

TENNESSEE

CONFERENCE

September 2008

NEWSLETTER

The Fall Meeting at a Glance

The fall 2008 Meeting of the Conference will be held on Saturday, October 4th. Our host is Motlow State Community College. We thank them for their hospitality. Please register in advance so that they can adequately prepare for us. The schedule of the meeting and a link to the registration form are on the next column.

The theme of the meeting is “Working Together.” There will be two concurrent sessions in the morning, both of which will be working sessions. In both cases, the result will be a blueprint of initiatives and strategies that will be submitted to the Conference membership at the business meeting in the afternoon.

Session A, in the morning, will be facilitated by the Committee on Part-Time and Non-Tenure Track Faculty. An in-depth report of the Coalition on Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) Conference will be given as background, as well as the recent work of the Committee. The remainder of the session will be devoted to prioritizing key issues of contingent faculty to be addressed, developing a strategy for reaching out to contingent faculty across the state, and establishing the next steps of the Committee.

Session B, in the morning, will be facilitated by the Government Relations Committee and Coley McGinnis, a long-time AAUP member who is currently serving as our lobbyist. In order to strengthen our case as we promote higher education before legislators and the general public, a list of AAUP Core Values will be developed and explicated. These will serve as talking points and touchstones as we promote higher education in Tennessee. It is clear that we cannot just hire a lobbyist to do all of this for us. A recommendation to

the Conference membership will be developed as to how best to proceed.

After lunch, a session for all participants will be facilitated by the Membership Committee. An overview of the upcoming membership drive planned by the national AAUP and how we can capitalize on that plan on individual campuses and as a conference will be given. A strategy for coordinating membership efforts across the state will be explored.

The final event will be the business meeting of the Conference. Please be prepared to act on a number of initiatives proposed as a result of the sessions. There will also be a ballot on the proposed Constitutional Amendment which appears on page 2, as well as an opportunity to share Chapter Reports.

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Fall Meeting Program	
Please Register by E-mail	
9:30—10:00	Coffee and Registration
10:00—12:00	Concurrent Sessions
A.	Contingent Faculty in Higher Education: From a National Perspective to a State Agenda —Facilitated by the Committee on Part-Time and Non-Tenure Track Appointments
B.	AAUP Core Values: Developing Talking Points And an Action Plan for Promoting Higher Education —Facilitated by the Government Relations Committee
12:00—1:00pm	Lunch
1:00—1:45	Implementing a Comprehensive Membership Program —Facilitated by the Membership Committee
2:00—3:30	TN Conference Business Meeting Ballot on the Constitutional Amendment

IRS 990-N Update

As reported in the Summer 2008 newsletter, all charitable organizations, including AAUP chapters, are now required to file an electronic postcard with the IRS called the 990-N. The Tennessee Conference has already completed this requirement thanks to the efforts of our Secretary/Treasurer, Pippa Holloway. She will be available at the fall meeting to answer questions regarding this process.

Call for Local and Sub-Regional Events

The time is ripe to present our issues to candidates for the state legislature. AAUP Core Values, to be developed at the fall meeting, will serve as talking points. Consider coordinating an event to present the AAUP as a resource and to highlight the critical role of higher education in Tennessee. There is one month between the fall meeting and the November election. Let's begin planning now. The networking required to hold such an event will provide a foundation for continued collaboration between campuses as we continue to Work Together.

Spring 2009 Meeting

The Spring Meeting will be hosted by East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. The proposed date of the meeting is March 28th.

Constitutional Amendment

The Executive Committee recommends that two additional elected offices be established for the Conference. This would increase the number of officers to seven. The proposed new offices would be Secretary, separating the Secretary/Treasurer position, and a Vice President for Community Colleges. A secret ballot on the proposed amendment will be held at the Fall 2008 meeting. The text of the proposed Amendment follows:

Article 3 Section 1 amended to read

The officers shall be a president, a vice-president from independent/private institutions (who is first vice president), a vice president from public

institutions (who is second vice president), a vice president from community colleges (who is third vice president), a secretary, a treasurer, and the immediate past-president. These seven officers shall constitute the Executive Committee, and shall perform the duties prescribed by this constitution and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Conference. The vice president from independent/private institutions, the vice president from public institutions, and the vice president from community colleges shall represent the particular concerns of their constituencies to the Conference.

Article 3 Section 3 amended to read

The Executive Committee shall fill any vacancies in the offices of president, vice presidents, secretary, or treasurer that occur between elections.

Article 5 Section 1 amended to read

The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Conference between its meetings, fix the hour and place of meetings, make recommendations to the Conference, and perform such other duties as are specified in this Constitution. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Conference President or upon the written request of four members of the Executive Committee.

Tennessee Conference Committees

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

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

Lessons Learned at LeMoyne-Owen

By Delphia Harris, LeMoyne-Owen College

When I was nominated and elected as President of the Tennessee Conference, I did not take it as a personal endorsement, but rather considered it to be recognition of the strength and accomplishments of the Faculty Organization at LeMoyne-Owen College, where I am privileged to serve. Many of you know some of our story and have watched us grow. We have received vital encouragement, a national perspective, legal and financial assistance, from the AAUP. We have decided that it is time for us to give back what we can. For those of you who may not be familiar with our struggle, a brief timeline is given below. The purpose for sharing this is not to brag. Instead, it is out of recognition that there may be institutions within our conference where faculty are discouraged; where morale is low, where economic adversity is being used as an excuse to undermine process and shared governance. Perhaps we can encourage you. We will stand with you.

Timeline

- ~1972 -- Faculty Organization formed and recognized by inclusion in the Faculty Handbook approved by the Board of Trustees
- 1980's -- Faculty Organization President represents faculty on President's Cabinet
- 1989 -- Tenure review is suspended
- 1989 to 2001 -- Faculty-Trustee Contact is forbidden
- 2000 -- NLRB Petition is filed
- 2001 -- Tenure review is reinstated: The tenure policy is jointly developed by a faculty committee and the President and then approved by the Board
- 2002 -- Faculty Representation on the Board Begins
- 2003 -- The Faculty Organization affiliates as a Chapter of the AAUP and joins the Collective Bargaining Congress
- 2006 -- The President includes two faculty members on the President's Cabinet in addition to the Dean of Faculty
- 2008 -- The Faculty Organization co-hosts a conference on Shared Governance with the Tennessee Conference of the AAUP. The President of the College and two Trustee members serve on the panel.

Through our journey over the past eight years, several critical principles have emerged. These principles have become fundamental to who we are and how we conduct ourselves. I share them with you and ask that you reflect on the dynamics among faculty on your own campus and within the Conference. These principles have served us well at LeMoyne-Owen.

Environment Affects Perception Even for Scholars

We were experiencing very difficult times. We never wanted to start a union. We just wanted to be heard and to have meaningful input into the governance of our college. We hired a labor attorney and filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board and for over a year after that we were still heard to say: "we don't want to form a union. We just want the Faculty Organization to be our collective bargaining agent." Finally we realized that is what a union is. We began to wear the union label proudly.

When a district court overturned the repeated NLRB decisions that we should be recognized as a collective bargaining unit, we didn't flinch. A court can change what someone else calls us, but they cannot change who we are and how we think of ourselves. There are some things that the NLRB and lawyers cannot accomplish. But through that process we learned to trust each other and to act in solidarity. We found ways to codify our relationship within existing structures. It was our quest for recognition that brought us into the AAUP. There we found solidarity with faculty across the nation who helped us hold our ground and helped us pay legal bills that would have taken us more than ten years to pay.

In a right to work state, unions are accused of being adversarial and focused on money; something far beneath a professional. Through the Collective Bargaining Congress we met faculty from large state institutions who have had bargaining agreements for more than thirty years. There are a number of states where it seems perfectly natural for university faculty to be union members. Rather than being negative, true solidarity requires a much higher standard of behavior among peers. Solidarity also provides the strength to insist that the wisdom and expertise expected in faculty when they are hired actually benefit the institution that pays their salaries.

Process is Key

Process is our constant theme. We have developed a fundamental reliance on the principle that the product will always be better when several people are involved than if one acts alone. There must be substantive involvement of the people who will be affected by a decision. Not only do we expect this of our administration and trustees, we also hold each other accountable for this in our own deliberations.

There have been times when I have felt that I knew exactly what should be done and others did not agree. I spoke freely and made my case. When they were not persuaded I deferred to the will of the group and let the process work. Even if I had been right and had struck out on my own, standing alone would have meant that I had lost my colleagues. I would have lost everything. Can the group make a mistake together? It is possible, but at least the solidarity and accountability are still intact and you can plan next steps together. Generally, the cultivated collective wisdom is better than the wisdom of one.

Model the Behavior You Seek

We are scholars and educators in everything that we do. Not only do we seek to educate students, but we find ourselves educating administrators, board members, each other, and ourselves. As educators we find that we are most effective when we demonstrate and model what we want from our students. I would never require a student to do something that I am either unwilling or incapable of doing myself.

What do we want from board members and administrators? We want them to listen to us respectfully and to take what we have to say seriously, as they proceed. We want them to allow us to take responsibility for matters under our purview. Clearly, we should give these same considerations to our colleagues, our fellow faculty members. If another faculty member and I disagree shouldn't I listen respectfully and take what is said seriously? Sometimes it is the person who disagrees with us that has the most to offer in terms of deepening our perspective.

A Split Decision Yields a Broken Result

Consensus is the standard by which we strive to operate. It requires us to listen to those with whom we disagree, but the effort is well rewarded by a deeper, more meaningful approach. There are times when there seems to be a deadlock. It is possible on those occasions that waiting is the best decision. How can there be solidarity when a simple majority

overpowers colleagues who should be working toward a common goal?

Leadership is Service

When we elect officers of the Senate we give them the responsibility of 1) facilitating our deliberations, and 2) communicating what we have spoken to the President and the Board of Trustees. The members of the Senate do not have the authority to make major decisions for us. Solidarity is not only valued among us, it is recognized by the rest of the campus. On committees and even in social settings, any faculty member may be asked "how would the Faculty feel about this" or "where does the Faculty stand on that." This means that all faculty members need to gain the perspective that what they do and say reflects on the entire faculty.

Often the Faculty has much more power than they realize. An important role of the faculty leaders is to remind the group of that and to help channel that power in positive and meaningful endeavors.

I am pleased to serve with you

COCAL Movement Offers Solidarity for the Contingent Professor

By Andrew William Smith, Tennessee Tech

Years ago, I engaged in a vigorous debate with a friend and fellow English professor about whether academic professionals should consider themselves part of the working class. That day, we could not agree about whether or not our middle-class backgrounds and flexible working conditions made it impossible to call ourselves workers in the sense suggested by working-class consciousness and labor movement philosophy.

As an instructor who spent the first decade of his career in the ranks of the contingent faculty—the growing group that includes part-time professors and full-time, temporary, non-tenurable professors—I was made acutely aware of how my intellectual labor gets purchased on the cheap and how this exchange results from the profit motive of the corporate multiversity. Sharing a common experience of low wages, lack of job security, exclusion from faculty governance, and all the righteous indignation that goes with these, contingent faculty across North America have formed a social labor movement under the auspices of COCAL—Coalition Of Contingent Academic Labor.

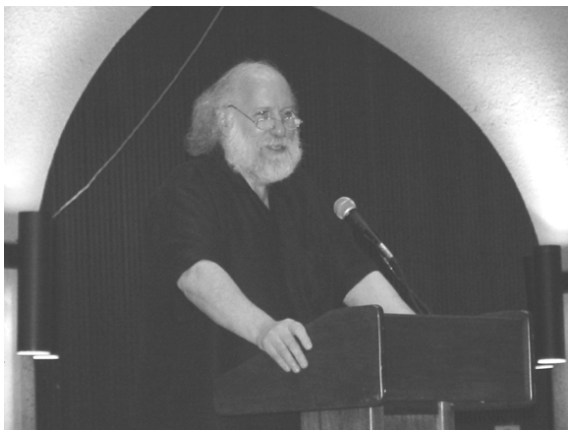
This past August, I attended the eighth biennial COCAL conference in San Diego, California with

hundreds of instructors and activists from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. In addition to formal plenary sessions and several communal meals held on the campus of San Diego State University, breakout sessions with titles like “Contingents in Academic Governance” and “Impact of Contingent Academic Labor Conditions on Educational Quality” were well-attended.

In San Diego, I learned of the hard-fought victories won by contingent faculty in public education systems with a strong union presence.

According to a report of the event published by *Inside Higher Ed* (available at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/08/11/adjuncts>), “one session almost turned into a boasting session of how successful some unions have been in winning job security and other rights for faculty members off the tenure track. At one point, those present talked about the problem of achieving job security close enough to tenure that it might be called ‘tenure light’ or ‘de facto tenure’ without using language that might upset those who have tenure.”

Learning about the gains by instructors in states with a vibrant culture of faculty unionism only further illuminated the problems we face in so-called “right to work” states. The session I presented at was called “Organizing in Difficult Sectors,” and as I learned over the weekend, of the constituencies in attendance at the conference, only the Mexican colleagues had it worse than adjunct professors in Tennessee do. The lack of an organized and united faculty mirrors our lack of living wages, job security, and enfranchisement in shared governance.



Cary Nelson, AAUP President, Speaking at COCAL
Photograph By David Milroy

The closing plenary of the conference was called “Globalization & Corporatization of Higher Ed.” The presentations by Cary Nelson, AAUP National President, and Arturo Ramos, Sindicato de Trabajadores Académicos de la UACH, did an excellent job framing the academic labor struggle in a larger theoretical and economic context. Facing leadership styles in our governing boards, institutions, and administrations that increasingly resemble the profit-driven perspectives of boards at large multinational corporations, we are faced with the opportunity to see ourselves as part of the international, grassroots movement that organizes around the common identity of casualized laborers everywhere. The international quality of the event was continental, but having presentations in Spanish, English, and French added to the very real sense that in the tradition of the twentieth century labor organizers—“an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Since its inception, COCAL has fashioned itself as “informal network” rather than a formal organization with full-time staff. This anti-bureaucratic stance combined with an activist sensibility among participants makes COCAL both unusual and inspiring.

The entire mood of the COCAL conference conveyed a feisty and committed spirit of cooperative and collective action as central aspects of workplace justice and social change. What makes COCAL amazing and unique among both academic conferences and activist convergences is its fashioning of a space where theory and action command equal attention.

What could be a mere support group for the disgruntled or a divisive internal battleground for defining a movement’s agenda was neither. Instead, fluid gestures of solidarity mixed with meaningful discussions about our shared role in redefining our professions, of rejecting elite abstractions and cultivating working-class subjectivity.

Sadly, many contingent instructors in “difficult sectors” like Tennessee live around anti-education, anti-union sentiments every day and don’t even know that a movement like COCAL exists. Over the coming months, the Tennessee Conference of AAUP in the name of its Committee on Part-Time and Non-Tenure-Track Appointments hopes to reach out to more and more adjunct and temporary full-time instructors to invite them to participate in improving our situation here in Tennessee. Knowing that we have offers of solidarity from contingent activists around the continent reminds us that we are not alone.

Chapter News

These updates are based on reports from local chapters. Please send your chapter news to Delphia Harris by February 6th for inclusion in the spring 2009 newsletter.

Austin Peay State University

The APSU chapter sponsored an initial luncheon meeting with our new University President and the Chapter Executive Committee in March. This is President Hall's first year at APSU and the chapter had not formally met with President Hall before that. The meeting was very positive. The key issue put forward at the meeting was the closure of our Developmental Studies program the previous year.

Development studies had been closed as a program in 2006 by the university's past president who retired in the Spring of 2007. The tenured faculty in the program were assigned to non-teaching jobs, or to departments outside of their area of professional expertise. Several left the university as a result. The majority of the non-tenured faculty in the program were either assigned to clerical jobs or laid off. President Hall made a commitment at the luncheon to review the issue with the University Provost.

By August, 2008, five months after the meeting with President Hall, the tenured faculty had been re-assigned or notified of a future assignment. Laid off faculty had been made job offers and were returning to the university. The chapter considers this a very positive development.

This past spring and this fall the chapter is pursuing two issues. One issue is the investigation of a complaint about academic freedom being challenged in regard to a faculty member and their work on campus. The second issue is the review and research over the reclassification of the library faculty. The previous president, just before leaving the university, had downgraded the library's faculty status from faculty to staff without tenure potential. The chapter is investigating and collecting materials about this issue and is in the process of negotiating with President Hall and the university administration to reverse this decision. We expect a position statement from the administration this semester.

Two officers of the chapter, our Treasurer and our Secretary, have made a strong commitment to co-chairing our membership efforts on campus. We plan to contact all faculty members by email within the month. We plan a follow up process of personal visits to faculty who do not respond to the email

during the remainder of the school year. Our goal is to increase chapter membership significantly.

In relation to this membership campaign we are working to increase visibility of the chapter on campus. Our plan is to involve national in our campaign. The chapter is currently working to arrange a visit to campus by a national officer who would participate in a campus-wide convocation that would present the AAUP's History, Goals, and Potential. Our goal is to facilitate this convocation before the fall semester's end.

Other projects are in the planning stage at the executive committee level, but have not yet been finalized.

Tennessee Tech University

This fall, the Tennessee Tech Chapter of AAUP has plans for a busy semester. In addition to our regular chapter meetings, we are hosting a fundraising social in September and are co-sponsoring a forum with other campus groups on the upcoming presidential election in October.

Late last academic year, we decided to change the pattern for our regular chapter meetings to include one "special topic meeting" per semester, one off-campus meeting on a Friday afternoon, and to no longer have a meeting during last days of the term, a meeting that was very poorly attended. This semester, the special topic meeting will feature the new interim director of our counseling center who will make a brief presentation and field questions from the faculty. In the spring, we will have our annual meeting with President Bob Bell.

Our chapter has several active members and committees that are addressing pressing concerns that affect all of us.

Our Committee W is studying salary data to determine whether or not there is a pattern of gender inequity on our campus. We recently passed a proposal by consensus that will ask various committees and offices on our campus to implement new teaching awards for which contingent faculty will be eligible. Currently, contingent faculty are ineligible for all the major teaching awards on our campus.

Recently, our administration disseminated an email that proposed possibly changing the way in which we have traditionally managed full-time temporary appointments at Tech. The shift would involve longer contracts for temporary faculty and no limit on the number of years a temporary faculty member may be employed as long as a new search is conducted every three years.

This model of full-time "permatemping" is already in effect at several campuses in Tennessee,

but Tech has been unique in both capping temporary appointments after three years of one-year contracts and in offering tenure-track appointments to professors at the instructor (or lecturer) rank who primarily teach general education courses. There was lively discussion about this issue at our September chapter meeting, with strong sentiments expressed that were skeptical of the proposal and advocated a position that would uphold AAUP principles.

Tennessee Tech has a new provost in Jack Armistead, who was previously the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Provost Armistead is pioneering the prospect of changing the culture of our campus by creating “villages” on the “residential college” model already implemented by some universities in other parts of the country. Provost Armistead is always prompt to reply to any requests made by AAUP, and last year he was responsible for getting a proposal for a raise in the maximum allowable stipend for adjuncts onto the agenda of the Academic Subcouncil in the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Conference Officers

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About the Chapter Service Program

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

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



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