

## UNCG Chapter of the AAUP

Meeting 09 13 2017

269 Stone 4:00 to 5:30

### Agenda

Attending: Jonathan Tudge The Gaffer, Sue Dennison, Anne Wallace, Andrew Willis, Andrea Hunter, Deb Bell, Wade Maki, George Dimock, Veronica Grossi, Michael Frierson, Sue Collins, Spoma Jovanovich

#### I. **Introductions (or re-introductions)**

Jonathan Tudge asked members to introduce themselves. It felt like *déjà vu* in a very nice way. Jim Carmichael was especially missed.

#### II. **Should we organize and sponsor a candidate forum for the upcoming local elections (primary elections, October 10; general election, November 7)**

There was a lengthy discussion about how involved our campus chapter should be with the upcoming September 16 Candidate Forum for local elections to be held at Ben L. Smith High School. Also, UNCG professor Jennifer Mangrum will be running against Tom Tillis in the state elections. Are there ways to support a Candidate Forum for that upcoming election as well?

Sue Dennison reported that UNCG University Counsel has stated that the new retired faculty association is being set up so that group will have the freedom to take a political stands and support candidates running for public office. On October 6, there will be the kickoff of the new UNCG faculty association with a luncheon at Weatherspoon to review guidelines for political involvement by this faculty group. Senate Chair Andrea Hunter said that the Senate could have broad endorsement of the issues involving political process and voting accessibility but that it needed to tread carefully not to involve partisan activity. She thought perhaps a range of Senate support might work around the idea of civic engagement and providing information.

Anne Wallace asked how much freedom does AAUP have to risk showing partisanship—but perhaps has more flexibility in this regard than the Faculty Senate.

Veronica Grossi suggested that the Faculty Senate is indeed a political part of our lives and that there should be open space for discussion—but when representing UNCG as faculty we should remain a-political.

Hunter suggested that we use political capital around issues carefully—that faculty should concentrate our efforts around those issues that directly affect the faculty's work. Consequently, she did not think the Senate would want to co-sponsor involvement in the September event.

Dennison stated that the non-partisan North Carolina You Can Vote—might be a good partner with AAUP in the upcoming Candidate Forum. This group is mostly concerned with voter accessibility to informed voting. She will ask National AAUP office what our chapter can do around political endorsement activity.

### **III. What (other) public events would we like to sponsor, including something related to AAUP's Taking a Stand Against Harassment?**

There are concerns across the country about various types of faculty harassment for speaking up about political or social concerns. Elizabeth Keathley has committed to organizing an AAUP campus chapter panel centered on Academic Freedom. Perhaps the panel could also address faculty harassment issues.

See attached statement at the end of this meeting's report from the AAUP national office regarding faculty harassment occurrences and how AAUP members can respond. It also includes another statement on how to best support DACA. Dimock stated that graduate students are eligible to become members of AAUP, and this issue remains of special interest to both faculty and students on campuses. There are approximately 14 UNCG students with DACA status.

Jerry Pubantz has encouraged our chapter to be more pro-active—not consistently defensive on issues. This panel that Keathley is willing to organize could be the sort of proactive work that would be of service to the campus at-large.

Michael Frierson volunteered to draft a statement in support of a resolution to support DACA students. Hunter says that there might be a resolution coming from the Senate that might allow AAUP members who are also senators to sign (on behalf of AAUP.) These senators include Frierson, Maki, Jovanovic, Willis and Marshall-Baker.

### **IV. NC AAUP Annual Conference**

Confirmation that state conference planning is happening for this year remains a mystery. Dennison has emailed Altha a couple of times and no response has been forthcoming. She will call her soon—but suspects there are no plans for a state conference this year. Sue is going to the Asheville campus to advise faculty members on how to create a campus chapter. She will inquire if they are interested in hosting a conference—which would be a great way for them to meet other AAUP members statewide.

We also wondered if perhaps the state conference should occur every other year—with an electronic conference of some sort in the other years. We discussed the possibility of UNCG committing to hosting the conference every other year, because it is so centrally-located and our chapter members really rock in organizing conferences! Regardless, Wallace thinks that we should have a system where campus chapters commit to hosting 3 or 4 years out. **We should probably return to this issue after we've had time for reflection.**

## **V. Fostering connections between AAUP and the Faculty Senate**

Wallace reported on her efforts to inform Provost Dana Dunn on the rather frequent confidential counseling of faculty members by AAUP leadership (in tandem with the national office in some cases) during the past several years. She had sought some sort of sanctioning from the Provost's office—and/or ways to find common purpose. Dunn expressed appreciation of AAUP's work. Wallace encouraged Dunn to continue to seek support for an Ombudsman position on campus, even though now there is not adequate funding for such a position, making AAUP's work even more valuable.

Hunter announced that the updated Faculty Senate Website will include AAUP as one of its auxiliary groups. Bell asked if there might be a moment in an upcoming Senate Meeting for Hunter to stage an invitation for AAUP leadership to offer its Red Book to Chancellor Gilliam or Provost Dunn. Hunter said that she would ask them about this option—but also encouraged AAUP members who are also senators to bring this up with the Chancellor at their upcoming "Chancellor Chats." Frierson will do this since his chat with the Chancellor is quite soon.

Hunter also stated that she was encountering a variety of groups on campus such as African-American Women Organizing—who have expressed interest in coordinating a wide range of campus efforts with AAUP. She anticipates lots of ways groups on campus can become stronger by joining together on common interests.

## **VI. Keeping track of speaking to departments**

Dennison intends to visit as many units on campus as possible. She will be contacting department heads/directors to meet during their regularly-scheduled meetings for about 10 minutes to tell faculty members about the benefits of AAUP. She asks our chapter members for information about who to contact in their units—or identify other heads/directors whom they think would appreciate a visit from Dennison. Dimock as volunteered to join her for most of the meetings if his schedule permits.

Tudge added that AAUP should be more prepared for the inevitable crises in higher education—that AAUP (and other groups on campus) can speak with a stronger, more unified voice and offer community during critical times.

## **VII. Other business**

Jovanovic suggested that we make it a campaign goal to have 102 new members (or more) by the end of this year—rather than emphasizing precious time to focus on a state conference for this year.

Dennison and Frierson heartily agreed that we should also schedule some sort of informal gatherings for AAUP membership—as we have often done in the past—perhaps something as simple as a "Happy Hour" gathering at the end of a week day.

The rest of the meeting included discussion about ways to get out the vote, particularly for local elections, and the fact that not a lot of voting seems to happen on campus—though that could still be happening in students' home districts and faculty and staff could be voting closer to their homes.

## **Two Statements from the National AAUP Office on Faculty Harassment and DACA:**

Dear AAUP member:

In the past few months, we have seen an alarming uptick in threats of violence directed against faculty members, their families, or their institutions following remarks they have made, or are alleged to have made, in public speeches, on social media, or in the classroom. These threats are often accompanied by calls for college and university administrators to summarily dismiss or otherwise discipline the offending faculty member, and, in a number of cases, campus administrations have willingly obliged, opting to put concern for bad PR over the academic freedom rights of faculty and casting a pall over open debate and dissent on campus.

Last week, the AAUP released [Taking a Stand Against Harassment](#), co-signed by AFT and AAC&U, denouncing this online harassment of faculty as part of the broader attack on faculty rights and the right to free expression and dissent.

The statement ends by calling on college and university presidents, members of governing boards, and other academic leaders to endorse the statement and to commit to standing up forcefully and publicly to threats to individual members of the academic community, to academic freedom, and to freedom of expression on campus.

Here's where you come in. We ask that our AAUP chapters reach out to campus presidents and boards of trustees and ask them to sign on to this statement. Please circulate this statement widely on your campus, meet with your campus administration, and demand that your campus administration sign on to make clear that these sorts of threats will not be tolerated. Where possible you might get endorsement of this statement placed on the agenda of your next trustees' meeting. In short, we hope that AAUP members will use this statement in creative ways.

And when you succeed in obtaining endorsements, please let us know by sending an e-mail to [dhanible@aaup.org](mailto:dhanible@aaup.org). Your e-mail should include a contact person in the administration so that we can confirm their endorsement.

Regards,

Henry Reichman,  
Chair, AAUP Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure

Dear AAUP member,

The AAUP denounces in the strongest possible terms the decision by the Trump administration to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). This decision marks a continuation of the anti-immigrant racist policies that the administration has supported from the start.

Many of our members come from families that immigrated to the US. Their forebears came to the US for the same reason that today's immigrants do, for a better life for their families, especially their children. But the Trump administration, feeding off the fears and insecurity of many Americans, has used the issue of undocumented workers, along with racism and anti-Semitism, to divide people and disguise the real causes of the declining standards of working people, including working people of color.

DACA, which provides renewable two-year work permits for immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children, was created by President Obama after the Republican-led House of Representatives refused to act on immigration. About 1.9 million undocumented young people are eligible to apply for the DACA program. Nearly 800,000 had their request for DACA status granted in 2016. Of those who have DACA status, about 576,000 are enrolled in college. In other words, an overwhelming majority of those granted DACA status are our students.

One of the major factors that makes American higher education a world class system is the diversity of our faculty and students. We owe it to these students and their families, as well as to other undocumented young people, to speak out against this action in the strongest manner possible. We call on our members to urge Congress to act immediately to undo President Trump's action and allow these young people to remain in our classrooms. We also urge Congress to enact a comprehensive immigration reform policy that will welcome immigrants to our shores--those fleeing political persecution and violence as well as those who simply seek a better life, regardless of their race, religion, or national origin.

Rudy Fichtenbaum  
AAUP President