



THE TENNESSEE CONFERENCE
Academic Freedom for a Free Society in Tennessee

Newsletter of The Tennessee Conference of the American Association of University Professors **December 2020**

AAUP

Founded in 1915, the purpose of the AAUP is to:
advance academic freedom and shared governance.
define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education.
ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

The Tennessee Conference of the AAUP newsletters are archived on our website at Taaup.org

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THE TENNESSEE CONFERENCE OF THE AAUP AND THE TENNESSEE AAUP FOUNDATION

The Tennessee Conference of the AAUP provides services to its constituent colleges and universities and to the state as a whole, and strives to protect the rights of all faculty members in Tennessee public and private institutions, whether they are full-time or adjunct, tenured, tenure track, or non-tenure track. We attempt to help government officials, the media and the general public understand the importance of higher education in helping students become more competitive in a global economy and more capable of exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and to convey the vital role that faculty plays in achieving those goals.

The Tennessee Conference recently revived its Foundation Account. National AAUP has its own Foundation; the Tennessee Conference of the AAUP Foundation is designed specifically to help TN Conference members, and to support Academic Freedom in Tennessee.

The Tennessee Foundation of the Tennessee Conference of the AAUP, through the generous contributions of Tennessee Conference members past and present, was recently enabled to send out its first check for Legal Assistance to a Tennessee Conference member. This member was negatively affected as a direct consequence of organizing an AAUP chapter at their university. We would like to continue to help Tennessee Conference members in this way and we thank all of those of you who have previously contributed.

If anyone would like to donate to the TN AAUP Foundation and receive a tax deduction for 2020, the letter containing their contribution must be postmarked by Dec. 31, 2020. Mail donations to

Dora Estes

TN Conference of the AAUP Treasurer
303 Ponder Rd.

Smithville TN 37166

Envelopes must be postmarked Dec. 31, 2020 to qualify for a tax donation for the year 2020. Checks should be made payable to "TN Foundation of the AAUP."

Josephine A. McQuail

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: WHAT CAN BE DONE?

With Covid-19 adding to the previous problems with shared governance in colleges and universities in Tennessee, it is easy to feel helpless in the face of the continued overreaching on the part of administrators in the course of which they ignore principles of Faculty Governance, the principles upon which AAUP was founded in 1915. However, working collectively, we can fight against such overreaching and ensure the faculty voice is heard! Here are some examples from the National AAUP, from the MTSU Chapter AAUP, and from the TN State Conference of the AAUP itself.

Recommendations to the Biden Administration by Irene Mulvey, National AAUP President

In a December 7 virtual listening session on higher education with the Biden-Harris transition team and other higher ed advocacy organizations, AAUP president Irene Mulvey delivered remarks about planning for a better future for higher education; supporting students, faculty, and staff; and reversing Trump administration policies.

Thank you for inviting the AAUP to participate in this event. We are truly honored to have the opportunity to share our priorities and concerns with the Biden-Harris Transition Team. I am Irene Mulvey, the elected president of the American Association of University Professors. We represent all kinds of faculty at all kinds of institutions of higher education in the United States. We work in very close partnership with AFT on a number of issues and we also work in partnership with NEA on legislative priorities such as the Higher Ed Reauthorization.

Our priority and our mission is ensuring higher education's contribution to the common good, acknowledging that a robust system of higher education—that is affordable and accessible—is essential in a well-functioning democracy. Any specific priorities of ours would follow from that mission to advance academic freedom and shared governance in higher education, and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

From the AAUP:

1. We need a plan that will make higher education affordable and accessible to anyone willing to do the work to get a degree.
2. In that vein, we support student loan debt forgiveness. The current situation is morally wrong and economically untenable.

3. Along the same lines, we support a national movement to increase wages for adjunct faculty in contingent positions. Most are paid literally poverty level wages. Colleges and universities administrations should be held accountable for their employment practices. We are deeply concerned that in the post-pandemic world, higher education will be offered on the backs of contingent faculty. Institutions must be disincentivized from exploiting contingent faculty.

4. This leads to our strong support for unions and labor so that faculty and staff who want to organize unions can do so.

Mulvey, cont'd p. 5

NEWS FROM THE MTSU CHAPTER — ADMINISTRATION IMPLEMENTS STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY WITHOUT FACULTY INPUT

Without significant faculty input, MTSU's administration implemented a survey of student satisfaction regarding their experiences in remote and hybrid learning environments early in the semester. Furthermore, the information derived from this extra-procedural faculty evaluation has not been provided to the faculty members, even though we have received information regarding one case in which the chair of a department used the information to request a faculty member change teaching strategies.

On behalf of the chapter, Pres. Ellen Donovan and Pres-Elect Alfred Lutz wrote a letter to Provost Mark Byrnes noting the violation of shared governance in this action and the ways in which this information (gained outside the regular student evaluation) could bias annual review evaluations or tenure decisions. You can find both documents at <https://www.mtsu.edu/aaup/news.php>

In other news: The chapter welcomes Dr. Elyce Helford (English) as our new and efficient website manager.

— Ellen Donovan, MTSU AAUP President
The website for the MTSU AAUP is:
<https://www.mtsu.edu/aaup/>

LETTER FROM THE STATE CONFERENCE OF THE AAUP PRESIDENT TO CHANCELLOR TYDINGS ON BEHALF OF RSCC AAUP

Chancellor Flora W. Tydings

Tennessee Board of Regents

1 Bridgestone Park, Third Floor

Nashville, TN 37214

December 4, 2020

Dear Chancellor Tydings,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Tennessee Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). It has come to our attention that for approximately four years, the Faculty Senate at Roane State Community College has been requesting an employee satisfaction survey to be administered by a third party. We believe that the faculty at Roane State should have an opportunity to provide confidential feedback to their administration and we ask that you give permission for the survey.

Since 1915, it has been the mission of the national AAUP to define standards for higher education, to advance academic freedom, and to promote the principles of shared governance. The AAUP believes that frequent, transparent, and constructive communication among all components, including the governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others involved with the operations of the College is essential for solving educational problems.

The Tennessee conference of the AAUP has been informed that under the leadership of the current Roane State President, Dr. Chris Whaley, communication between administration and faculty has been poor. The faculty, through the Faculty Senate, requested a survey which was originally approved in January 2019 but was cancelled at your direction before it could be administered. A direct result of the survey cancellation was the compilation and submission of an extensive report of concerns by several faculty members. Receipt of this report compelled you to appoint your Chief Audit Executive to initiate an internal audit of Roane State. The audit has been ongoing since December 2019 with no information provided on a projected end date.

On behalf of the faculty at Roane State Community College, we request that a third-party faculty survey be approved and administered for Roane State this academic year. Additionally, we request that the survey committee include faculty representatives chosen by the Faculty Senate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Josephine A. McQuail, Ph.D.

President of the State Conference of the AAUP

Professor, Department of English
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Tennessee Technological University



Mulvey, continued from p. 3

5. We'd like to see the Biden-Harris team put the full weight of their new administration behind a real COVID relief stimulus package, that includes adequate funding for higher ed and ensures that students will still be able to receive a quality education and that faculty and staff will be treated with dignity and respect. (We would be remiss not to point out that funding for higher education has been eroded to a very large degree over the last ten to twenty years and that, in general, restoring funding of public higher education must be a top priority.)

6. We need the Biden-Harris administration to provide support for scientists and other experts across all disciplines. The pandemic has shown what happens when we ignore those with expertise.

7. Something that can be done on day one: a number of the Trump administration's executive orders and department-level rules undermine the role that higher ed plays in our society. Right off the bat, the Biden administration should:

- issue guidance that would allow for maximum flexibility to support international students during the COVID-19 crisis that would apply not only to current students but to new international students as well;
- rescind Trump's March 2019 Executive Order on Campus Free Speech; and
- reverse the OMB's direction to agencies to discontinue critical race theory and racial sensitivity trainings

Originally published, Wednesday, December 9, 2020

NATIONAL AAUP SHARED GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE JUNE 14-18, 2021

The AAUP will hold its shared governance conference online June 14 through June 18, 2021, and we are now accepting proposals for paper presentations on topics relating to academic governance. In addition to paper presentations, the conference will include panels, plenary presentations, and workshops for current and future governance leaders.

Proposals for paper presentations are sought from individuals or groups on topics relating to college and university governance. Authors are encouraged to explore connections between their institutions and other institutions, and to consider the application of [AAUP governance policies](#).

Possible areas of focus include:

- Shared governance and the COVID-19 crisis
- Corporatization and challenges to shared governance
- Shared governance and assessment, accountability, and accreditation
- Faculty participation in budgeting, financial exigency, or strategic planning
- Governance mechanisms that address interests and concerns of scholars of color
- Governance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Principles, structures, and best practices of shared governance
- Governance and faculty hiring, promotion, and tenure
- Faculty governance, pedagogy, and curriculum
- Governance and collective bargaining
- The relationship of faculty governance to administrations and legislatures
- The role of tenured, tenure-track, and contingent faculty in shared governance
- Departmental governance issues
- Instructional technology

Proposals of one to two pages should be sent by April 16, 2021, to Michael DeCesare, chair of the AAUP's Committee on College and University Governance, at decesarem@merrimack.edu. All accepted presenters must register for the conference, which will be free for members.