



AAUP Alert! Spring 2009

Spring 2009

A Newsletter of the American Association of University Professors - Colorado Conference

ABOUT AAUP

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

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<http://aaup-co.org>

From the Co-Presidents...



**AAUP-CO Co-President
Dean Saitta (DU)**

These are dangerous times for faculty, and for the professoriate generally. The volatile economy is testing commitments to academic freedom and shared governance on many of our campuses, and individuals are facing great uncertainties and anxieties.

A particularly striking example of the current assault on the faculty franchise is evidenced by CU President Bruce Benson's elimination of funding for CU's independent faculty and staff newspaper, the *Silver and Gold Record*. While there are many reasons to be concerned about this move, there are two that should be of concern to all faculty in Colorado. The first is the assault on academic freedom. The *S&GR* is the only independent voice of faculty and staff at CU. This move stifles that voice. When the voices of our colleagues are silenced, we are all immensely harmed. The effects can even ramify outward to those of us on other campuses who have a keen interest in the health of academic freedom on the state's flagship campus. For example, we found the *S&GR's* reporting of events



**AAUP-CO Co-President
Laura Connolly (UNC)**

surrounding the Ward Churchill affair to be uniquely helpful in understanding the complexities of that closely-watched, nationally-significant case. Although the outcome of the Churchill case is still unknown, the proceedings and jury verdict clearly vindicated faculty (and Colorado AAUP) worries about the quality of commitments to academic freedom and due process on the Boulder campus. Elimination of the *S&GR* strikes us as another, equally cynical and pretextual assault on faculty rights and freedoms at CU.

The second reason to be concerned about the abolishment of the *Silver and Gold Record* goes to shared governance. President Benson's decision reflects contempt for that ideal. His decision is, in fact, yet another example of the long and persistent trend across the state of shutting faculty out of the governance process. Administrators constantly give lip service to shared governance but, purposely or not, routinely impede it. The examples from Colorado campuses are too numerous to mention. The problem stems in part from the absence of meaningful faculty participation in the selection process for college and university presidents. As a result, almost all presidents hired over the past decade have had little understanding of academia and have assumed the best way to manage a university is to use a hierarchical corporate

approach. The irony, of course, is that many corporations—especially those in the information industry (e.g., Intel, Google, Apple) have recognized this approach is unproductive.

By treating the relationship between administrators and faculty as "management versus labor" rather than as a partnership, the campus climate is poisoned. We spend our time trying to outwit one another in an adversarial relationship instead of working together toward our common goals of high quality teaching and research. The AAUP has recognized the folly of this approach from its very beginning. The 1915 Declaration of principles states that members of a faculty "are the appointees, but not in any proper sense the employees," of the trustees; i.e., they are partners with the trustees [and administrators].

Too many of Colorado's administrators seem to think that faculty are only looking out for themselves and have no real interest in their students or their institutions. In our experience, nothing is further from the truth. Faculty identify—as much as any academic leader or governing board—with their institutions. Our identities are wrapped up with that of our institutions; we clearly want them to succeed. We coach our students to greatness and take as much pride in those who succeed as any parent. Assuming and respecting such commonality of interest and purpose is key to healthy institutional governance, success, and sustainability.

Benson Orders Elimination of CU's Silver and Gold Record

The staff and Editorial Board of University of Colorado's Silver & Gold Record were notified by the president's office on May 1 that CU's 39-year-old newspaper for faculty and staff is being eliminated, and all nine of its staff members are being laid off.

Representatives from the 15-member Editorial Board expressed dismay at both the decision to eliminate the paper and staff and the way in which the decision was made. Larry Cunningham of UCD business said he was disappointed that neither the Editorial Board, which oversees the publication, nor University governance groups, which established the paper in 1970 and appoint the Editorial Board representatives, were consulted during the decision-making process.

Faculty Council Chair and Editorial Board member John McDowell of UCD dental medicine also voiced concern at Dinegar's repeated statement that the decision to shutter S&GR was final. "You said this decision was irreversible," McDowell told Dinegar. McDowell asked Dinegar three times if he would meet with Faculty Council to discuss the decision. Dinegar said he is always willing to talk to Faculty Council, but that such discussions would not alter the decision. "What I'm hearing is something less than support for shared governance," McDowell said.

Dinegar said that while he believes S&GR has provided a valuable service, the University can no longer support it financially. "Frankly, the president's office concluded that we can no longer afford to be in the newspaper business," he said.

In April, Dinegar informed S&GR Editor Jefferson Dodge that S&GR would have to take a 21.4 percent cut for the fiscal year beginning July 1. On April 23, S&GR ran an article about that cut, contrary to the administration's wishes.

Dodge asked whether the president's office decided to eliminate the paper in part because of his decision to run the article or because of the paper's editorial independence.

Dinegar said the closure was not retaliatory. "Does the Silver & Gold sometimes run articles that make us crazy? Yes. But that only happens once or twice a year," Dinegar said. He said concerns from individual administrators about articles that S&GR runs were outweighed by the service the newspaper provides.

If the decision to close S&GR was not made to squelch editorial independence, Dodge asked, then why would content of the planned new Uni-

versity publication be subject to prior review by the administration?

"We're not looking to replicate the Silver & Gold," Dinegar said. "The University has changed since the Silver & Gold Record was established. We now have a lot of other avenues for communication," he said. "We need to protect the core operating services that we provide to the campuses. We did not feel that the Silver & Gold Record was a core service."

As word of S&GR's imminent closure spread across the University on May 1, faculty and staff members began a grassroots effort to save the paper.

Over the past two weeks, faculty and staff groups at all of the CU campuses have passed

"What I'm hearing is something less than support for shared governance"

—John McDowell, CU Faculty Council Chair and S&GR Editorial Board member

resolutions calling for the decision to eliminate Silver & Gold Record to be reconsidered.

The Boulder Faculty Assembly Executive Committee

unanimously passed a resolution stating the process used by system administration to eliminate Silver & Gold Record may have violated the Laws of the Regents. The BFA's resolution cites the portion of the Laws of the Regents, which states, "In establishing and reviewing budget policies and plans for resource allocation, the faculty shall collaborate with the campus or system administration in the development of recommendations to the chancellor or the president, as appropriate, for submission to the Board of Regents."

The BFA also pointed to a section of the Laws that says, "In the preparation of budgets, the administration shall have the principal role, with early collaboration with the appropriate faculty governance unit(s). ..."

"This is a line in the sand," Margaret LeCompte of education [and AAUP-CO VP for Administrative Affairs] told S&GR. "If we as a faculty governance group don't act on this, then we may as well fold up our tents."

This article is adapted from an S&GR staff report published on May 7 and an article by reporter Kim Glasscock published on May 14. Both are used by permission.

Academic
Freedom
for a Free
Society



Widely regarded as an authoritative source on sound academic practice, the AAUP's Policy Documents and Reports, also known as the Redbook, contains the Association's major policy statements. Order your copy at

aaup.org

Ballot

In order to comply with Federal Law, delegates to the Annual Meeting of the AAUP's Assembly of State Conferences must be elected by secret ballot. Please mark and return your ballots no later than June 5, 2009.

The following individuals have been nominated to represent the Colorado Conference at the Annual Meeting of the Assembly of State Conferences in Washington DC on June 12.

Please vote for three (3):

_____ Laura Connolly (UNC)

_____ Dana Waller (FRCC)

_____ Anne Toewe (UNC)

_____ (write in)

The following individuals have been nominated to represent the Colorado Conference at the Plenary Session of the Annual Meeting of the American Association of University Professors in Washington DC on June 13.

Please vote for two (2):

_____ Laura Connolly (UNC)

_____ Dana Waller (FRCC)

_____ (write in)

Please place
first-class
postage here

AAUP Elections Committee
c/o Marki LeCompte
4800 Baseline Rd. E-104, #235
Boulder CO 80303

*Fold and tape
Please do not use staples*

Election of State Delegates to Assembly of State Conferences Meeting

Enclosed in this newsletter is a ballot for the election of delegates to represent the Colorado Conference at the national Assembly of State Conferences meeting on June 12. The ASC is the umbrella organization for individual state AAUP conferences. The ASC provides train-

ing and helps to coordinate state activities in areas such as government relations, academic freedom and tenure, membership development, and communications.

It is important that Colorado be represented at the business meeting of the ASC so

we have a say in matters that affect all members in our state. Please return your ballot today!



Congratulations!

The Colorado Conference of the AAUP actively works with the Colorado Legislature. Each year, we recognize the legislator who has contributed the most to higher education with our annual *Friend of Higher Education Award*. This year's winner is **Senator Chris Romer**.

CSU Chapter Continues to Push Arbitration Proposal in Fort Collins

The Colorado State University Chapter in Fort Collins continues to work on getting an arbitration provision introduced in its Faculty Council. In the past, the university legal counsel has opposed the proposal, claiming it was unconstitutional. Clearly it is not, and the Chapter has responded many times to this argument.

The good news is that a new general counsel began work a few months ago. Chap-

ter officers have a meeting tentatively scheduled for this summer to meet with him and the president of Faculty Council. The goal is to persuade them to at least let faculty debate the idea of an arbitration procedure. If progress is made, it is possible the proposal would

come forward in the next academic year.

On a related note, we continue to work with our legislators about a bill covering all of higher education that would recognize arbitration as a valid alternative to existing grievance procedures at higher education

institutions. We have tied this together with a proposal to remove contingent faculty from their current "at will" status under Colorado law. As these developments move forward, we will be asking for your support in contacting faculty representatives and our legislators.

"The goal is to persuade [the general counsel and president of Faculty Council] to at least let faculty debate the idea of an arbitration procedure"

AAUP-CO Executive Committee Addresses Financial Exigency

AAUP has established clear guidelines on how university administrations should handle financial exigency, which is defined as "an imminent financial crisis that threatens the survival of the institution as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by less drastic means."

The AAUP-CO Executive Committee recently sent a memo to higher education officials throughout the state outlining these principles. The memo reads, in part, "Representative faculty bodies should actively participate in the decision that a condition of financial exigency exists or is imminent, and should be included in deciding whether all feasible alternatives to termination of appointments have been pursued. Judgments determining where, within the overall academic program, termination of appointments may occur involve considerations of educational policy and thus should be the primary responsibility of the faculty or of an appropriate faculty body—not the administration."

The full text of the memo may be found on our website: <http://aaup-co.org>. All Colorado AAUP members are urged to refer to these principles if their institutions are proposing reductions in force.

Make plans now to attend the

2009 AAUP Summer Institute

July 23-26
Macalester College
St. Paul MN

*Get ready for a crash course
in faculty leadership.*



The 2009 Summer Institute includes workshops on:

- the faculty's leadership role in times of financial crisis
- analyzing institutions' financial documents
- strengthening faculty handbook language
- creating winning campaigns and targeted communications
- organizing a successful membership drive
- negotiating contracts and administering grievances
- building a better tenure process
- and more

More Information:

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/events/SI/default.htm>

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Officers

Laura Connolly and Dean Saitta—Co-Presidents
Marki LeCompte—VP for Administrative Matters
Ray Hogler—VP for Legislative Matters
Liz Nick—Secretary/Treasurer

The office of VP for Community College Matters is currently vacant. If you have an interest in serving in this position, please contact Laura Connolly (laura.connolly@unco.edu).

**Academic Freedom for a
Free Society**

For information on organizing a chapter at your college or university, contact Jennifer Nichols, AAUP national field representative, jnichols@aaup.org, or visit AAUP Colorado's web-site at www.aaup-co.org. AAUP is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization.

You can become a member of AAUP by visiting www.aaup.org and clicking on "Get Involved" or by contacting one of these AAUP Colorado Chapter representatives:

| Chapter: | Contact: | Email: |
|--------------------|-----------------|--|
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