

February 18, 2008
Volume 2, Issue 8

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

Countdown to March Election

Final arrangements are underway as we all prepare for the election on March 4th & 5th. Signs are being prepared, and arrangements are being made for all faculty to be available to vote in this important election.

We thank all of our contributors to the "Why I'm Voting Yes" series, for having taken the time to reflect on why it is so important right now to vote in favor of forming a collective bargaining unit. Right now, we have an opportunity—during this time of change in the leadership at the top levels of this institution—to make significant progress in becoming stakeholders whose regular input into the decision-making process at this college is actively sought and valued.

Inside this issue of the newsletter, in addition to 3 more letters from our own faculty, we are printing in its entirety a letter from another colleague of ours from the University of Akron. Not too long ago, our UA colleagues went through the process we are currently in the midst of, and they have been most supportive of our efforts from early on in this process. They have answered our calls for assistance, and they have watched with interest as our election campaign has moved forward, so Dave's letter offers what many of us feel is a valuable perspective on our current situation.

We plan on getting out to you just one more newsletter prior to the election, and in that issue we have planned something very special indeed! So watch your mailbox. And please, feel free to let any of us know if you have any questions as we move closer to the important March dates, which we hope you have marked on your calendar by now!

Kee Hall (room 128A):

March 4th between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

March 5th between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Kehoe Center in Shelby (conf. room 169):

March 4th between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

(Faculty can vote at either location.)

>>>>>>>> Photo ID Required! <<<<<<<<<

To My Fearless Colleagues at North Central State

According to your website, your election to decide union affiliation with AAUP is going to be held March 4th, 2008. I have little doubt, given the steadfast campaign you have waged, that you will be successful in winning the day. And you will have won nothing less than the opportunity to slow the steady encroachment of corporate-style educational leadership into your classrooms and to have a stronger voice in determining your professional destinies.

By now you all know too well that fighting for your rights as faculty members is accompanied by hefty responsibilities to make sound judgments. You have already begun to prepare in this regard by forming a negotiating team, sending your union leadership to AAUP training sessions and calling on your unionized colleagues around the state for advice and counsel. You likely have noticed that your unionized colleagues in Ohio are only too happy to consult with you as often as you need because we are all in this effort together.

Further, you have carried yourselves with integrity throughout your election campaign. By taking the high road, you've had the exciting experience of letting the facts speak for themselves. You are representing the right side of the arguments and you know it. You have, in my limited experience, most excellent legal advice in Sandy McNair and valuable strategic advice from the national AAUP staff. These are crucial resources – the same ones we relied upon – that will see you through to the realization of your first contract and beyond.

Looking back on the two years since we ratified our first contract with our administration, I can say that unionization has accomplished exactly what we envisioned that it would. Our paychecks have increased predictably. Our administration now asks for our participation on university committees. The number of grievances over retention, promotion, and tenure has decreased. Our health care contributions have increased, but at a rate much less than it would have. These “bread and butter” issues are now matters that were just beyond our reach prior to unionization. Now they are contractually agreed upon and cannot be undone easily. The least paid of my colleagues now have the same rights as the highest paid, and we all enjoy the simple fairness of the arrangement.

We've managed to cement the issues of academic freedom (a principle we all cherish and one that has come under attack) and shared governance (a principle we are working to rectify with each passing month). Where the administration could have taken our livelihood away from us with little in the way of a reason, now they must demonstrate their reasons in transparent legal terms. Where they could have made demands on our time as they wished, now our work is guaranteed in the ink of our contract.

Some might charge that faculty relationships with the administration are more formal now, and pine for the halcyon days when we made agreements based on a trusted handshake (presumably a time before any of us were alive to bear witness). Personally, I'll take our union over the good old days without any reservations.

In my discipline, which is Family and Consumer Sciences, we are now able to carry out our professional responsibilities in a manner that I had hoped for when I taught my first class 25 years ago at UA. I can focus on my students and plan my career according to the forces that should be considered – the quality of my students, the application of my intellect on the subject matter of my classes – without having to wonder who is determining my financial future and existence, or who is listening at the door. My union enforces a contract with elements that protect my professional status.

None of this was easily won, but already I have younger, new colleagues who came to the university after all our unionizing activism. They are starting out their careers with rights and privileges we all should have had all along. They'll be able to better concentrate their efforts on producing a better graduate, better research, and more of both. They'll be better classroom instructors because they can focus undistracted by administrative whim.

The nicest part of all this is that for the first time in my decades of teaching in higher education, I feel like I have real colleagues who are interested in a set of common issues – a real academic community. All in all I wouldn't change a thing (except for even better pay raises and an increase in the full time faculty in the next contract).

We'll be watching your website for news of the vote on March 4th.

Good luck to all of you,



Dave Witt
Akron-AAUP

NCSEA
NCSFA



Why I'm voting yes

I am writing this letter in support of voting YES at the election in March to establish a collective bargaining unit for full-time faculty on this campus.

Over the 20+ years I have been teaching, the environment at NC State has changed drastically. Soon after I came on board, the faculty assembly was established. Through the faculty assembly, and now the caucus, faculty were supposed to have input at various levels of the college. Administration verbalizes the "right" words to make it sound like faculty will get input but then does not follow through. This has continued and faculty input has eroded further than ever before. Micromanagement has been the name of the game for many years.

Faculty don't look to collective bargaining if they are valued, trusted, and supported. Here at NC State this is not happening. Repeatedly, faculty have participated in college-wide committee work, giving recommendations or whatever was required, and in the end were ignored. At times, results of committees were not made public.

Salaries are some of the lowest in the state because there is "no money." Yet administration has received increases, and bonuses have been given out. When was the last time faculty received a 5% increase in salary in consecutive years? We have gone backwards in purchasing power in the last five years while administration has kept costs down by suppressing faculty salaries. The secret salary grid is not easily accessible to faculty (it used to be in the Faculty Handbook). There is inequity among faculty – promotions, pay, bonuses and vacations taken.

With a union contract, we can define the role of full-time faculty. We can define our role as new technology for use in the classroom emerges. So I WILL vote YES AT ELECTION TIME.

— **Cindy Freeman,**
Associate Professor, Nursing

Why I'm voting yes

I joined the ranks of full-time faculty of the college in the fall of 1985. I was excited and passionate as I started my teaching career. I was fully engaged with students and my teaching responsibilities. Over the years the enthusiasm has waned as the climate of the college has changed from my initial employment. My morale as well as the morale of my colleagues has dwindled as we have felt unvalued.



However, I do not want to just sit out my final years of employment and maintain the status quo! I believe we have an opportunity to make a difference in the governance of the college once we have a collective voice. As faculty we are the backbone of our student's success. Faculty who work in a positive healthy environment help to produce positive student outcomes.

I had the opportunity to travel to Utah to attend an AAUP conference and heard the benefits of collective bargaining from colleagues around the country this past summer. I became sold and returned to campus excited by the possibilities of strengthen the voice of the faculty. I know when I retire I want to leave a positive environment for my successor and the future of North Central State College.

My choice is clear. I'm voting yes for AAUP!

— **Teresa VanDorn,**
Associate Professor, Human Services

Why I'm voting yes

About a year and a half ago, a group began meeting to discuss the need for a union. I attended all of the informational meetings and have been sitting on the fence for most of that time for many reasons. My father was a member of management and had no use for unions in the factory where he was the foreman; in fact, the union closed down the factory where he worked. My husband paid USW dues for 30 years, and we cannot say that the union did much for him. I have talked to people on campus and they have commented that they have worked in union settings and were less than thrilled with them. I was left wondering what to do.



I began working with the unionizing group in July, and slowly I came to form my opinion that the union could be good for us. First of all, AAUP was formed so that professors could begin to be considered professionals, something like the AMA or ADA. We all have a high level of education and experience and should have a say in what a good professor is and what should be required of him or her. I also learned that while my father was not a fan of unions in his later years of employment, he served as a union president for many years and had a certificate of commendation for doing so. In addition, I talked with my niece, who has a master's degree in labor relations, and explained that we need to get some policies set in stone because some administrators hold strictly to policy and others ignore it to varying degree. She said that money and benefits are not good reasons to organize, but clarification was. Finally, I see that what we have now could change in a heartbeat with a new president or a new vice president. Dr. Abrams always wanted some clarification on what the faculty of the future should look like and a new administration could make that decision for us if we do not take action and do it for ourselves. We are professionals. We know our students, our subject areas, and our classrooms. We should be part of deciding what is necessary to meet the needs of those students. We should have equitable hiring/pay policies. We should have consistent application of college policy in all departments. We need a voice that is heard, and I am voting for the union March 4 or 5, 2008.

— **Margaret Puckett,**
Associate Professor and FYE Course Coordinator

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