

## A Brief History of DU's AAUP Chapter, 2007-2017

Dean Saitta, Professor of Anthropology, Past Chapter President, 2007-2014  
and Campus AAUP Liaison, 2014-2017

AAUP officers at DU have counseled faculty in nearly every academic unit on campus, helping them with matters relating to infringement of their academic freedom, denial of tenure and promotion, allegations of professional misconduct, violations of due process rights, overly-creative administrative interpretations of the university's APT document, and difficult working conditions.

**Pre-2007:** DU had an AAUP chapter before 2007, but it fell into dormancy by the time of the mid-1980s financial crisis. Bernie Spilka, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, shared a few things with me about the chapter back in the day. In light of today's Law School gender equity case, it was interesting to learn from Bernie that the chapter has dealt with gender-based salary discrimination before. As AAUP chapter president back in the early 1960s, Bernie worked to expose and remedy salary inequities between male and female faculty. He told me that DU's Chancellor at the time—Chester Alter—agreed to provide information that would help the AAUP chapter with such a salary study. He also reported that Chancellor Alter was the campus AAUP chapter president at Boston University before he came to DU. I suspect further research would surface other widely unknown tidbits of information that would put the DU faculty's efforts to advance the cause of “Inclusive Excellence” in a deeper historical perspective.

**April 2007:** Chapter revived from dormant state. Memo is sent to DU administrators asking them to “*encourage this development and welcome the professionalism it represents.*” The only encouragement and congratulations come from Law School dean Beto Juarez.

**April 2007:** [AAUP at DU](#) Portfolio site is created.

**May 2007:** Following a chapter vote (17 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain), a letter is sent to CU-Boulder President Hank Brown supporting the Boulder AAUP chapter's position on the Ward Churchill case as a politically-motivated faculty termination.

**July 2007-2008:** Counseling of DU faculty member charged with professional misconduct, plus numerous interventions relating to regular governance violations in the faculty member's school. Faculty member was exonerated. Dean of the School left under a cloud a few years later.

**August 2007-2011:** Repeated heavy input on revision of DU's Faculty Grievance Policy.

**September 2007:** Chapter requests P&T policies from all DU schools and colleges for posting to the [chapter portfolio site](#). Not all academic units comply.

**September 2009:** Chapter supports a faculty member appealing tenure denial. Memo is sent to Provost calling attention to violation of recommended AAUP policies regarding tenure file review and other due process procedures.

**December 2009:** Memo is sent to Human Resources requesting (1) information about the faculty's right to access their personnel file and (2) the process for selecting outside investigators in faculty grievance cases so as to ensure objectivity.

**May, 2010:** Chapter submits the following blurb for inclusion in the DU Self-Study document:  
*Revival of the campus AAUP chapter was an important governance accomplishment to the extent that it created a faculty voice that is independent of the Faculty Senate, although we work closely with the Senate on common problems. There are issues that faculty are more inclined to raise with AAUP than with Senate, especially in the areas of academic freedom, tenure and promotion, and working conditions. Moreover, our APT Guidelines are heavily influenced by AAUP recommended policies. APT has been creatively interpreted by both faculty and administrators, sometimes to the benefit of neither. The AAUP chapter can be an important check on uninformed and even downright bad governance practices.*

**June-November 2010:** Chapter successfully helps a faculty member unjustly terminated for cause. Her termination letter is destroyed and a severance agreement is successfully reached.

**December 2010:** Memo is sent to Human Resources outlining concerns about DU's Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity discrimination complaint process, especially its "glacially slow" handling of complaints.

**January 2011:** Chapter submits recommendations for APT Document Revisions, including a substantive new section dealing with academic freedom.

**February 2011:** Memo is sent to DU's Office of Business and Financial Affairs urging the university to (1) respect and humanely treat Sodexo cafeteria workers; (2) support the workers' legal right to unionize if that is their wish; (3) establish a "code of conduct" for university subcontractors ensuring fair and equitable treatment of campus workers, and (4) create a standing labor management committee to process worker grievances and investigate when necessary.

**May 2011:** Memo is sent to Chancellor and Provost calling out the university library's off-site book storage plan without adequate consultation with faculty. Faculty Senate is similarly concerned. A compromise is reached.

**May 2011-January 2012:** Chapter supports a faculty member appealing tenure denial, and arranges for a Colorado Committee for the Protection of Faculty Rights (CCPFR) investigation. [CCPFR](#) is a committee of the statewide AAUP organization, the [AAUP Colorado Conference](#).

**May 2011-April 2012:** Chapter intervenes in a high profile, nationally-significant case of a DU faculty member charged with sexual harassment in a classroom setting. Chapter president is interviewed by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education*. Numerous memos are sent to DU administrators, including one signed by a sizable majority of 17 chapter members urging that the guilty verdict be vacated.

**May 2012:** Chapter president arranges a Faculty Senate vote on a motion urging that the guilty verdict just mentioned be vacated for the following reason: "*Given that the academic context of Professor X's classroom speech was never considered during the investigation that found him guilty of sexual harassment, we urge that the administration vacate the finding of sexual harassment and remove this stain from Professor X's official personnel record.*" The result of the vote was 22 for, 11 against, and 11 abstaining. According to Senate rules and Roberts Rules of Order, the motion passed.

**June-December 2012:** Chapter intervenes on behalf of a faculty member appealing a highly prejudicial second-year, mid-tenure review. The original review was destroyed and a new, fairer review was ordered by the College's dean.

**November 2012:** Chapter offers input on Sturm College of Law academic freedom policy.

**November 2012:** Chapter president sends message to Faculty Senate about the need for strong shared governance in the wake of a surprise announcement that base salary increases for the year will be replaced with one-time bonuses.

**April 2013:** Continued chapter input on APT revisions.

**May 2013:** Chapter is added to the A-Z listing on the university's website.

**July 2013:** Chapter president publishes a [letter in The Denver Post](#) considering Korbels Humanitarian Award to former president George W. Bush from a shared governance perspective.

**December 2013:** Chapter president publishes a [letter in The Denver Post](#) regarding infringement of academic freedom in the Patty Adler case at CU-Boulder.

**March 2014:** Chapter goes into hibernation pending election of new officers. Outgoing president stays on as campus AAUP liaison for the faculty and the AAUP Colorado Conference.

**July 2015:** The National AAUP's most popular program, The Summer Institute, [is held on the DU campus in the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the AAUP's founding](#). The scheduling of the Institute on a Colorado campus in the organization's centennial year implicitly honored the activism of Colorado's AAUP chapters in protecting academic freedom and safeguarding shared governance in the state. The chapter and DU Faculty Senate persuade the Chancellor to host a welcome reception

for delegates, and the Provost to provide several registration stipends for Faculty Senate members.

**August 2015:** Campus AAUP liaison gives faculty in-service on shared governance at Colorado Mountain College.

**December, 2016:** Campus liaison publishes a [letter in \*The Denver Post\*](#) on the divestment discussion at DU and calling attention to the Faculty Senate's participation in the discussion.

**August 2015-May 2017:** Campus liaison [offers input](#) from an AAUP perspective on a number of governance issues occupying the Faculty Senate. These include:

- Development of a campus Freedom of Expression document.
- Tenured Faculty Performance Review (aka Post-Tenure Review) policy.
- Research Misconduct policy.
- Abrasive Conduct policy.
- Policies for Non-tenure track faculty performance review.
- Securing the faculty's right to select their own representatives to all-campus search, planning, and curriculum committees.

**May 2017:** Aaron Schneider (Josef Korbel School of International Studies) becomes President of the chapter.