

Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP Excellence in Education

Awarded the AAUP Assembly of State Conferences *Outstanding Newsletter Award*



From the FWC/AAUP President:

Colleagues,

My warmest welcome to everyone. For our new faculty colleagues, I hope this is the start of a rewarding career at Fairfield, and for our returning colleagues may this be another excellent year.

I usually begin the year with a welcome and a brief description of the roles of the national AAUP and of our local chapter, but instead I would like to discuss recent events. New legislation in various states is threatening to undermine key principles and ideals central to the good of higher education, and for which the national AAUP has fought for 100 years and our local chapter for over 20 years. Gwendolyn Bradley's excellent article on page 3 highlights some of the key issues, and on page 6 you can find information specifically about legislation passed recently in Ohio. The Ohio bill is so extreme that over a million Ohio residents signed a petition (a record) requiring the issue be decided by the voters. I encourage you to consider donating a small amount to the repeal effort (information on how you can contribute can be found in the box at the bottom of page 6). There is a good deal of corporate money going to oppose the repeal effort, so every contribution helps.

I again wish you all the best, and if there are any questions I can address or help I can provide, please do not hesitate to ask.

Rick DeWitt, President
Fairfield University FWC/AAUP

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CONGRATULATIONS, Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP!

**We have been awarded the
AAUP Assembly of State Conferences
Outstanding Chapter Newsletter Award
for the third year in a row!
Enjoy this latest *award-winning* issue!**

FWC AND AAUP NEWS AND EVENTS

RECENT FWC/ AAUP EVENTS:

FWC annual Faculty Attitude Survey:

Thanks to all the faculty members who participated in our annual faculty attitude survey. You may review the 2011 results and compare with the previous seven years of data we've collected at <https://eidos.fairfield.edu/fwc/fwc/> Thanks to Prof. Curt Naser for once again facilitating our survey.



CT State Conference/ AAUP annual spring meeting:

There was a wonderful turnout of FWC/AAUP members to the CSC-AAUP annual spring meeting at the Graduate Club in New Haven. Of special importance to the chapter was the presentation by the CSC of the fourth annual George E. Lang, Jr. award to our colleague, Prof. Debra Strauss from the Dolan School of Business. Watch for a complete article on this event in our next newsletter.



AAUP Summer Institute:

Four faculty members from Fairfield attended the AAUP Summer Institute at Suffolk University during the *hottest* week of the summer in Boston. Yes, we stayed in dorms and, yes, they were air-conditioned. Deb Strauss, Rona Preli and Rick DeWitt participated in a four-part workshop on analyzing your institution's financial health. Back by popular demand, Irene Mulvey and Rick DeWitt presented their workshop on chapter development and Irene co-presented another workshop on Action-Oriented Meetings and Parliamentary Procedure. Sound like fun? It was! Next year's SI is tentatively scheduled for Chicago. Do consider attending this premier institute for training faculty activists.



FWC Fall Picnic to Welcome New Faculty:

We had a wonderful turnout on a beautiful afternoon to welcome our great new colleagues. See complete story on pages 4-5.



UPCOMING FWC, AAUP AND OTHER FACULTY EVENTS:

Brown Bag Lunch Discussion #1 on the BUDGET:

Thursday, Sept. 29
noon to 1:00 PM

Faculty Dining Room

Join Julie Dolan, VP for Finance, and faculty members from the Faculty Salary Committee and the Budget Committee for information on the budget. Bring your lunch or buy it there. The FWC/AAUP will provide snacks.



Brown Bag Lunch Discussion #2 on the BUDGET:

Wednesday, Oct. 19
noon to 1:00 PM

Faculty Dining Room

We will follow up the 9/29 BBL with a second session on 10/19. As always, the FWC will provide snacks.

Academic Labor: Unions and Higher Ed

This article is by Gwendolyn Bradley, senior program officer at AAUP, and first appeared in March 2011 as a guest post in College Inc., a blog at washingtonpost.com. It is reprinted here with permission of the author.

As everyone knows by now, conservative legislators in the Midwest are pushing legislation attacking the collective bargaining rights of a wide swath of public employees. Among them are faculty members and other academic employees at public institutions. Professors and librarians may not immediately spring to mind when we think about unions, but in fact academic unions—including many unionized chapters of the American Association of University Professors, where I work—play an important and beneficial role in higher education. Here's how.

Academic unions are the latest in a long line of structures—from medieval collegia to modern faculty senates, with which unions coexist—designed to defend against threats to censor curricula, violate institutional autonomy, and intimidate scholars.

Increasingly, such threats come from corporations. They push for courses tailored to their needs (instead of training employees themselves). They fund research, but only on marketable topics with sales-friendly results. Academia is also threatened by a corporate mindset—evidenced by the sky-high salaries of top administrators; the decreasing proportion of full-time, tenure-track faculty; and an increasing tendency to see higher education as a business instead of a public good to which citizens are entitled. The effect is to transfer the cost of education from society at large to individual students—witness the ever-rising amount of debt under which students labor. At the same time, for-profit colleges and universities are growing, fed by federal funds.

Academic unions are a bulwark against this rising tide and they protect students and the public as well as faculty. Some union contracts protect academic freedom in the classroom, so teaching and learning can occur in an atmosphere free from intimidation. Some protect academic freedom in research, so corporate funders can't easily squelch unfavorable findings—for example, findings that a certain drug does not work. Some protect the rights of faculty to speak out, so they can question, for example, why instructional budgets are cut while athletics are not, or why developmental courses are eliminated as more students with developmental needs are admitted.

In an alarmist op-ed in USA Today last week, Naomi Schaefer Riley noted, "Some observers worry that unions desire more than job protection. . . . unions 'want to get into curricula, class schedules, grading norms, etc.'" Indeed, they do. And this is a good thing. Faculty should have a say in curricular decisions—for example, to insist on offering broad education, and not only narrow job training; to set reasonable faculty/student ratios so that students can receive the attention they deserve; or to ensure that university libraries have librarians available to answer research questions.

Such provisions are by no means universal, nor are unions the only means to achieve them. But they are an important means.

Beyond these benefits specific to higher education, the right to bargain collectively is a fundamental right of all workers. As the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted in 1948 by the United Nations proclaims, "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." In higher education, this right has never been more crucial. Forget the stereotype of the pipe-smoking scholar reading Shakespeare in an armchair. The majority of faculty jobs today are part-time, low-wage jobs with no benefits and no job security. After often assuming staggering student debt loads, many PhDs graduate only to discover that the only faculty jobs available to them are per-course contract positions for which they earn less, once grading and preparation are factored in, than minimum wage.

The attack on public-employees is misguided. And, unfortunately, it extends far beyond Wisconsin. Legislation limiting union rights for public employees has already passed the Ohio senate and is being debated in the Ohio house. Similar legislation is being considered in Michigan and other states.

Those behind it—Republican legislators fueled by corporations and the billionaires Charles and David Koch—would have you believe that America can't afford union workers, and that public employees earn bloated salaries. This simply is not so. Public employees did not cause budget problems and attacking unions will not fix them.

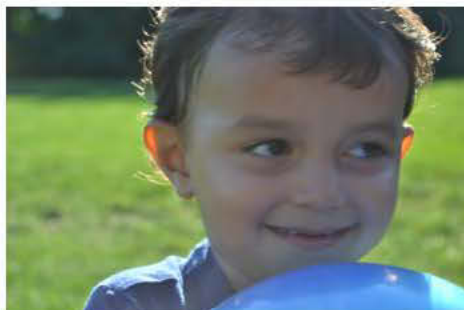
Comparisons suggesting that public employees earn more than private-sector workers are misleading because they do not control for education and experience—primary factors that predict salary. When similar workers are compared, public employees actually earn less, on average.

This wage disadvantage extends to higher education. Preliminary data from the annual AAUP compensation survey released in April show that since 1980, the public-sector disadvantage for full-time faculty members has widened to 16 percent **(continued on page 5)**

FWC/AAUP Picnic to Welcome New Faculty September 9, 2011



It was hard to believe that a hurricane - who here shall remain nameless - had just blown across the state by the look of the glorious weather we had for our FWC/AAUP Fall Picnic to welcome new faculty. The turnout was great, the beer cold, the food yummy, the kids lively, the frisbees (flying discs?) airborne, the bocce competitive, and the conversations engaging. The location this year was lovely and, if one sets aside the fact that we couldn't play softball, maybe even perfect. President Jeff von Arx was very gracious to let us use the lawn outside his office. We hope he liked the pictures the kids drew in sidewalk chalk on his concrete railing (see photo on front cover, which is much better in color) and wonder if our pictures were still there for the convocation the following week. We are certain that next May at Commencement some lucky parent or grandparent will find that whiffle ball we just couldn't find in the grass. We were only sorry that Jeff and Senior VP Paul Fitzgerald were out of town on the day of our picnic and hope they can make it to the picnic in the spring. Thanks to our academic deans for joining us; shared conviviality, like shared governance, is alive and well at Fairfield. As with all our events, the picnic is open to all members of the faculty but funded by dues-paying members of the FWC/AAUP, Fairfield's AAUP chapter. If you aren't a member, please consider joining the nearly 75% of your General Faculty colleagues who are members. Contact any member of the Executive Committee (listed on p. 5).



FWC/AAUP Picnic to Welcome New Faculty September 9, 2011



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

ABOUT THE FWC/AAUP: The Faculty Welfare Committee/AAUP at Fairfield University is an ad hoc committee of the General Faculty and an affiliate of the national AAUP. We promote the professional and economic interests, broadly defined, of the Fairfield University Faculty. All our activities are open to all members of the faculty but we are funded entirely by our dues-paying members.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Rick DeWitt, President; Joe Dennin, Vice-President; Bill Abbott, Secretary; Rona Preli, Treasurer; At-large members: Kate Wheeler, Jocelyn Boryczka, Deb Strauss, Sue Rakowitz. Membership Director: Cheryl Tromley. Newsletter Editor: Irene Mulvey.

Academic Labor (continued from page 3) at baccalaureate colleges and 24 percent at doctoral universities.

Where do union workers fare better than their nonunion counterparts? They have been able to hold onto benefits that have eroded in the private sector. But the problem here is not that unionized public employees have health insurance and retirement plans—it's that other workers don't.

The bigger point is that America does not suffer from a lack of wealth. It suffers from a concentration of wealth at the top—and the rich keep getting richer. In fact, one of Scott Walker's first actions as Wisconsin governor was to slash taxes for businesses and special interest groups—exacerbating the very budget problem that he now wants to solve on the backs of working people. Between 1978 and 2008, average income grew by more than \$10,000. But all the growth went to the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans, and almost 40 percent went to the wealthiest 1 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Income for the bottom 90 percent declined.

Public-employee unions have nothing to do with this. The average budget deficit is actually slightly lower (16.2 percent) in the 15 states that allow collective bargaining for all public employees than it is in the nine states which prohibit it (16.5 percent).

Certain interest groups see this time of economic distress as an opportunity to divide and conquer American workers. They hope that the millions who are now out of work or stuck in nonunion, dead-end, low-wage jobs will focus their anger on the workers who are doing just a bit better—rather than insisting that employers and corporations to raise standards and wages for all workers. There is a name for this: it's a race to the bottom. Let's not run that race.

Q&A on We Are Ohio and SB 5

What is SB 5 and how does it affect faculty? Senate Bill 5 is legislation that strips public employees of the ability to engage in a good faith collective bargaining process with their employers. If SB 5 is enacted, public employees would be able to bargain in name only, as the employer essentially has the final say in the contract. With specific regard to faculty, the bill defines that faculty members would be considered "management level employees." Under SB 5, "management level employees" or "supervisors" are not permitted to bargain. The definition of a "management level employee" is so sweeping that conceivably every faculty member would be covered by this definition. The bill says:

With respect to faculty members of a state institution of higher education, heads of departments or divisions are supervisors; in addition, any faculty member or group of faculty members that participate in decisions with respect to courses, curriculum, personnel, or other matters of academic or institutional policy are supervisors or management level employees.

The legislation specifically targets and eliminates the rights of faculty at Ohio's public colleges and universities to collectively bargain.

Who else is affected by SB 5? Everyone. All Police officers, firefighters, nurses, professors, teachers, and other public employees are directly affected by the legislation. However, small businesses and communities that heavily rely on income from public employees also will be negatively impacted. For this reason, people from all walks of life and political persuasions are opposed to SB 5.

What is the SB 5 Referendum? In Ohio, citizens have the right to repeal legislation through a referendum. In order to place this referendum on the November 8, 2011 ballot, 231,149 valid signatures had to be submitted to the Ohio Secretary of State for approval no later than June 30, 2011. On June 29, 1,298,301 signatures - more than five times the number needed - were filed with the Secretary of State.

Who is leading this effort? The coalition that is leading the effort to repeal SB 5 is called "We Are Ohio." We Are Ohio is a citizen-driven collaboration with participation from Republicans, Democrats, independents, small business owners, activists, public and private labor unions, and many others. The **Ohio Conference AAUP** is an active member of the We Are Ohio campaign.

What is the current status of SB 5? Even though the Ohio General Assembly has passed this legislation and it has been signed by the Governor, the law is not yet in effect. In Ohio, once the Governor signs the bill, it takes 90 days before the bill takes effect. The effective date of SB 5 was July 1. However, since the We Are Ohio campaign collected far beyond the requisite signatures to place the referendum on the November 8 ballot, the law will be held in suspension until the election. The Ohio Secretary State has placed this on the ballot as Issue 2. If voters reject Issue 2, SB 5 dies. If voters approve Issue 2, SB 5 takes effect on November 9.



AAUP leaders and faculty activists across the country consider SB 5 and Ohio as a pivotal moment in the academic labor movement. The fallout from SB 5, if it passes, will have a negative effect on the rights of faculty at public universities all over the country and on the academic labor movement in general. If you would like to help the We Are Ohio campaign, donations can be made through the Ohio State Conference of the AAUP. Checks made out to "We Are Ohio" can be sent to Ohio Conference AAUP, 137 East State Street, Columbus, OH 43215 or to Rick DeWitt/Philosophy Department/DMH who will sent Fairfield's donations to Ohio AAUP.