

NEWSLETTER

Colorado State University Chapter American Association of University Professors (AAUP) *Academic Freedom for a Free Society Vol.1:1 (2008)*

Legislative Update

- *S.045 Shot Down:* The badly titled *Intellectual Diversity Act* was voted down on a party-line vote. Laura Connolly, AAUP State Conference legislative liaison writes: "I am happy to report that SB-45, the 'intellectual diversity' bill, was voted down in committee on Monday (February 4) on a party-line vote (2 in favor, 3 against). Your state conference president, Myron Hulen, and I presented testimony against the bill, which would have had a chilling effect on academic freedom in Colorado. I want to thank all of you who contacted your senators and asked them to vote against the bill – those calls and emails truly do make a difference."
- *Arbitration bill.* Myron Hulen reports this bill will be heard by Joint Budget Committee with sponsorship by Steve Johnson (R) and Randy Fischer (D). Chapter member Ray Hogler has been instrumental in seeing this legislative initiative. Thanks, Ray!

State Conference/Around the State

- *Bruce Benson appointment under fire at CU-Boulder.* See, Marki LeCompte's OPED Denver Post, February 10.

Chapter Update

- *Arbitration.* The Chapter will pursue this issue over the summer and fall of 2008.
- *Grievance issues.* The Chapter remains seriously concerned over procedural deficiencies in our CSU Section K grievance procedures. Absent provisions for "pattern of abuse," articulation with OEOD procedure, clear level of institutional accountability, greater clarity in the instructions to University Grievance Officer, expedited reviews, and greater transparency in the process, faculty have cause to question the adequacy of these procedures as a fair mechanism of conflict resolution in faculty-administrative disputes. We continue to believe these issues require the attention of Faculty Council and the Administration.

Feature Article

Dr. Sue Doe
Assistant Professor, English
February 17

Contingent (Non-Tenure-Track or NTT) Faculty Update

A quick glimpse at the Employees section of the CSU 2007 Fact Book (<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/OBIA/factbook-fb.html>) reveals that a lot of people who are not tenure track are conducting a substantial chunk of the work at this university. Still, no one should fear that non tenure-track faculty are taking over. In this academic year, 2007-08, while only 13% of the workforce at CSU is tenure-track faculty, 28% is comprised of state classified staff, 19% are graduate teaching assistants, 17% are administrative professionals, 12% are research associates, **and only 6% are a combination of temporary and special appointment faculty.**

Surely then, we can find a way to justify the embrace of so small a percentage of the institutional workforce that is nevertheless doing the lion's share of the undergraduate teaching of lower-division courses. The teaching of undergraduates remains, after all, a central mission of a land-grant university and is for most tuition-paying parents and the tax-paying public *the face* of higher education. And while we know that undergraduate teaching is not the only, or perhaps even the primary, focus of a Research I institution, we also know that teaching by non tenure track faculty frees up tenure-line faculty to do the other forms of faculty work that are essential to the current enterprise. Can there be any doubt that we are at a crossroads at which it can no longer be denied that we have a two-tier faculty system in place? Can it any longer be denied that as tenure-track and non tenure-track faculty alike, we are engaged in a relationship of mutual dependency? If not, then it follows that non tenure-track faculty rightfully will demand a bigger piece of the pie.

We have made progress. In 2004 this university responded to adjunct faculty, largely from the CLA,

- *Faculty disciplinary procedure. Thus far, Faculty Council has not taken up this issue. Please keep Steve Mumme and other members apprised of any development of which you may be aware.*

Coloradoan, December 26, 2007 by Laura Connolly, Myron Hulen, and Steve Mumme

You've heard it before...say it often enough and its true. So, you may have believed the various myths on Colorado higher education found recently in the *Denver Post*. If these distortions and inaccuracies were simply harmless, we wouldn't both to correct them. Unfortunately, these shibboleths threaten the quality of Colorado higher education and with it the social and economic prosperity of our state.

The first misconception is tenure. The pundit argues for "a system that protects the free speech ... but removes any assurances that a professorship is a lifetime appointment." Not only is it unclear how this might be done, but the author's claim tenure is a "lifetime appointment" is utterly unfounded. Tenured professors *can* be dismissed for incompetence, but such a judgment *must not* be based on the popularity of professor's writings and teachings. Far from being a "mediocre job-protection program for un scholarly work," tenure ensures no professor is dismissed without due process. Now, you might ask why first amendment isn't sufficient. The answer is that higher education is tasked with building human knowledge, a process that often involves exploration and debate of controversial ideas. While everyone has first amendment protections, not everyone has a job that requires them to challenge the status quo, ask hard questions, and demand well-reasoned responses on a daily basis. Of course, not every idea coming out of academia will be correct. All ideas, old and new, must be closely scrutinized. When the threat of dismissal affects intellectual reasoning, however, free academic inquiry is stifled. And we are *all* diminished.

Nor does tenure limit the incentive for professors to strive for excellence in their chosen fields. Just the opposite is true. Advancement in higher education is highly competitive, situated in disciplines that measure accomplishment in an international market. Within this competitive milieu, tenure allows professors to explore "risky" ideas that involve considerable time and effort to develop. No one knows in advance which ideas will change the

who pointed out that there had been no increase to base salary since 1998. Then Provost Peter Nicholls set into motion a series of pay raises that current Provost Tony Frank has carried forward with energy and enthusiasm. In January 2005, base pay for adjuncts went up from \$3000 per section to \$3150. In the Fall of 2005 it went up again to \$3500 per section. Steady improvements since then have placed the base this year at \$3785, and Provost Frank says he intends for the base to continue to keep pace with annual pay raises for tenure-track faculty. There have also been improvements in governance with the creation of standing committees representing contingent faculty and written into department and college codes. Some colleges, such as Vet Science, have engaged in creative approaches, for instance creating mentorship models that build contingent faculty cvs.

But there is still work to be done. The Provost's Task Force for Shared Governance delivered a slate of recommendations, "The 6 R's," to the Provost, which he approved in November 2006. Yet recent inquiries suggest that not enough people know about these recommendations except in terms of the widespread reclassification of many "temporary" appointments to "special appointments," a move that was intended to reflect the non-temporary nature of the relationships that have been forged. Most of the deeper goals of "The 6 R's" remain to be addressed. For instance, there should be base funding for core curriculum courses. Relying on enrollment growth dollars to fund these courses creates a situation in which courses that are not contingent are taught by people who are. Second, while the classification of special appointment improved the situation for new hires in the fall of 2007, it did little to improve the appointments of existing NTTs since many of those people still receive nothing more than base pay, annually must reapply for their jobs, and now must also submit a file for annual evaluation. We need to get behind a system that rewards seniority, acknowledging those whose labor we obviously have needed and will continue to need. Third, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 07-048 in January of 2007, but this act stipulates that long-term contracts can be offered to research positions only, not to teaching positions. We need to keep the pressure on our legislators and the State of Colorado more generally to do the right thing to support the teaching mission.

This list represents just a start. I urge you to get involved and to identify the issues in your departments and colleges. Begin by talking across faculty ranks in your departments, but be sensitive

future and which will prove unworkable. But the incentive to reach for the stars is enhanced when the short-sighted mindset of producing something tangible *right now* is tempered.

The directive to hire more adjunct professors is simply pernicious. The perception that adjuncts are working professionals who teach part-time for love of teaching is largely fiction. Most adjunct faculty do not have other careers. Many cobble together a “full-time” job by teaching one or two classes per semester at two or three different institutions. At Colorado State adjuncts work for less than \$5000 a course; at Front Range Community College they make less. They usually work without health insurance or retirement benefits. While they are often highly qualified student-caring scholars, it is very difficult to devote the time and effort needed to teach high quality courses or contribute to student advising or scholarship under such conditions.

Branding our universities are “inefficient” is simply false. Our colleagues at CU would be astonished to learn they have 22,000 faculty and staff serving 50,000 students. The actual number, based on information from the institutional research offices of the three campuses in the CU system (UC-Boulder, UC-Denver/Health Sciences Center, and UC-Colorado Springs), is approximately 4,800 instructional faculty and 52,000 students. These combined campuses also have about 3,800 staff, for a total of 8,600 faculty and staff.

Well-meaning people should not buy these myths. Over-reliance on adjunct faculty and their unconscionable treatment is one of the biggest U.S. higher education problems. Colorado is already 48th in the country in higher ed funding. With low faculty salaries and benefits, it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain good faculty. If we took Ms. Corry’s advice and abolished tenure, they would avoid us like the plague, further crippling higher education in Colorado – and with it a significant share of our economic growth and quality of life. We have barely begun to repair the damage caused by years of under-funding. If we truly care about our state, we must invest in higher education and support our dedicated faculty. Knowledge should prevail over ignorance.

to the probable cautiousness of those whose every word is spoken in a context, however misguided, of “contingency.”

ALERTS!

- ***Faculty Council is seeking to fill various positions on FC committees. At the moment the Chapter would benefit from having a representative on the Faculty Discipline Committee. Please consider self nominating or asking a chapter member to nominate you.***
- ***Chapter needs volunteers to represent AAUP to Oval leaders. If interested, contact Steve Mumme (smumme@colostate.edu)***
- ***David Skaggs holds town hall meeting Feb. 19***

David Skaggs, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, will visit the CSU campus on Tuesday, Feb. 19. As part of his time at the university, Skaggs will hold a town hall meeting from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the Lory Student Center.