in 1998, that compensation practices for adjunct faculty be actively addressed particularly through a thorough examination and revision of TBR Guideline P-050. This review must consider the need to establish minimum rates of pay, address other possible forms of remuneration for adjuncts, and provide institutional leaders with the flexibility to remunerate adjuncts without the costly and time-intensive requirement of a documented market study. Also, that a mechanism for regularly reviewing adjunct pay rates be considered as a component to policy and guideline revision.
3. That best practices in training adjunct faculty including orientation, technology in teaching, and pedagogy be systemically identified and shared in order to support an optimal quality of adjunct faculty experience to support student persistence and success.
4. Similarly, that best practices in Communication, Working environment, and Inclusion and recognition practices be identified and shared. Sharing mechanisms may include a system-wide, hard copy text of best practices, use of various electronic communication tools, conferences, and workshops.
5. To implement proposals 1 – 4 above, that a separate action team be formed to investigate each proposal in detail; that each action team prepare and present its findings to the TFAF and the Office of Academic Affairs; and that each action team, the TFAF and the Office of Academic Affairs follow-through to actualize significant improvements in the adjunct faculty experience throughout the TBR.

### **Outsourcing Outstrips Shared Governance at Tennessee Tech**

TTU's AAUP chapter has watched with growing concern the manner in which the University has managed the process of considering whether to outsource its custodial staff. Early this year the Custodial Services Ad Hoc Committee was established under the direction of President Bob Bell. With a mandate to find cost savings of about \$1 million, the Committee's charge was to design an RFP [request for proposal] that would be submitted for bid by private vendors and to investigate alternatives to outsourcing. Motivated by a spirit of shared governance, the Committee included faculty, administration, and staff.

By August 2011, however, it was clear that the charge to the Committee had been egregiously violated when the RFP was submitted for bid without the committee ever having met with an agenda to consider what elements the RFP should contain.

The violation of the Committee's charge prompted the TTU Faculty Senate on August 12, 2011, to pass a motion acknowledging that the Committee's charge had been "compromised" in its first procedural step. The motion also called for all members of the Committee to take part in the evaluation process of the RFP. Subsequent decisions by Committee members from TTU's Business Office precluded participation by all committee members even in the RFP evaluation process. Following this series of events, on October 6, 2011, TTU's AAUP chapter passed a resolution also acknowledging that the charge to the committee had been violated, along with the process of shared governance. The AAUP resolution called in addition for the RFP to be withdrawn from bid and reconsidered before being resubmitted for bid. The fact that the process of shared governance has been so clearly abused, and with no apparent current consequence, is a cause for great concern and calls into question the Administration's commitment to the idea and practice of shared governance.

-- Dr. Jon Jonakin, TTU AAUP Treasurer and  
Professor of Economics, TTU

## Occupy The Classroom

As the world watches the Occupy Wall Street movement garner support across America, teachers and professors continue to occupy classrooms with critical thinking, dialogue, and other tools of citizenship education. Public higher education for the common good might occupy more of a priority at the local and national levels. Academic freedom might occupy our hearts rather than preoccupy us with worries about whether or not we'll achieve tenure or be reappointed. In the TN Conference of the AAUP, we hope you will occupy our membership rolls, our committees, and our vacant leadership positions when they arise. Let's all occupy our minds with a vision of social progress that includes prioritizing education and honoring professors' voices.

<http://www.good.is/post/why-education-needs-an-occupy-the-classroom-revolution/>

## Chapter News

These updates are based on reports from local chapters.

### Jackson State Community College

Use of adjunct instructors has increased at Jackson State Community College to an all-time high, with half or more of course-section offerings now being taught by part-timers. Also, most (perhaps even all) recent full-time faculty hires have been assigned term or temporary contracts rather than placed into tenure-track positions. This is occurring in areas of long-established, ongoing instructional need, both for academic programs and for core general-education classes. Dual-enrollment classes have increased with a corresponding rise in concerns related to them.

The interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs has continued as such. No official word has addressed when this position might become a permanent one. This may be in part due to changes related to the Complete College Tennessee Act, which has various kinds of impact on community college structures.

### LeMoyne-Owen College

The Faculty Organization piloted an evaluation of the College President last year. This year the results were reported to the President, his Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. We are now leading an effort to institutionalize faculty evaluation of the Chief Academic Officer and other administrative offices on campus.

The Professional and Employment Conditions Committee, of the Faculty Organization, has been very busy. They have met with the Director of Human Resources to discuss benefit issues raised by faculty.

### Tennessee Tech University

This year we have revived our Fall Forum and are planning on having a tenure workshop in the spring. We want to make AAUP visible and to make a contribution to campus life. We have less than 50 members right now and we would like to increase that.

The Fall Forum this year is entitled "Research in Hard Times." Dr. Tor Guimaraes, who presented at the National AAUP Convention this summer, gave me the idea for the forum from his paper in D.C. We would love to have anyone from the Tennessee Conference attend. It will be Tues. Oct. 25 at 7 p.m. in Prescott Hall Auditorium Room 215.

The forum is meant to encourage faculty to engage in original research, and to find sources for funding. In addition, the forum will help faculty and the general public understand decisions made at the state level which may negatively affect faculty at TTU and other colleges not considered "flagship" universities, making original research harder to carry out.

Speakers for the Fall Forum include Dr. Tor Guimaraes, who is J. E. Owen Chair of Excellence in the Information Technology Services at TTU, and will speak on "Research Grant Emphasis: An Insidious Threat to Faculty Governance." and Dr. Russ Witcher, Professor of Journalism at TTU, who will give a presentation entitled: "Developing Your Own Research Interests and Cultivating Publishers." Dr. Otuonye will serve as a respondent, supplementing and commenting on the presentations.

Dr. Guimaraes and Dr. Gunter are very distinguished researchers: Dr. Guimaraes won the highest award at TTU for outstanding research, the Caplenor Faculty Research Award, and Dr. Witcher has published 4 books. Dr. Otuonye knows the ins and outs of obtaining research grants at TTU due to his top position in the Office for Research and Graduate Studies, and he has participated in such prestigious programs at the National Science Foundation. He, too, has a substantial record of research.

This will be a great faculty development opportunity and we are inviting faculty, graduate students, adjunct faculty, and the general public to attend.

-- Dr. Josephine McQuail, President AAUP, TTU

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## Conference Officers

**PRESIDENT**

Coley McGinnis, Tennessee State University  
[coleymac@comcast.net](mailto:coleymac@comcast.net)

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

Andrew Smith, Tennessee Tech University  
[ASmith@tntech.edu](mailto:ASmith@tntech.edu)

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS**

Pat Papachristou, Christian Brothers University  
[ppapachr@cbu.edu](mailto:ppapachr@cbu.edu)

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Pam Xanthopoulos, Jackson State Community College  
[pam.xanthopoulos@gmail.com](mailto:pam.xanthopoulos@gmail.com)

**SECRETARY**

Jim Williams, Middle Tennessee State Univ.  
[jhwillia@mtsu.edu](mailto:jhwillia@mtsu.edu)

**TREASURER**

Pippa Holloway, Middle Tennessee State Univ.  
[phollowa@MTSU.edu](mailto:phollowa@MTSU.edu)

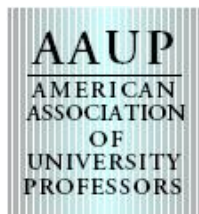
**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

Delphia Harris, LeMoyne-Owen College  
[df\\_harris@loc.edu](mailto:df_harris@loc.edu)

## About the Chapter Service Program

The Tennessee Conference Chapter Service Program, with support from the Assembly of State Conferences, is designed to aid AAUP chapters in promoting a program on their campuses that will reflect the standards of professional development associated with the AAUP. The AAUP has developed the standards for academic practice long recognized by professors, governing bodies, and administrators in higher education. Each local chapter should have as one of its goals a commitment to see that these standards are adhered to on their campus. Please contact Conference officers for help and services in the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention of members
- Tenure and academic freedom
- Faculty governance
- Chapter leadership training
- Conference web site
- Attorney referral list
- Economic welfare of the professoriate
- Lobbying activities



**Coley McGinnis**  
**TN-AAUP President**  
**21 Vaughns Gap Road**  
**A-18**  
**Nashville, TN 37205**  
**(615)356-5993**