

August 10, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 5

North Central State Faculty Association A Chapter of the AAUP

www.ncscaaup.org

*Officers of the
North Central State
Faculty Association
~ A Chapter of
the AAUP:*

*Beth Franz
President*

*Joe Badamy
Vice-President*

*Ross Justice
Treasurer*

*Pat Herb
Secretary*

*The North Central
State Faculty Assn.
Mission Statement:*

*We, the members of
the North Central
State Faculty Assn.,
have organized in
order to support the
college's values,
vision, and mission
statement. We offer
a strong,
independent,
unifying voice in an
effort to create an
environment of
mutual respect in
which faculty
knowledge and
expertise are valued.*

Mailing Address: 1421 Lexington Ave. # 140; Mansfield, Ohio 44907

Defining the Unit – Update #1

A settlement conference took place in Columbus on July 18th, in anticipation of the actual SERB Hearing, scheduled to occur on Wednesday, August 22nd.

The conference, facilitated by SERB (State Employee Relations Board) officials, was held in order to see if the two sides could reach a settlement in the interest of moving to an actual election in a more timely way.

Two faculty members,

representing the Association, attended this settlement conference, along with the Association's legal counsel. Two members of the Administration also attended this conference, as well as the Administration's lawyer.

Six faculty positions were discussed at the conference that took place on July 18th: 1 Lecturer position, 2 Police Academy Commander positions, and 3 Workforce Development positions. While no settlement was

reached, discussions on the 18th did clarify somewhat just why the Administration initially challenged all 6 of these positions in terms of their belonging to the collective bargaining unit.

It is still the Faculty Association's hope that all individuals who share a community of interest – that is, all individuals who hold full-time teaching positions – will be determined by SERB to be members of the unit, and thereby eligible to vote.

Defining the Unit – Update #2

On Monday, August 6th, two faculty members, representing the Association, traveled to Cleveland to be on hand for a conference call involving the SERB Hearing Officer and legal counsel for both the Administration and the Faculty Association.

The purpose of this conference call was to review both sides' lists of evidence that will be presented and potential witnesses who will be called at the August 22nd hearing.

In the course of the phone call, the Association's

lawyer proposed that any specific mention of the Lecturer, Police Academy Commander, and Workforce Development positions be removed from both sides' definitions of the unit in order to minimize any further delay as we move toward the actual election.

If the Administration were to agree to this proposal, SERB could then turn its attention to the matter of scheduling the election to occur in a timely way, and any further challenges that the Administration might care to issue in the course of the election could then be

resolved by SERB ... after the election has already taken place. It is unlikely, however, that the Administration will agree to this proposal, as it is the tendency of most employers – when faced with an impending election to form a collective bargaining unit – to use whatever delay tactics they might have at their disposal.

We can only hope that the Administration will surprise us and actually demonstrate the courage necessary to let the faculty vote in a timely way in this matter.

The AAUP's Mission Statement:

The mission of the American Association of University Professors is to advance academic freedom, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good. Founded in 1915, the AAUP has helped to shape American higher education by developing the standards and procedures that maintain quality education and academic freedom in U.S. colleges and universities.

A Message from the President of the Local Chapter:

As one of the four individuals who participated in the AAUP's Summer Institute in Reno last month, (--See Separate Story on Opposite Page--), I returned to Ohio charged up and ready to play whatever part I can in helping us all improve the morale of faculty and staff on campus and thereby also improve the environment we create for our students.

I came back from Reno, encouraged by the stories I had heard other faculty members tell while there, believing more strongly than ever that we, as a faculty, CAN make a significant difference at this institution, but only if we believe enough in ourselves and each other to come together, in unity, to create a voice that must be heard. Only by doing so will we ever affect the direction of the College and the important decisions being made at the College that we have both the potential to affect and, more importantly, that we have a real responsibility to affect.

It was so encouraging to hear the stories that other faculty members told about how, when told by their Administration, that certain rights – the right to participate in genuine shared governance, for example – were going to be withheld from them, those faculty took on the seemingly impossible task of organizing themselves, educating their students, informing the public, and galvanizing their constituents with the sole purpose of saying to the Administration, “No, you cannot take that right away. We as a faculty have a unique contribution to make to this institution. We will be heard.” ... And they were.

So many decisions of late here at our institution, important decisions that impact the lives of students, are being made without any real input being asked of faculty. Sadly – and ironically – we, as faculty, are often in the best position to understand the constraints within which many of our students are living their lives, yet our input is often the last sought ... if it is sought at all.

I do not say this to criticize the Administration, which, in its own defense, is often responding to pressures being placed on the College from sources outside the institution. I say this to invite – and to challenge – you, my colleagues, to dare to believe that there is a different way of “being” at the College than the way that so many have chosen for so long. I truly believe that we CAN make a difference, but it will take a willingness on the part of many who have chosen to disengage – for reasons that we all understand too well – to choose now to re-engage, to participate, to question, to voice your concerns, ... to try again!

-Beth

Participants Report on the AAUP's Summer Institute in Reno

Four of us made the trip last month – one by train and three by plane – to participate in the AAUP's annual Summer Institute. It was a worthwhile undertaking. It was clear, based on the conversations that we had with so many of our colleagues nationwide there, that we are not alone.

The faculty at many institutions of higher education are facing many of the same challenges we face, particularly in the area of shared governance issues, one of our primary areas of concern. In fact, the first seminar that 3 of us attended focused specifically on the challenges that two institutions – one private & one public – faced when it came to the issue of shared governance. Some of the lessons that those institutions learned we have already learned ... the hard way.

For example, it might be encouraging for some of you to hear, as we did in Reno, how many institutions have held a vote of no confidence, as we did, thinking that surely such a lopsided vote would bring about significant change at the college ... only to learn that even a vote of 59-1 had no discernable effect whatsoever! We certainly learned this lesson at our institution ... the hard way!

It is the hope of this committee that we might learn from the hard-learned lessons of some of our colleagues and go into this next year ahead of where we might otherwise be, had we not reached out to colleagues at our sister institutions. For instance, it is quite common for faculty to enter into the negotiating process fully believing that a reasoned argument, reasonably presented, will make a difference at the negotiating table. Faculty tend to believe in reason and tend to believe that whoever they are dialoguing with surely values reason as much as they do.

However, the two of us who attended two full days of training in “contract negotiations” learned what really matters in the negotiating process. We learned what it takes to be able to negotiate effectively, and we are looking past the vote this fall and already preparing for the next phase of the process we have entered into: preparations for the negotiations phase.

And while two of us were tied up in contract negotiation exercises for two full days, the other two of us took the opportunity to attend sessions on such topics as “Faculty Advocacy,” “Developing a Contract Campaign,” “Developing Your Leadership Cadre,” “Developing Shared Governance,” and “Building Strength through Coalitions.” In the course of a couple of these sessions, one of us took a hard look at our own Faculty Handbook, which was at one time the repository for all of the policies and procedures we needed to have access to in order to do our jobs well. In the course of these sessions, it became clear that not only is there much work to be done on the Handbook itself, but there is also much work to be done in terms of “codifying” those policies and procedures that are outlined in the Handbook into a more binding contract.

Needless to say, the four of us are very glad that we went. There really are a lot of other faculty members out there who are currently facing, or who have already faced, the same challenges that we find ourselves facing. **Not one of the faculty with whom we spoke regrets having organized in order to more responsibly and effectively meet the challenges that we all face as professionals intent on serving the needs of our students in the world of higher education.**

Visit our website at: www.ncscaaup.org or e-mail us at info@ncscaaup.org



"To be fearless isn't really to overcome fear. It's to come to know its nature."

Update on the Upcoming Election

As we approach the upcoming election, we will need to identify a number of you who are willing to play a role in seeing that the election is held fairly.

If you are interested in playing such a role – regardless of how you intend to vote – we encourage you to step forward and express such an interest.

Both the Administration and the Faculty Association will

be trying to identify individuals who can help things run smoothly on the day of the election.

If you are committed to free and open elections and care enough about the voting process to see that it plays out fairly – for both sides – we hope you will make your interest known.

Feel free to contact any member of the Organizing Committee for information.

On Changing the Culture at an Institution

Surely one of our biggest challenges, as an Organizing Committee, is recognizing the dynamic that has settled in here at the College for what it is – largely as a result of the Administration's way of doing business – and then figuring out how to go about changing it.

It is, after all, a dynamic that no one individual has the power to change.

As so many of the sessions and conversations at the AAUP's Summer Institute made clear, changing the culture at an institution from one of "lack of genuine engagement (largely on the Administration's part)" to one of "re-engagement (on the Faculty's part)" is a huge undertaking.

So many of us, over the last decade, have gradually "let go" of so much when it comes to really believing that we can and should have a say in the governance of the College, choosing instead to bury ourselves in the affairs of our students, our specific programs, and the specific classes that we teach.

So many of us have allowed ourselves to believe that such a focus is enough, after all, and that we should not be asked to "give" anymore to an Administration that has not shown itself capable of truly listening to its faculty and learning from what the faculty, in the form of a collective voice, has to say.

If you have, over the years, felt yourself "let go" of the

belief that there are ways that you can effectively engage in the affairs of the College, then as President of the Chapter, I invite you to challenge those of us on the Organizing Committee to articulate why we feel it is time to "re-engage." Those of us on the Organizing Committee, and especially those of us who attended the Summer Institute, recognize that this is both an exciting and a challenging time to be a faculty member at an institution of higher education ... particularly here in Ohio, where our challenges seem to be increasing exponentially!

Please join us in the process of re-engaging in the affairs of the College and thereby changing the culture here.

Organizing Committee Members:

Representing Health and

Public Service:

- Cindy Freeman
- Jean Jones
- Sam Wade

Representing Business and Education:

- Beth Franz
- Brad Hays
- Pat Herb
- Ross Justice

Representing Technology and Workforce Development:

- Joe Badamy

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