

3-2013

Right Flier: Newsletter of the AAUP-WSU Volume 13, Number 2, 2012-2013

American Association of University Professors-Wright State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/rightflier>



Part of the [Mass Communication Commons](#), and the [Organizational Communication Commons](#)

Repository Citation

(2013). Right Flier: Newsletter of the AAUP-WSU Volume 13, Number 2, 2012-2013. , 13 (2).
<https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/rightflier/41>

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the American Association of University Professors at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Right Flier Newsletter by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

The Right Flier

The Newsletter of AAUP-WSU

Volume 13, Number 2
2012-2013

Editors: Marty Kich and Linda Farmer

Table of Contents

Announcements:

- Spring Semester Chapter Meeting *Attend!*
- Spring Social *Attend!*
- Ohio Conference's Annual Meeting *Attend!*
- Presidential Lecture Series: Van Jones *Attend!*
- Campaign for the Future of Higher Education's May Meeting in Columbus *Attend!*
- Chapter Council Election Results
- Chapter Elections *Submit a Nomination!*
- National Council and Ohio Conference Elections *Vote!*
- Negotiation of the NTE Unit's First Contract

Articles:

- Putting Our Workload Agreement in Some Perspective
- OCAAUP President John McNay's Testimony on the State Budget
- Defining Faculty Mentoring in College and Department Bylaws
- Your Contract's Greater Protection of Academic Freedom
- Your Rights under the Contract: Discipline Issues
- Potential Pitfalls of Student Ratings of Teaching
- Working Papers on Alternative Funding for Higher Education from the Center for the Future of Higher Education
- Book Review: Benjamin Ginsberg's *The Fall of the Faculty*
- Right to Work Is an Insult to Intelligence

Announcements:

- **Spring Semester Chapter Meeting**

The Spring Semester Chapter Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 17**, at 3:30, in room E157 SU (Atlantis Room) (in the back behind the Endeavor Room, where the Faculty Senate meetings are held) on the main campus and in room 150 Dwyer on the Lake Campus. Because collective bargaining matters will be discussed, only TET & NTE faculty who have joined AAUP-WSU may attend.

- **Spring Social**

The Spring Social will be held from 4:00 to 6:00 on **Thursday, April 11**, in the Millett Hall first-floor atrium. As always, there will be plenty of food, a cash bar, musical entertainment, and an opportunity to socialize with colleagues in other colleges.

- **Annual Conference of the Ohio Conference of AAUP**

The annual conference of the Ohio Conference of AAUP will be held on **Saturday, April 13**, at the Columbus Renaissance Downtown, just steps away from the Statehouse in the heart of downtown Columbus. (See: <http://www.ocaaup.org>)

Benjamin Ginsberg, professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University and author of *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters*, is scheduled to deliver the keynote speech. Additionally, there will be a presentation on student debt, a workshop for advocacy chapter members on finances at their institutions, as well as a workshop geared toward collective bargaining chapter members on using polling and focus groups to develop effective messaging during negotiations.

Registration deadline is April 1, 2013. The chapter will cover the modest registration, as well as mileage for members who wish to attend. Please contact Connie Jacobs at connie.jacobs@wright.edu

- **Presidential Lecture Series: Van Jones**

The chapter was invited again to recommend a speaker for the Presidential Lecture Series. The theme for this year is "community." Van Jones was our top choice. He is scheduled to speak on campus at 7:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 16**, in the Apollo Room of the Student Union.

What follows is taken from his profile in Wikipedia:

"Van Jones is an American environmental advocate, civil rights activist, and attorney. He is a co-founder of four non-profit organizations including Rebuild the Dream, of which he is president. In 1996, he founded the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, a California non-governmental organization (NGO) working for alternatives to violence. In 2005, he co-founded Color of Change, an advocacy group for African Americans. In 2007, he founded Green for All, a national NGO dedicated to "building an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty." In 2011, he founded Rebuild the Dream, a national advocacy organization working towards a fairer

economy. His first book, *The Green Collar Economy*, was released on October 7, 2008, and reached number 12 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. In 2008, *Time* magazine named Jones one of its "Heroes of the Environment". *Fast Company* called him one of the "12 Most Creative Minds of 2008".

"Jones is currently a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and a senior policy advisor at Green for All. Jones also holds a joint appointment at Princeton University, as a distinguished visiting fellow in both the Center for African American Studies and in the Program in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs."

Van Jones's talk is free and open to the public. Please make plans to attend.

- **Columbus Meeting of the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education**

The Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE) is a loose consortium of the largest faculty unions nationwide: AAUP, AFT, NEA, and the unions representing large statewide systems in California (the 23 campuses in the California State University system and the 123 campuses in the California Community College system), New York (the 64 campuses in the SUNY system and the 25 campuses in the CUNY system), and Pennsylvania (the 14 campuses whose faculty is represented by APSCUF).

On **May 18**, the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education will hold its spring meeting at the Columbus Airport Marriott. The January meeting in Sacramento led to the release of three working papers on alternative funding methods for higher education that will be discussed later in this newsletter and in subsequent newsletters.

Fuller information on CFHE and its efforts is available at: <http://futureofhighered.org/>

The chapter will cover the modest registration, as well as mileage for members who wish to attend. Please contact Connie Jacobs at connie.jacobs@wright.edu.

- **Chapter Council Elections**

The following chapter members have been elected to represent their colleges on the newly created Chapter Council:

CECS	TE: Travis Doom	NTE: Brandy Foster
CEHS	TE: Richele O'Connor	NTE: Brenda Kraner
CoLA	TE: John Feldmeier	NTE: Jane Blakelock
CoSM	TE: Scott Baird	NTE: Cheryl Conley
CoNH	TE: Ann Bowling	NTE: Stephanie Triplett
LAKE	TE: Dane Daniel	NTE: Steven Pedler
RSCoBA	TE: Fall Ainina	NTE: Alan Chesen

Congratulations to those who won election to the council. Thank you to everyone who was willing to serve.

We hope that we will be able to arrange several meetings of the Chapter Council before the end of the spring semester. We would like to enlist their input on the ongoing negotiations of the first NTE contract and in setting priorities for next year's negotiation of a three-year contract for both units.

We have been in discussions with the university administration to arrange for an expanded office space to accommodate both the Chapter Council and our expanded Executive Committee.

- **Chapter Executive Committee Elections**

The AAUP-WSU Nominating Committee invites you to nominate prospective candidates for the following five positions: President, Secretary, Communication Officer, one Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee, and Member-at-Large of the Nominating Committee. The ensuing election will be a routine one as specified by [Article VI](#) in our chapter's Constitution and Bylaws.

The first four officers listed above serve on the chapter's Executive Committee, and their duties are outlined in [Article IV A](#). Terms of office will begin on May 1, 2013 and will last two years, except for the Member-at-Large of the Nominating Committee, whose term lasts one year. Tenure-eligible and tenured (TET) faculty serving as President, Secretary, or Communication Officer are potentially eligible for course releases, as is specified by the CBA applicable to TET faculty. We hope that a like provision will exist in the CBA now being negotiated for non-tenure-eligible (NTE) faculty.

The Member-at-Large position on the Executive Committee is to be filled by a person in the "original" Bargaining Unit for TET faculty. Accordingly, only RCMs in the TET Bargaining Unit may make nominations for that position (see [Article III C 2 f](#)).

Otherwise, all Regular Chapter Members -- faculty in either Bargaining Unit who have joined AAUP-WSU -- may run for and make nominations for all these offices. Self-nominations are encouraged. You may make multiple nominations.

Important: Before nominating others, please **confirm** that each nominee you specify is willing to run, and please **report** your having obtained confirmation in your nomination.

Nominations must be received by **10AM on Wednesday, March 27, 2012**.

Nominations may be made by e-mail, campus mail, or U.S. mail:

- Nominations by e-mail should be sent to the chapter address: aaupwsu@gmail.com
- Nominations by campus mail should be addressed as follows: Nominating Committee; AAUP-WSU; 123 Allyn Hall.
- Nominations by U.S. mail should be addressed as follows: Nominating Committee; AAUP-WSU; 123 Allyn Hall; Wright State University; Dayton, OH 45435.

- **Council and State Conference Elections**

Ballots for these elections have been sent to each member's home address. In order to be counted, they must be received in the post office box at the national office by 9:00 a.m. on April 16.

Given the major changes that have been occurring at both the national and the state levels, it is very important for members to vote. Some candidates for the National Council have e-mailed statements explaining their reasons for wanting to serve.

- **Negotiation of the First Contract for NTE Faculty**

The Negotiating Team for the first NTE contract has been formed, met several times to prepare for negotiations, and has now had several negotiating sessions with the administration.

The members of the committee are Rudy Fichtenbaum, our Chief Negotiator, Marty Kich, Sarah McGinley, Bobby Rubin, Sue Terzian, and Jim Vance,

We will keep the members of the new bargaining unit updated on the negotiations as they proceed.

Putting Our Workload Agreement in Perspective

Marty Kich
President AAUP-WSU

As tenure-eligible and tenured (TET) faculty filled out their annual activity reports, the chapter leadership fielded some complaints about the process and about the agreement itself.

Given circumstances within our own chapter, at other universities in Ohio, and surrounding the drafting of the new state budget bill, we think that it might be worthwhile to focus less on the perceived disadvantages of the agreement and more on its increasingly apparent advantages.

First, it is worth emphasizing that the NTE faculty voted to form a second bargaining unit within our chapter largely because they would like to have an agreement on workload broadly comparable to the existing agreement for TET faculty.

Second, the administration at the University of Toledo has already announced that it will raise teaching loads for all of their TET faculty to four courses per semester and for all of their NTE faculty to five courses per semester. Likewise, the administration at the University of Akron has announced its intention to seek an as yet unspecified increase in teaching load for all full-time faculty. And since the administration at Bowling Green State University has announced its intention to eliminate 100

NTE positions while increasing enrollment by 6,000 to 8,000 students, it seems obvious that teaching loads for their full-time faculty will have to be increased in some fashion or other.

Third, the proposed state budget includes language that allows university administrations to increase faculty workloads by one course per year. As the language is now written, the increase must be applied across-the-board and any new agreement on workload must include the increase.

Along with Rudy Fichtenbaum and Jim Vance, I recently met with President Hopkins to ask him pointedly if our administration intended to use this legislation to alter our current workload agreement. He indicated that our administration intends to stand by its agreement with us. Whatever its limitations may be, we believe that this agreement is generally fair and has allowed us not only to discuss our workload for the first time but to define that workload in a way that is generally fair to our university and equitable to our faculty.

OCAAUP President John McNay's Testimony

On the Workload Provisions

in the Proposed State Budget

Testimony of John McNay, Ph.D., President
Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors
Before the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
Representative Cliff Rosenberger, Chair
March 13, 2013

Chairman Rosenberger, Ranking Member Ramos, and distinguished members of the Higher Education Subcommittee: my name is John McNay and I am President of the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The Ohio Conference AAUP represents nearly 4,500 college and university professors at both public and private institutions of higher education across the State of Ohio. I am also a professor of American history at the University of Cincinnati where I teach courses on the Cold War, World War II, and the Vietnam War. I've published books and articles on the Cold War. The mission of the Ohio Conference AAUP is to promote the greater social good that comes from a dynamic, active professoriate – professors being the backbone of quality education and research in higher education. To achieve that goal, we work to preserve and advance academic freedom – the right to engage in good teaching and important research without fear of being terminated for political reasons; and to promote shared governance, so that important decisions are made with the input from those with the expertise to make good decisions and from those who must carry out those decisions in the best interests of students and the general public. I come to you today to share the thoughts and opinions of the Ohio Conference AAUP regarding House Bill 59, the state budget bill. My comments will focus on three key topics: the new State Share of Instruction (SSI) formula, the provision pertaining to faculty teaching loads, and the problem of administrative bloat at our public institutions.

First, on the issue of the proposed SSI formula, my organization is not opposed to the idea of rewarding colleges and universities based primarily on graduations and course completions. However, no faculty were consulted in development of this plan and so I would like to bring to your attention what we believe to be potential unintended consequences of this outcome-based funding approach.

Over the past 15 years or so, there has been a national trend in higher education of administrators overriding faculty-given grades. Not only does this violate academic freedom, but it also calls into question what kind of value a grade or a degree holds if it was not earned. The trend, as documented by reports in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, appears to occur mostly with student athletes and students on the cusp of graduating. Some of our faculty unions' collective bargaining agreements contain language that prohibits administrators from overriding grades; however, this is not the case at all of our public institutions of higher education, particularly the ones that do not have faculty unions. We fear that the new SSI formula could encourage this kind of behavior, thus undermining academic freedom and the quality of education. Next, I would like to address the language in the budget that would require universities to increase the teaching load for full-time faculty by one additional class from the previous academic year, if the university chooses to create or modify a workload policy. While the language in the bill is "permissive," it is quite inflexible. This provision fails to take into account the myriad of factors that determine how much teaching faculty are assigned. Universities are complex organizations, consisting of different colleges, schools and departments, each with different missions. Teaching loads at our universities have been carefully crafted to allow faculty to carry out these distinctive missions. For example, at my college, UC-Blue Ash, the state's oldest and largest regional campus, I'm a full professor whose teaching load this term is three sections of World History and an upper division course on the Cold War. I teach about 100 students per term. But faculty at our College of Engineering and College of Medicine teach fewer classes and have fewer students because they are often engaged in grant-based research, sometimes with commercialization in mind. Faculty at our state institutions of higher education are huge economic drivers – they bring in millions of research dollars into the Ohio economy every year through grants. In fact, as state support for higher education has dramatically decreased over the past two decades, faculty research money has helped to replace the lost revenue. Placing this kind of arbitrary mandate on their workloads will jeopardize that revenue source and distract from their research and innovation. So while the Administration has identified this provision as a cost-savings measure, it could actually have the opposite impact.

A one-size-fits-all edict from the state will impair the ability of faculty to carry out their distinctive missions and make it difficult to retain our most productive faculty and attract high-quality faculty to come to Ohio. This kind of micromanaging will do more harm than good. To measure faculty purely based on the number of classes they teach would be like measuring legislators based only on the time spent in their legislative chamber – it would fail to take into account their committee work, constituent service, and all of the other responsibilities expected of legislators.

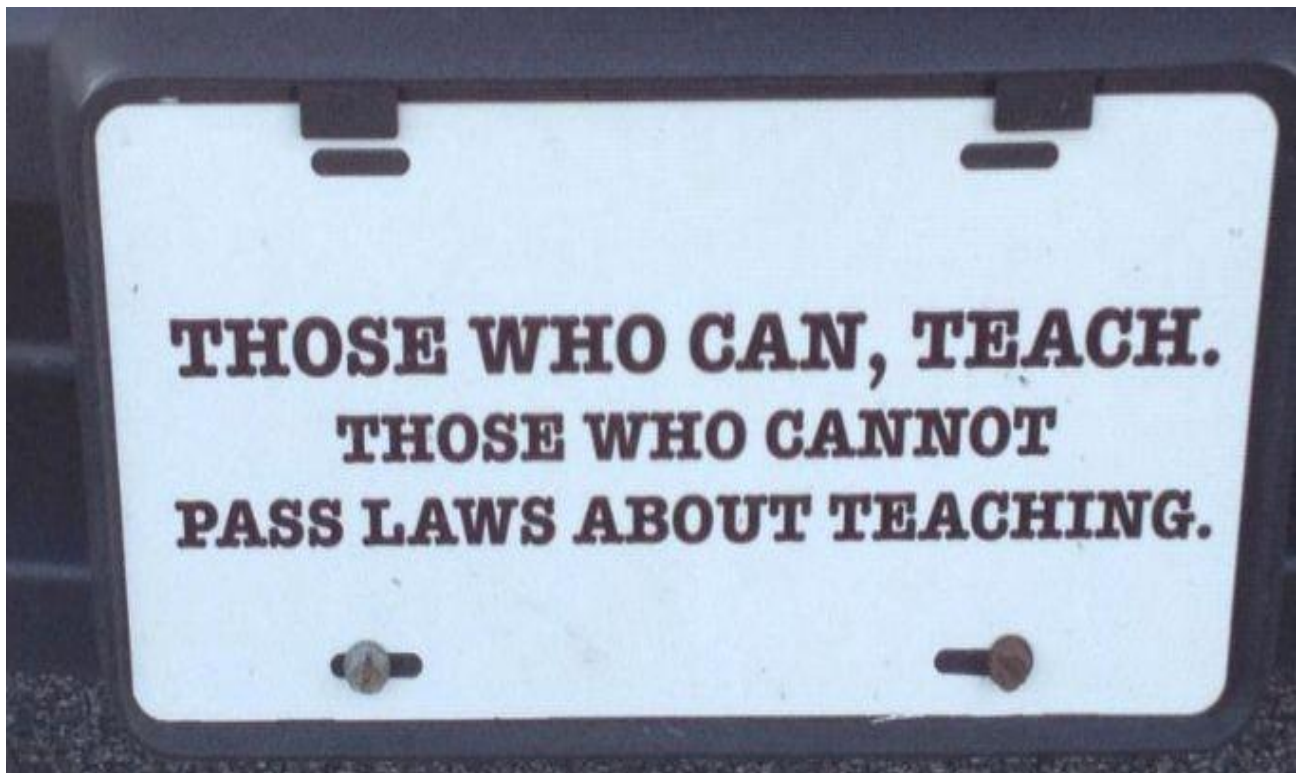
If we are to find solutions and make our public institutions of higher education more efficient and effective, we first have to correctly identify the problems. One of the most pervasive problems is that universities are spending too much money on unnecessary administration. Even conservative think tanks like the Goldwater Institute have found that "administrative bloat" is the largest factor behind rising tuition costs and waste in higher education.

Using data from the Integrated Post-Secondary Data System (IPEDS), Dr. Rudy Fichtenbaum, Professor of Economics at Wright State University, has calculated that for all two and four year public institutions of higher education in Ohio, between 1987 and 2008, spending on instruction and academic support increased 179 percent. In contrast, spending for institutional support and student

services (mostly administrative spending) increased 270 percent over the same period. Ohio's institutions are spending far too much on administrators and not enough on instruction. We often hear that universities' costs are so high due to the labor (e.g. faculty) that they have to employ. Yet the IPEDS data reveals that Ohio's institutions spend around 20 percent or less on instructional salaries. Administrators outnumber tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty by a nearly two to one ratio. If you include all full-time faculty, the ratio is closer to one to one; but think about that: our universities are employing as many administrators as full-time faculty.

Administrative bloat is amounting to an administrative tax on our students. HB 59 would allow institutions to raise tuition by two percent, but what will our students be getting for their money? More administrators?

While there is widespread agreement on the problem of administrative bloat, there has not been a whole lot of discussion on solutions, until recently. Former University of Cincinnati President Nancy Zimpher, now Chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY) system, has a plan to shift five percent of administrative costs to instructional spending. That would seem like a good start. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.



Defining Faculty Mentoring in College and Department Bylaws

Marty Kich
President AAUP-WSU

The current contract specifies the following in Article 10.4.4.1:

“The bylaws for each department will state procedures by which Bargaining Unit Faculty give advice and make recommendations regarding --faculty appointment, reappointment, dismissal, promotion, and tenure; **professional development and mentoring of new faculty**; teaching assignments and class schedules, including summer and overloads; graduate and undergraduate curriculum and academic standards; faculty involvement in review of chairs; and issues affecting the department or college.” [My emphasis]

During the most recent Quadrennial Review of the Faculty Senate’s Constitution, a suggestion was made that a committee be designated or created to coordinate the professional development opportunities available to our faculty and to insure adequate mentoring of new faculty. There was some initial confusion about whether mentoring was already defined by the contract. As it turns out, it is less defined by the contract than designated as something that should be addressed in college and departmental bylaws, which according to the most recent contract are to be considered as binding as the contract.

Currently, some bylaws define the mentoring process in fairly specific detail while others do not mention mentoring at all. So we would encourage those responsible for the revision of bylaws in each college and department to check those bylaws to insure that they do define as specifically as possible a carefully considered mentoring process for new faculty.

Your Contract’s Greater Protection of Academic Freedom

by Linda Farmer
Vice President AAUP-WSU

When the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006) that public employees have no First Amendment protection for statements they make during the course of their professional duties, the potential threat to academic freedom in public colleges and universities was immediately recognized by the dissenting Justice David Souter. And, unfortunately, that dissenting opinion was prescient. As a result of some lower court rulings since then, faculty members at public universities can now face disciplinary action for statements they make in the course of their official duties,

including statements made while serving on academic committees and while addressing university procedures and policies.

But not YOU. Article 5 of your contract protects your academic freedom from the Garcetti threat. It is, at this time, one of the very few contracts that offers such protections. It includes carefully crafted language that stipulates what academic freedom is, what types of expression are covered by academic freedom, and what types of expression may warrant institutional discipline. As a result, YOU will not face disciplinary action for stating that the Administration's priorities are misplaced, that the proposed budgeting structure is seriously flawed, or that there are too many persons with the title of "Dean" around here. Nor can you be denied promotion, as was Ceballos, for stating opinions that you believe are central to the best interests of our institution. You can speak your mind about academic programs, administrative procedures, budgets, curriculums, and so forth, as long as what you state doesn't suggest your own disciplinary incompetence ("The Earth is flat!", "2+2=3," etc.) or somehow violate either professional ethics or your professional responsibilities.

So speak up. Speak out.



**“I suggest putting a teacher
in every gun store.”**
Jef Johnson

Your Rights under the Contract: Discipline Issues

Barbara Hopkins
Grievance and Contract Administration Officer AAUP-WSU

This year AAUP-WSU has been working a number of cases in which faculty members have been accused of wrong doing.

What Behaviors Could Lead to Discipline?

The most serious offences that could lead to termination or unpaid suspension are clearly defined and listed in article 15. However, there is no all-encompassing list of behaviors that could result in discipline, merely the statement that “The University will not impose discipline except for just cause” (CBA article 14.2). The contract does list various behaviors that are explicitly permitted, including the revisions to the language on Academic Freedom in the most recent contract. The revised section on Academic Freedom (CBA article 5), added the explicit right to “address any matter of institutional policy or action whether or not as a member of an agency of institutional governance” (CBA article 5.1.3). These revisions were developed as a response to a recent Supreme Court decision in which the court upheld the right to punish an employee who had publicly disagreed with the official position of the institution for which he worked (*Garcetti v. Ceballos*). Article 5 also describes the limits to your freedom, such as members “have an obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They shall practice intellectual honesty.” This is analogous to the limit to free speech that does not allow you to yell “fire” in a crowded room. Thus, the issue that arises in these sorts of discipline cases is to what degree a particular statement or behavior could be considered the practice of academic freedom or as unprofessional behavior.

What is the Process if a Faculty Member is Accused of Wrongdoing?

The general discipline process is laid out in article 14 of the CBA. The process starts with an investigation into the incident. That investigation usually includes an informal meeting with the BUFM. You have a right to an AAUP representative at any meeting and a right not to talk about an incident. If the administration begins a formal investigation, in which they speak to third parties or records are kept, they need to inform the faculty member in writing of the specific allegations. If after the investigation the administration wishes to impose some form of discipline, it must conduct a disciplinary meeting to discuss the charges and to allow the faculty member to present his or her case. The administration is required to notify the faculty member of the specific charges five days in advance of the discipline meeting. At this point, the University administration can impose discipline, most likely a letter of reprimand that will appear in your personnel file. If the punishment is not commensurate with the act or if it is too severe, then the AAUP-WSU can take the matter to arbitration. Most cases are, however, settled or resolved through negotiation and mutual agreement.

Some useful tips:

1. Don't wait until a conflict reaches the level of discipline to contact the AAUP. We may be able to help you resolve issues before the administration considers discipline.

2. You have a right to AAUP representation at any meeting with your chair or dean that could lead to discipline. We recommend that you avail yourself of this right.
3. Keep all your e-mail communications. If you have conversations face to face, follow up with e-mail that lays out your understanding of what was communicated in those conversations.

Potential Pitfalls of Student Ratings of Teaching

Larry Turyn
Secretary AAUP-WSU

Studies¹ have shown a positive correlation, a statistical concept of association, between (a) student ratings of instruction and (b) student achievement, as measured by results on a common final examination for a multi-section course. Some people believe that even if ratings only measure student satisfaction, then the data will still be useful. While the commonly used terminology is “student *evaluations* of instruction,” it is more appropriate to call them “student *ratings* of instruction” because ratings data requires interpretation and evaluation before the data can be useful. Many of the controversies about student ratings have their source in how the ratings are used.

The current student evaluation form used at Wright State University was designed by a joint Administration and AAUP committee in 2000. We attempted to create one form that could be used (1) by instructors for formative feedback to improve their teaching, and (2) by administrators for summative feedback as a factor in personnel decisions such as salary raises, promotion, and tenure. Also, we wanted one form that could be used in all disciplines and in courses in which a broad variety of pedagogical methods are used.

The WSU evaluation form has six numerically scored questions concerning the performance of the teacher and a seventh question, “Coming into this course, I was motivated to learn this subject.” In addition, there are three fairly open-ended “essay questions” designed to elicit comments from students.

All untenured Tenure-Eligible and Tenured (TET) faculty, as well as all Non-Tenure-Eligible (NTE) faculty, have both the responses to the essay questions and numerical scores reported to the administrator who evaluates them, namely their department chair or the dean of CoNH and Lake Campus. Tenured faculty may choose to not have their numerical scores reported for evaluation. So, unless everyone in that department has their numerical scores reported to the administrator, the only way to *try to compare* all of the faculty in a department is to use the comments to the essay questions.

The 2011-2014 CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) between Wright State University and the tenure track faculty says that student ratings can only be used as one factor among many. Specifically, the CBA says:

¹ “Student Ratings of Teaching: The Research Revisited,” William E. Cashin, IDEA Paper 32, September, 1995.

“12.4 The University and the AAUP-WSU recognize that student evaluations of teaching are important indicators of teaching effectiveness, but numerical scores from these evaluations alone neither confirm nor deny an individual’s effectiveness. Thus, the Chair shall consider additional factors besides such numerical scores in evaluating a Bargaining Unit Faculty Member’s teaching.

“12.4.1 Low numerical scores or scores that are below college or department averages do not confirm ineffective teaching. Additional measures are needed to determine the Bargaining Unit Faculty Member’s teaching effectiveness.

“12.4.2 High numerical scores or scores above college or department averages do not confirm effective teaching. Additional measures are needed to determine the Bargaining Unit Faculty Member’s teaching effectiveness.”

Potential General Pitfalls of Student Ratings:

- 1) A single number, e.g., the average rating on one of the questions for the students in a course, cannot measure teaching effectiveness. Likewise, the simple average of the averages for different questions for the students in a course cannot measure teaching effectiveness.
- 2) One should not take the simple average over several courses of the averages on one of the questions. One does not have to be a statistician to realize that a simple average can be misleading:

For example, suppose (a) in each of three courses all 10 students gave me a score of 5 for Question 1, “The instructor was available for consultation,” and (b) in one course all 170 students gave me a score of 3 for Question 1. The average of the averages would be $4.5=(5+5+5+3)/4$, whereas the average for the four courses combined, weighted by the number of students, would be $3.3=(5 \times 10+5 \times 10+5 \times 10+3 \times 170)/200$.

- 3) The average of student ratings for one question, for all students in one course, is just one characteristic of a statistical distribution.

For example, suppose for Question 1 in one course I got 10 scores of 2 and 20 scores of 5, for an average of $4 = (2 \times 10+5 \times 20)/30$, and in another course I got all scores of 4. Would you conclude that in the two different courses the students thought that I was equally effective in being available to students?

- 4) Use of student ratings to compare faculty is problematic. In particular, it is dangerous to compare ratings for professors in different departments, let alone colleges. Even within a department, the level of the course and whether the course is required or optional may bias the ratings. So, for example, it would be wrong to directly compare a faculty member’s ratings in MTH 2300 (a required, freshman level course) to ratings in MTH 6240 (an elective, graduate level course).

In addition, perceptions of instructor experience and reputation substantially affect student course selection as well as student performance, supporting the notion that students do not² randomly assign themselves to instructors when choice is available.

² “Instructor reputation: An expectancy relationship involving student ratings and achievement,” Raymond P. Perry, Philip

- 5) It is not possible to make a valid judgment about the teaching effectiveness based on a professor's ratings in one particular course. That is one reason why tenure decisions should take into account ratings over a period of at least two years.
- 6) "In general, experts recommend that comprehensive systems of faculty evaluation be developed, of which student ratings of instruction are only one, albeit important, component." Within such a system, student ratings should be used only to make crude judgments of instructional effectiveness (exceptional, adequate, and unacceptable)."³ (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997)

So, *ranking* professors by their class average rating on a question could inappropriately magnify small numerical differences. For example, if four instructors' class average on Question 1 were 4.70, 4.65, 4.60, and 4.55, it would be ridiculous to say the lowest ranking score is cause for concern about the person's teaching. and it would be ridiculous to say that the highest ranking score is proof of superior teaching. And it would violate the WSU CBA, besides violating intellectual integrity.

Addressing the General Pitfalls:

- 1) It is controversial whether any single number can measure teaching effectiveness. What is not controversial is that no single number can measure the many "dimensions" of teaching effectiveness. What is not controversial is that any attempt to take a weighted average of ratings for several questions would require a very large Wright State University specific research project concerning the questions and measures of student learning and simulations to test the formula that would produce such a weighted average.

The WSU evaluation form does *not* have a question such as "Overall, how would you rate this course?" Such a question would have been likely to be misapplied by some administrators, and even some faculty, by using it as a sole (mis)measure of teaching effectiveness.

We should protest any time an administrator tries to violate the CBA by using *only* student ratings as proof of a judgment about teaching effectiveness. Contact AAUP-WSU if you believe that any of your contractual rights have been violated!

- 2) I am not a statistician, but I believe that there is a way to take a weighted average of ratings in several courses that makes good statistical sense. But I believe that way is not as simple as the weighted average I mentioned above, which essentially treats the students in several courses as if they had been in one larger course.
- 3) Anyone who claims that a small difference in student ratings of teaching proves that one professor is more effective than another has no understanding of ratings.

C. Abrami, Les Leventhal, and James Check, *Journal of Educational Psychology* 1979, Vol.71, No. 6,776-787.

³ "The dimensionality of student ratings of instruction: What we know and what we do not," Philip C. Abrami, Sylvia d'Apollonia, and Steven Rosenfield, in *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: An Evidence-Based Perspective*, R.P. Perry and J.C. Smart (eds.), 385-456 (2007) Springer-Verlag.

Potential Pitfalls of Student Ratings, at Wright State University:

- 1) As far as I know, the evaluation form used at Wright State University has not been studied to see to what extent, if any, the form is “valid,” i.e., measures teaching effectiveness, and “reliable,” i.e., consistent over use in several courses taught by the same instructor. While the questions on our form were inspired by what the research literature has found to be useful questions, the precise wording of questions may affect the results and in principle, the students at any particular university might have idiosyncratic biases.
- 2) As remarked in (4) above, one should not assume that students randomly assign themselves to different instructors and courses. It is no secret that a typical Wright State University class often has a very heterogeneous student population with great variations in student ability, previous preparation, and age, as well as many students with extensive employment and family responsibilities. I believe that such heterogeneities make the “random assignment” assumption particularly suspect.

Working Papers From the Center for the Future of Higher Education

The Center for the Future of Higher Education is the research arm of the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education, which is a loose consortium of the major faculty unions nationwide: AAUP, AFT, and NEA, as well as the unions representing large state system in California (the California State University and California Community College systems), New York (SUNY and CUNY), and Pennsylvania (APSCUF). To give you some idea of the scope of the representation at the CFHE meetings, the May 2012 meeting in Ann Arbor was attended by about 65 faculty leaders from 28 states.

Funding Higher Education: The Search for Possibilities:

In the United States, quality public higher education was once accessible to most Americans able to benefit from it.

The way it worked was simple—taxpayers funded public colleges and universities sufficiently so that students who were prepared to work a few hours a week could complete their degrees in a relatively short time with a minimum amount of debt. For those with even greater need, government provided state grants and Pell grants.

This system worked well for decades and opened the door to opportunity for millions of Americans.

Now, we are told we can no longer afford this. We believe that is wrong.

The Campaign for the Future of Higher Education has begun a drive to involve our nation’s college and university faculty in the search for better solutions than funding cuts, privatization, soaring tuition and academic shut-downs.

Our nation has arrived at our current quandary for a variety of reasons. One is surely a failure of imagination, a set of assumptions that profoundly limits our ability to think about possibilities.

Three working papers released by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education aim at stimulating a more thoughtful, fact-based, national conversation about paying for higher education in this country.

Three Ideas To Fund Higher Education In America

Two of the CFHE working papers address the common assumption that funding higher education through public means rather than through skyrocketing tuition is simply impossible.

One explores the notion of free higher education and examines what the actual cost to provide such an ideal would be.

Bob Samuels, a University of California faculty member in San Diego, argues we could make big strides towards free public higher education by reallocating current governmental expenditures for higher education and by eliminating regressive tax breaks.

The second paper, using the state of California as a test case, looks at the real magnitude of returning to recent, more adequate levels of state funding for higher education. Stanley Glantz, a professor at UC San Francisco, describes that “resetting” higher education funding to more adequate past levels would require only very small adjustments in the median income tax return.

The third paper explores a currently unused tax revenue source that could be tapped if there were the political will to provide adequate public funding for higher education. Rudy Fichtenbaum, an economics professor at Wright State University in Ohio and national president of the American Association of University Professors, explains how to achieve vastly improved funding for higher education through a miniscule tax on selected financial transactions.

You can see all of the papers at www.futureofhighered.org/workingpapers.

These working papers are meant to encourage discussion, foster debate, and generate action. We invite faculty members and higher education supporters, particularly those with direct experience in America’s classrooms with students, to add thoughts about these models and ideas about others through the comment section of the CFHE website. We also invite you to post on the CFHE Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FutureofHigherEd> and to follow CFHE on Twitter @FutureofHE or using #FutureofHE

Book Review

Marty Kich
President AAUP-WSU

Ginsberg, Benjamin. *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters*. New York: Oxford U P, 2011.

Ginsberg's book has very quickly become a seminal work in the growing body of scholarly literature dedicated to higher education's institutional self-examination. This literature has been written almost equally by administrators and faculty, who share a singular focus on the increasing corporatization of our colleges and universities. Not surprisingly, most of the administrative authors of these studies have expressed largely positive views of corporatization, while most of the faculty have presented decidedly negative views of it. What the administrators have typically seen as the salient benefits of corporate modeling in shaping the future possibilities of our institutions, the faculty have generally regarded as a further compounding of the trends that have turned our institutions into misshapen caricatures of what they have traditionally, and ideally, thought themselves to be or sought to be.

Ginsberg rightly notes that the rise in tuition and direct costs to students over the last three decades has led to a misplaced focus on faculty performance. In the view of the most vehement critics of higher education and, increasingly, in the minds of the general public, the tenured faculty member has become the higher-ed equivalent of the unionized factory worker: an overly privileged and unconscionably protected class whose great resistance to constructive and necessary change needs to be overcome for the sake of general progress.

The truth is that the competition for a decreasing number of tenure-track positions has led to a steady increase in expectations of faculty at all levels. To secure an assistant professorship, candidates now need as much published scholarship as a candidate for promotion and tenure needed thirty years ago. Despite those increased scholarly expectations, teaching loads have generally increased, incrementally but steadily, and the proliferation of "learning options" outside of the classroom has meant that faculty are now expected to supervise such things as "service learning" projects and co-op programs, as well as more conventional internships. And, although faculty at most institutions are less actively engaged in shared governance, the opportunities and expectations for them to engage in departmental, college, university, community, and professional service have proliferated. In short, faculty—even the more privileged tenured and tenure-track faculty—are working harder than they ever have. Furthermore, although it is undoubtedly an overstatement to say that they have been nothing more than wholly blameless observers to all that currently afflicts higher education, they certainly do not deserve the lion's share of the blame.

Ginsberg places the lion's share of the blame on administrators. He co-opts the more common phrase "administrative bloat" and gives it a cutting turn in denouncing "administrative blight." Unlike some of those who have previously attempted to address the corporatization of higher education, Ginsberg does not focus primarily on the dramatic increases in the number and the compensation of upper administrators. Instead, he concentrates on the ripple effects of that phenomenon: the almost entirely unchecked expansion in the numbers of mid-level administrators and of administrative staff. In essence, Ginsberg delineates the peculiar institutional logic by which administration and administrative support have come to consume a higher percentage of institutional revenues than is now allocated to instruction and instructional support. Namely, anyone with vice-president or vice-

provost in his or her title not only requires immediate support staff but also subordinate administrators with “associate” in their titles, who each not only requires immediate support staff but also subordinate administrators with “assistant” in their titles, who not only require their own immediate support staff but also liaisons to each other and to the deans and chairs (and associate and assistant deans and assistant chairs) who now form a distinct administrative level more immediately responsible for supervising faculty and those staff allocated to instructional support.

In most institutions, deans and chairs are not listed in the administrative hierarchy below the various vice-presidents and vice-provosts; instead, the two hierarchies are placed side by side as if they are parallel entities. But any review of the individual compensation and cumulative compensation allocated for the positions—and, more importantly, the support staff--within the two hierarchies will very clearly convey which is being given more institutional emphasis and resources. Ginsberg notes that between 1975 and 2005, the number of administrators rose 85% and the number of administrative staff rose 240%--all while the number of instructional faculty remained flat and the number of instructional support staff significantly decreased: that is, the savings realized by the development of electronic technologies have been quite dramatically realized on the instructional side but seem to have had precisely the opposite effect on the administrative side.

The most common argument in defense of the expansion in administrative positions has been that federal mandates, the explosion in technological needs, and the changing expectations of students, who are no longer satisfied with sparsely furnished dorm rooms and a few intramural sports, have combined to create many extra-instructional demands on institutions that did not exist thirty or more years ago. But Ginsberg points out that most individual disciplines and the curriculum as a whole have also undergone very comparable, dramatic changes over the same period, and yet faculty have been expected consistently “to do more with less” while adapting to each new wave of innovations in course content and course delivery. Indeed, nothing more pointedly demonstrates the skewed priorities of our institutions than the much-changed composition of the faculty. As the number and compensation of mid-level administrators and their support staff have ballooned, the number of tenure-track faculty positions has declined by about half to about 36% of the total number of faculty employed nationwide, with non-tenure-eligible faculty constituting another 18% of the total, and adjunct faculty therefore accounting for the remainder of the positions, nearly half of the total. Given that adjuncts receive very minimal stipends per course, very few if any benefits, and very minimal if any instructional support, it is not hard to understand why the revenues allocated to administration and instruction are headed in opposite directions.

Ginsberg points out that faculty used to assume administrative roles later in their careers, the assumption being that they would have acquired enough experience with the institutional structure and dynamic, as well as with the personalities of their colleagues, to effectively manage their departments or colleges until a somewhat younger colleague was willing, in his or her turn, to step up to the task. But the shift toward the increasing corporatization of our institutions has created demands for an ostensibly “professional” administrative class. Ginsberg rightly points out, however, that simply creating a distinct class of faculty who rather quickly move over onto an administrative track does not necessarily mean either that those faculty will be especially effective as administrators or that the faculty who might be the most effective administrators will necessarily be attracted to that track.

Nonetheless, Ginsberg himself acknowledges that it is hardly the case that all, or even most, administrators are incompetent. If higher education had unlimited resources and administrative bloat were not draining resources from instruction, most administrative positions might even be somewhat easy to justify. But, Ginsberg does emphasize that the continuing proliferation of mid-level administrators is leading increasingly to the creation of positions that do seem ridiculous inventions,

as if administrations are, indeed, straining to define new functions and needs simply to sustain administrative growth.

On the other hand, almost all faculty have dealt with enough incompetent administrators to accept, on purely anecdotal evidence, that the number of incompetent and petty-minded administrators far exceeds the number of excellent administrators. In the spirit of that faculty bias, I would like to cite a wonderful retort to the cliché, “Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.” Teachers have turned the cliché around to: “Those who can, teach. Those who cannot, pass laws about teaching.” I’m assuming that you can very easily fashion your own snarky equivalent about administrators.

“Right to Work” Is an Insult to Intelligence

Marty Kich
President AAUP-WSU

This piece originally appeared as a post to the Academe Blog in December 2012.

In the very near future, I plan to post an extended comment on the passage of so-called “right to work” legislation in Michigan, as well as a series to be called “Right to Work, By the Numbers,” which will provide much detailed evidence that this sort of union-busting legislation can hardly be said to provide any sort of panacea for workers.

But as a prelude to those posts, I think that it is worthwhile and even necessary to ask some very basic questions that have almost never been asked during the debates over the relative value of unionization and “right to work” legislation.

First, no one *ever* asks or explains how “right to work” legislation actually and specifically benefits workers.

Proponents of “right to work” will immediately recite talking points about the corruption of union bosses, the counterproductive effects of some union work rules, and the use of union dues to support political causes with which not every union member agrees.

Let’s say, for the sake of argument, that all of these things are true, how does eliminating unions then insure fairer wages, fairer benefits, fairer workloads, and safer working conditions?

Does anyone believe that the average worker can negotiate those things more effectively as an individual than as a member of a union? If you do and you are making less than the median *family* income—still less than \$50,000 per year—I’d like to know what company employs you and on what planet both it and you are located. I know that there are companies that treat their employees very well, but how many of those companies have large, low-wage work forces? Perhaps I have simply missed or overlooked the stories about such places in the media. Perhaps those companies are so commonplace that the media does not feel it is newsworthy to publicize such happy-go-lucky low-wage workplaces and workers. And if most of those working poor are so

contented, so accepting of their circumstances, why were Mitt Romney and his donors so resentful and disdainful towards them?

I can understand why many workers may have become very disillusioned over the inability of the large industrial unions to preserve the jobs of their members in the face of relentless automation and low-wage foreign competition. Yet, over the last four decades, wholesale layoffs and outsourcing have not just continued unabated but have even accelerated as union membership in the private sector has declined to under ten percent nationally. So to claim that unions are primarily to blame for declining wages, eliminated benefits, unrealistic workloads, poor working conditions, the lack of job security, and business failures is patently absurd.

And it is worse than absurd—it is absolutely idiotic and patently dishonest—to do so when corporate profits and stock dividends, the compensation of corporate executives, and the self-interested political activism of corporations have reached unprecedented levels, measured both in raw dollar amounts and in proportion to the compensation received by and the political influence exerted by the average American worker.

Opponents of unions like to point out that unions have had their day, that they have outlived their usefulness—that they are tired of hearing about the things that unions accomplished for workers half a century ago.

If unions and the benefits that they provide are no longer relevant, why have the incomes of working-class families actually declined over the last three decades? (Why, when over the same period, the incomes of middle-class families have stagnated and the incomes of upper-class families have increased exponentially?) Why is the working class no longer middle class? Why have “benefits” become things that workers can purchase whenever they can afford them on their much reduced wages? Why are there now many more working poor than so-called “welfare cases” relying on public assistance programs such as food stamps and school lunches for economically disadvantaged children? Why are emergency rooms overwhelmed with sick adults and children from working-class families who have no health insurance and no place else to go for last-minute medical care?

If unions are so unnecessary, why are low-wage workers across a wide spectrum of workplaces, from Walmart warehouses to fast-food restaurants, risking what little economic security that they do have in order to attempt to form unions? If you answer that they have all been duped by pernicious union organizers, you have never tried to organize a union. In terms of the level of disinterest tinged with suspicion that one often encounters in trying to organize a union, it is a task all too comparable to being a door-to-door evangelist.

Returning to the talking points of proponents of “right to work” legislation, why, in all of the discussion of “right to work,” is there so much attention to union corruption and union excess and so little attention to corporate corruption and corporate excess? I am not willing to defend the attitudes and behavior of every union leader in America, but one hardly has to do an extensive search to find manifold evidence of corporate self-interest and malfeasance. Unions can hardly be said to have cornered the market on schmucks in leadership positions.

When I was still smoking cigarettes, I once was stopped outside our public library by a vehement anti-smoker. It was a very humid summer night, with almost no breeze, and the chemical odors from the large refinery and chemical plants at the south end of town had concentrated over the whole town, rather than dissipating downwind of the town. As I was listening to the non-smoker hector me about what I was doing to my lungs, I consoled myself with the observation that his harangue meant that he was drawing all of that chemically-enhanced, carcinogen-rich air deeply into his lungs and probably doing more harm to them than at least that one cigarette was doing to mine.

The point of this anecdote might be that people often very passionately miss the obvious and consequently misdirect their passion. But I think that the point is actually more subtle. An ex-smoker who will feel so self-righteous in haranguing smokers will never picket a polluting plant because he or she would feel ridiculous and ineffectual, rather than vindicated, in picketing the plant. Analogously, I think that, in many instances, workers who ought to know better find it easier to repeat corporate-sponsored talking points against unions and against their own interests than to reflect on and to express their dissatisfactions with the companies that employ or might employ them.

I can understand why corporations are in favor of “right to work” legislation. I cannot understand how a worker can support such legislation.

As I indicated earlier, the proponents of “right to work” legislation often argue that unions are, in effect, un-American because union dues are used to support political causes with which not every union member agrees. Putting aside the fact that union elections are now, very arguably, much more closely supervised and more democratic than political elections in general in this country, one might ask why the workers on the losing side in such elections should be able to dictate what the majority should or should not do.

If corporations are indeed “people,” I’d like to know why corporations are not held to a comparable standard. Why all political contributions made by corporations must not be approved by a shareholders’ vote before they can be made. Or why a minority of shareholders cannot prevent a corporation from contributing to political campaigns with which those shareholders disagree. Or why all political contributions made by corporations must not be made in proportion to the distribution of opinion reflected in a vote by shareholders.

I’d like to know how it is “fair” that in every “right to work” state in the country a worker who declines to pay any dues to the union *to which he chooses not to belong* can nonetheless demand that that union represent him when he needs representation—and can even sue that union if he feels that that its representation has somehow been insufficient.

I’d like someone to explain why the same far-right politicians who declaim about the pressing need to limit the “frivolous” lawsuits that can be brought against corporations have applied this very different standard to unions.

I’d like them to explain how these very different standards reflect some sort of core American values, rather than reveal transparent political expediency.

I’d like to remind them that unions are people, too. And not just because the Citizens United decision has declared them to be so.