

January 17, 2008
Volume 2, 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

Support from Our Colleagues around the State

One of our contacts at the National AAUP office (in Washington, D.C.) said recently, "I know I've said it before, but you guys are so lucky to be in Ohio – some of the best AAUP unionists are there!"

And indeed, at the AAUP Summer Institute that 4 of us were fortunate to participate in out in Reno last year, no state was better represented than Ohio. Perhaps because higher education is facing such stiff challenges here in Ohio, many of our colleagues around the state have already made the decision to form collective bargaining units in the interest of having a more secure position in the decision-making process at their institutions.

On the back page of this newsletter, you will find an excerpt from a letter written by **Paul Davis, current president of the AAUP - Ohio Conference**. Paul, who has been a faculty member at Cincinnati State for many years and who has since become active with AAUP at the state level, was good enough to come and have some conversation with us a year ago, when we were making our decision to affiliate with AAUP, and he was quick to respond to our invitation to write a letter to address some of the common concerns and questions that faculty have at this important juncture. (Full letter at: http://www.ncscaaup.org/Testimonials/Ohio_Colleagues.htm#Cin_State)

We are in the process right now of hearing from other faculty members from around the state. Several of those faculty have expressed an interest in either making the trip to our campus to directly address the questions and concerns that our faculty have or, if folks would prefer, fielding questions that you have via e-mail. Either way, many of our colleagues across the state support the action we are about to take and encourage us to take this next step.

As **Rodger Govea, from Cleveland State University**, cautioned us in his recent letter: "No doubt you will be hearing the sentence 'give the new president a chance' repeatedly during the coming [months]. You will hear that the authorization drive is 'hasty' and 'premature.'"

"Don't listen to the arguments about 'rushing to judgment' and the 'hasty' drive toward collective bargaining. You are taking action against long-standing problems, problems that threaten to become perpetual unless you do something. Ask yourself what happens when the board decides to change presidents in the future."

"The problem at NCSC is systemic, as it is all over this country at institutions without collective bargaining. Individuals come and go, but the system persists. This is your chance to change that system, and make it work for you. Do not let this opportunity slip away."



Why I'm voting yes

I am composing this letter to convey my support for the presence of the North Central State Faculty Association, Chapter of American Association of University Professors (AAUP) as part of our faculty governance process.

I have been a faculty member, off and on, at North Central State College since 1982 and have been part-time and am currently a full-time associate professor in the RN nursing program. I have experienced this evolutionary process of why we as faculty members are now at this present crossroads of making a decision to establish an acknowledged, stable labor relations organization.

When the Faculty Assembly was established back in the 1980's the faculty were very serious in giving consideration to unionize at that time. However, we were a trusting group, and based on interactions with Dr Kee, we decided that we would develop a Faculty Assembly since the President was committed to supporting our process of negotiation through this mechanism. It did work for a while, but over time the efforts of negotiations were not accepted and often delaying tactics were implemented when faculty presented various platforms, primarily related to salary adjustments.

This type of approach has continued with Dr. Abrams, and it eventually resulted in dissolution of the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Caucus has re-emerged as a vehicle to represent the faculty, and the faculty who have taken on the leadership roles in this new entity have done an exemplary job in achieving and implementing the purpose of the organization.

Keep in mind, though, that the power that is vested in this group is not legally binding, and that is a key factor of how to attain a recognized, negotiating body. We have been through negotiating processes with two presidents, which often resulted in frustration and disappointment. Yes, being part of the AAUP does require our monetary commitment, but for the future empowerment as a group, it may be very necessary to pay dues that reflect our commitment by being a member of a collective bargaining organization.

It is clearly evident that following the path of maintaining status quo of utilizing informal faculty organizations to address faculty concerns has proven to be inadequate in attaining our desired terms and conditions. We are now in a transition time for our college, and we have an opportunity to increase our involvement in the decision-making process through collective advocacy. This would be a positive and empowering move to strengthen the process of respectful shared governance and achieve bargaining agreements that are secure and legally binding.

We are all worth it!

Thank you for your time in allowing me to share my thoughts.

— **Carolyn M. Kaple, M.S., R.N., C.N.E.**
Associate Professor, Nursing



Why I'm voting yes

During the recent open session with the college community, both interim Presidential candidates (Don Plotts and Bill Miller) openly acknowledged the painful reality that under the past Administration, the level of collegiality, communication, and trust between faculty and Administration has arguably reached an all-time low at North Central State College. The dissolution of the old Faculty Assembly, the past vote of no-confidence under the new Faculty Caucus, and most recently the upcoming union election all tend to support that view.

Both candidates expressed the high-priority need to create a new college culture of mutual trust, respect, and transparent communication. Bravo and kudos to both of them for openly saying what we faculty have been feeling for so long.

From the inception of our AAUP chapter on campus, the restoration of those values has been the primary motivation of the faculty Organizing Committee. Therefore, we applaud their open candor and honesty on this uncomfortable subject. Wisdom dictates that the only way to correct a problem is to first openly acknowledge it.

Solving an existing problem (by definition) means that we create an environment that insures that the SAME PROBLEM does not happen again in the future. An essential key to creating a more productive work environment IN THE FUTURE is the legal guarantee of accountable, transparent, full-disclosure, and non-ambiguous communication.

That is why establishing a formal and mutually beneficial contract with Administration is in the very best interest of everyone.

A successful union contract that results from the mutual good-will and concern for everyone's best interest will dramatically increase our ability to attract top talent for the upcoming opening of our long-term President.

We faculty are now holding in our hands a golden opportunity to dramatically contribute to and shape the kind of change that is needed at North Central State College.

To miss this opportunity is to essentially continue the strategy of the past. Yes, with a new interim President, we all could immediately cease our current organizing effort. We faculty could all return to our "silently passive" mode rather than risk any "confrontation" when problems arise concerning top level Administration. Unfortunately, with that strategy, we will be deciding to "throw the dice" one more time and just hope for the best. When it comes to honest, open and effective communication IN THE FUTURE, we can and we must do better than that.

That's why I plan to vote in favor of forming a collective bargaining unit in the March election.

— **Ross Justice**,
Associate Professor, Business and Economics

Excerpt from a Letter of Support from a Fellow Faculty Member, this one at Cincinnati State

(Full text of letter available at: http://www.ncscaaup.org/Testimonials/Ohio_Colleagues.htm#Cin_State)

Dear Beth and Colleagues,

Congratulations on your decision to seek collective bargaining representation through the American Association of University Professors. The faculty at Cincinnati State made that same decision almost 20 years ago, under circumstances similar to yours. The decision we made in 1989 is one that we don't regret. Through collective bargaining, many important changes have happened for Cincinnati State faculty. Some of our achievements can be seen in "bread and butter" areas such as salary and benefits, but just as importantly, we've made significant achievements in professional areas such as faculty involvement in college governance.

When we negotiated our first contract, we considered it essential to codify the role of faculty in decision-making at Cincinnati State. The contract article titled "Faculty Involvement in the Governance of the College" defines the role of our Faculty Senate as the voice of the faculty in numerous academic and non-academic matters. This article also guarantees faculty representation on decision-making committees, including the standing committee that monitors and advises the College administration during the annual budget-building process. In addition, the article contains a clear procedure for dealing with possible program retrenchment, with faculty input as part of the process.

The governance article defines in detail the procedures for selection and appointment of faculty and academic administrators, and it includes a guarantee that at least three faculty members selected by the Faculty Senate will serve on the committee that recommends who the Board of Trustees should hire when a College president is selected. This type of contract provision is currently important to both Cincinnati State and North Central, since both of our institutions are going through a presidential search.

Just after our faculty voted for AAUP as our bargaining agent, the College president resigned. Administrators and Board members tried to persuade us that a contract was therefore less important, because we could simply trust that a new administration would eliminate problems of the past. Our faculty persisted in the belief that strong contract language regarding the faculty role in decision-making was important—not just for one year, but also for the long-term health and success of the institution. Since then, we've had two College presidents (plus two interim presidents), and we'll be selecting yet another new president during the coming year. I can tell you that Cincinnati State faculty are glad we have contract language to guarantee that our views about the choice for College president will be taken into consideration.

The decision to seek collective bargaining representation at North Central State College is an important one, and should not be taken lightly. Voting for AAUP will mark the beginning, not the end, of some hard work, and it will mark the beginning of a great opportunity. **By choosing AAUP as your collective bargaining agent, you will be gaining control over your professional lives, and enhancing your opportunity to have a meaningful voice in the governance of North Central State College.**

If you or other faculty members have questions or need additional information, please let me know. Cincinnati State AAUP members are ready and willing to assist you.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Davis, Ed.D.
Cincinnati State
AAUP Chapter President