

# NEWSLETTER

## Colorado State University Chapter American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

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### *Legislative Update*

- Aside from a bill requiring greater inter-institutional articulation on transferability of credit hours among state higher-ed institutions (SB09-045) there is little of direct general interest on the current legislative docket. This is shaping up to be a rather quiet year. SB09-045 mandates CCHE to establish articulation agreements for 5 baccalaureate degrees by 2011 and additional agreements in years thereafter.

### *State Conference/Around the State*

- *Churchill trial begins March 9—AAUP to testify.* Former State Conference president Myron Hulen, among others, will testify in the civil trial of controversial CU professor Ward Churchill. The AAUP has been highly critical of the procedures used by CU Administration in dismissing professor Churchill last year from his tenured position in the Ethnic Studies department.
- *CU-AAUP Chapter VP wins Horton Medal.* Vijay Gupta of civil, environmental and architectural engineering at CU-Boulder has received the 2008 Robert E. Horton Medal from the American Geophysical Union. The Horton Medal is the highest international award for outstanding contributions to the geophysical aspects of hydrology presented by AGU. The medal citation honors Gupta for "redefining the frontiers of scientific hydrology," and the award was presented Dec. 17 during the AGU fall meeting in San Francisco. *Vijay is ample proof science and advocacy are not mutually exclusive.*
- *Sue Doe at MLA.* In other news, CSU-AAUP member Sue Doe has been invited to serve on the Executive Committee of the Part-time Discussion Group for the Modern Language Association and, in this capacity, will give a presentation at MLA next December about how contingent faculty fared locally, regionally, and nationally in 2009 in the midst of economic crisis. Let's hope it's good news!
- *Colorado Committee for Protection of Faculty Rights:* The State Conference is moving forward with the formation of the CCPFR.

### *Local Affairs:*

- *BOG Faculty Hearing.* AAUP faculty participated in the BOG's scheduled hearing February 10<sup>th</sup> soliciting input on the position of chancellor. Steve Mumme spoke to the AAUP state conference statement (see feature article)

### *Feature Articles*

## **The Next President and Chancellor at Colorado State University**

### **AAUP State Conference**

The prospect of a new president and, most likely, a new system chancellor for Colorado State University has generated considerable buzz statewide, and for good reason. Few decisions are as vital for the state's opportunity and progress as the leadership of its historic land grant university.

Faculty at Colorado's public universities are pleased CSU's Board of Governors is proceeding deliberately, transparently, and inclusively in considering whether to separate the chancellorship from the presidency. These same principles should prevail as they weigh the resumes of an ample pool of applicants for these posts. As they begin vetting files they should also be guided by nearly a century of the accumulated wisdom of the American Association of University Professors.

An understanding of the unique character of America's colleges and universities lies at the core of the AAUP's precepts for executive selection. Universities, especially land grant universities, are tasked foremost with advancing the public good through teaching, scholarship, and outreach. As such, they are only as strong as their faculty. The faculty, in turn, thrives in a climate of academic freedom that nurtures critical inquiry and debate—the crucible of innovation. Students and society benefit.

What the AAUP and faculty know all too well is that universities are not classic corporations. Corporations thrive as limited purpose organizations with profit as a ready metric of success. Even in their more

AAUP members CW Miller, John Straayer, Tim Gallagher, and David Gilkey also weighed in. If the BOG's stakeholder's report [<http://www.csusystem.edu/chancellorsearch/>] is any evidence this testimony may have done some good. The report stresses the importance of finding someone who "understands faculty values" and has a commitment to "shared governance". *On the other hand, if Friday's Collegian (2-27-09) is to be believed, the Wayne Allard candidacy for the position is very much alive and that should give us pause.*

- **Faculty Council discussion advances proposal for adjunct standing committee.** The February 3 session of Faculty Council saw a spirited discussion of the proposal to establish a standing committee on the status of temporary faculty at Colorado State. Steve Shulman, chair of the President's adjunct faculty committee provided a strong rationale for the need for such action and various AAUP members including Sue Doe, Mary Van Buren, Bill Timpson, and others spoke in favor (see Minutes at: <http://facultycouncil.colostate.edu/files/fcminutes/0809/Feb03.pdf> ). Members of FC concluded the session by voting nearly unanimously to pursue the initiative. The measure will now be referred to the FC standing committee on Governance (see Sue Doe's report below).

#### **Adjunct Faculty Update, by SueDoe**

Profuse thanks to the CSU-AAUP membership and especially to Steve Mumme, Bill Timpson, and Mary Van Buren for the chapter's support of the Provost's Task Force as it presented (on Feb 4) a proposal to Faculty Council for a committee representing adjunct issues. Faculty Council voted nearly unanimously to support the proposal, and it now goes to the Faculty Governance Committee.

In other news, the Provost's Task Force is working with Kim Bender to finalize a contingent faculty survey that will be distributed (we hope) this spring. Also, contingent faculty standing committees are being formed in most of the colleges to provide ongoing representation of contingent faculty issues. In the College of Liberal Arts, for instance, a CLA Adjunct Faculty Council has been created, and contingent faculty representatives created a charter calling for four members of the contingent faculty, two tenure-line faculty, and one dean's office representative to serve on the committee. This group's work is well underway

#### **Other Updates:**

- **Arbitration initiative:** We've been informed by Richard Eykholt that soon as the Faculty Council docket has cleared some, most likely by early April, he will be revisiting our arbitration initiative.

diversified and flattened form—the HP way—they normally operate as hierarchies, pyramids dominated by executives in turn responsible to boards.

Universities don't work this way. Their pyramids, if pyramids they are, are very nearly inverted. Executives serve to support the organization. In the strictest sense they do not lead, not in the sense of the sergeant at the head of a platoon. They represent the university, yes. They monitor its progress and influence its directions. They convey the accomplishments of their faculty and students to the public. But sergeants they are not. In all the university's most critical responsibilities—curriculum, pedagogy, scholarship, even outreach and service—the expertise of the faculty is paramount. To have it otherwise impairs the university's credibility and prestige.

And that is where the AAUP's cardinal precept for higher education administration, the principle of shared governance, enters in. As the vital core of the university, faculty are not only responsible for matters of curriculum and scholarship but are expected to actively contribute to the crafting and application of university rules, procedures and programs, sharing responsibility with the administration. The chief executive, in turn, must be qualified "to serve both as the executive officer of the governing board and as the chief academic officer of the institution and the faculty." The system works best when the executive commands the respect of the faculty and facilitates its campus role.

This does not mean a skilled executive experienced in politics or the private sector or both need not apply for the post. As Denver University chancellor, Dan Ritchie drew on his deep links with the private sector to revitalize university finances while simultaneously inspiring and renewing faculty support for the educational enterprise. His success, however, owed as much to his energetic engagement with faculty and passionate faith in their work as to his financial acumen. His knowledge of the institution and his willingness to better understand faculty work was considerable the day he assumed the Chancellorship.

Unfortunately, the appointment of higher education leaders at Colorado's public

- **Faculty Discipline:** Faculty Council on February 3<sup>rd</sup> approved a minor changes to Appendix 5 of the Faculty Manual adding a sentence directs readers to the definition of “research misconduct” as found on the CSU website on research: <http://research.colostate.edu/ricro/mis/policies.aspx>
- **Grievance Procedure:** Faculty Council on February 3<sup>rd</sup> amended Manual Section K.14.5 dealing with the position of Temporary Special University Grievance Officer. This provision allows the Provost to appoint a Special UGO in cases where the UGO may have conflict of interest, becomes a Grievant, or requests to be recused from a grievance. The new amendment allows the Provost to extend grievance deadlines to accommodate this change. *This change seems reasonable, though AAUP hopes Faculty Council will go further than this. Section K remains heavily biased towards administrative discretion as it now stands and this change does nothing to right the balance.*

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universities has all too frequently strayed from the ideal of shared governance. This split between faculty and administrators has not served the state well, producing leaders too often at odds with core faculty concerns. Such neglect has distanced Old Main from students, faculty, and staff and diminished faculty confidence in the ability and willingness of their university leaders to articulate and advance the core values that make American universities the envy of the world.

As CSU’s Board ponders a new campus president and system chancellor to lead the university into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we hope they reflect on these core values that serve America’s colleges and universities so well. They should examine executive credentials at CSU’s twelve peer land grant universities, esteemed institutions including the University of California’s Davis campus, Michigan State University, and Ohio State. They should aim high on both administration and scholarship. The next president, and the next chancellor, if that should come to pass, should each meet these high standards. They are, after all, agents and symbols of academic excellence and the state’s academic ambassadors to the world. Their achievement should command the support of the faculty and their students. They should be ready to reach out to faculty and all the university’s constituencies. That’s the AAUP’s way, and where university leadership is concerned, it’s the best way still.

## Improve Your Teaching and Your Students’ Learning

**Bill Timpson**

January 2009 (excerpted from *Academe*)

In my two decades of work on postsecondary instruction, I have been constantly reminded of areas where we as instructors could improve teaching and deepen student learning: how we could move beyond content transmission; how we could benefit more from the published literature on instructional effectiveness, improvement, and innovation; how we could tap into more collegial support and assistance; how we could challenge students to do more to articulate their needs and preferences; and how, then, we could share more of what we learn

through the scholarship of teaching.

Yet I see very few campuses that have professional development programs that can make a real difference at the classroom level. Moreover, it is the rare campus leader who has the background or vision to push much beyond the surface of instructional effectiveness and focus on student learning. My professional development efforts at three research universities and my scholarly work on postsecondary instructional improvement and innovation have taught me, however, that instructors can take steps to improve teaching and learning even on campuses that offer little support for such work.

### ***Soliciting Student Feedback***

A book I recently co-authored with Sue Doe, *Concepts and Choices for Teaching: Meeting the Challenges in Higher Education*, describes the range of instructional options that we have and how each approach is strengthened by feedback. In particular, I have explored the role of feedback in the performing arts, where directors, choreographers, and performers are engaged in a continuous process of communication, feedback, exploration, and improvement

In my own classes, I routinely conduct a midsemester student feedback session to identify problems while there is still time to address them. I usually take about thirty minutes to reflect on what has happened to date, both positive and negative, and consider possible areas for improvement.

Using the standard course survey gives students practice with the form that will be used at the end of semester. I ask every student to complete the form individually and to list three aspects of the course that they appreciate and three concerns that they have. I also insist that they link any concerns to concrete recommendations for improvement.

After ten minutes or so, I invite them to join me in a full class discussion of some of these items. I will ask a student to note an aspect of the course that he or she appreciates and then ask the student to explain why he or she appreciates it. My intent is to encourage students to explain their reasoning in ways that others can

understand. I then ask everyone to indicate his or her level of agreement on the scoring sheet using a scale that ranges from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” I ask for a show of hands for each of these responses so that I can better gauge the experience of the entire class and, if necessary, explore any disagreements further, then and there.

For example, in a recent graduate class on classrooms and communication, one student noted how she appreciated the written feedback I had been giving her. When polled, everyone else agreed. In turn, I said that I appreciated hearing this since I always wonder whether students really value the comments that I write and whether the time I take to write comments is worth the effort.

When I next turn to student concerns, I insist that students offer concrete recommendations, and we repeat the public polling and discussion. A few students who were enrolled in both of my classes this spring mentioned that many of the short reflection papers were due in the same week. One student asked if these could be staggered. The other two students who were in both classes supported this request. I then polled the rest of the class. For them, it was not an issue. For me, it was a reasonable accommodation that supported my desire for high-quality reports. We decided that students who had both classes could turn in their papers one week later without penalty.

In nearly twenty years of using the midsemester student feedback process, I have seen no downside. Students value the time taken to affirm what is working, identify concerns, and consider improvements. We often talk about rights, responsibilities, and the inherently shared nature of learning. Everyone appreciates the opportunity to make improvements before the semester ends. Students appreciate being asked, heard, valued, and included. In an earlier book, *Teaching and Learning Peace*, I also made the case for student participation in classroom decisions as an essential practice for citizenship development and empowerment.

This midsemester process can be expanded

to include a range of other practices, formal and informal. For example, I try to come to class early to chat with students, check in with them about what is working, and inquire about concerns they might have. I routinely stay after class to answer student questions as well. Some instructors will also ask for feedback on a particular day's class in "one-minute papers." These papers can then be discussed in the next class session.

***Facilitating Feedback***

The midsemester evaluation process can be extended by inviting a colleague into the classroom to conduct a feedback session. I myself have conducted these kinds of sessions for others on three different campuses for nearly twenty years. While scholars like psychiatrist William Glasser recommend that we conduct feedback sessions—he referred to them as "classroom meetings"—in our own classes and promote the open, honest, and responsible communication that underlies effective instruction and deeper student learning, most students value the presence of a third party, which can provide integrity, confidentiality, and neutrality. Even when students want to express positive feedback, some fear that their comments will be interpreted by peers as an effort to curry favor with the teacher.

Before I conduct these sessions, I talk to instructors about any specific questions that they want me to ask and about what problems they think may exist. I like to observe the class for the first twenty-five minutes and take a few notes. I use the "instructional map" that I developed to refer to the published research and to serve as a springboard for later discussions. On one side, this map lays out three continuums for reference and discussion: (1) from instructor-directed to student-centered; (2) from product (information, skills) to process (thinking, creating, communicating); and (3) from individual to group. On the rear, I list a few of the most important factors for instruction that can also serve as a reference for later discussions, including knowledge, preparation, organization, energy or enthusiasm, clarity, time, engagement, meaningfulness, climate, feedback to

students, and assessment. (I describe this instrument in greater detail in my 1999 book *Metateaching and the Instructional Map*.) Afterward, I visit with the instructors, share my reactions, and hand over the course surveys from the students. Whether classes are small or large, this process can produce affirming and constructive feedback. Instructors value the feedback, ideas, and support it provides; students appreciate being asked to provide feedback and, invariably, offer useful ideas for course improvement.

### ***The Scholarship of Teaching***

Another potential benefit of the midsemester student feedback process is the relevant data that can be analyzed and reported in publications. In truth, we need more of this kind of analysis from instructors. In another case I facilitated, a colleague wanted help when a student petition surfaced insisting that her classes were “unsafe” for free and open discussion. As the director of our Center for Teaching and Learning, I routinely responded to such requests for assistance from faculty. In this case, I agreed to conduct midsemester review sessions in all three of her courses the following semester as well as end-of-semester student evaluation sessions and interviews.

I found a fascinating tension between what had been perceived as a “threat” by certain students in the previous semester and what was seen as a “stimulating challenge” by students in the subsequent semester. The lengthy report I wrote seemed to end concerns about this instructor’s teaching effectiveness, and she was later promoted to full professor.

Two peer-reviewed books as well as several chapters and conference presentations emerged from my work with this instructor. Once the instructor and I had received support from Atwood Publishing, we recruited twenty other colleagues on campus to write about their experiences with diverse student populations, in particular. Three years later, we released *Teaching Diversity*, followed in two years by *147 Tips for Teaching Diversity*. Everyone who participated received credit for contributing to these peer-reviewed

publications, a concrete reward for the discussions, shared readings, and writing that ensued. In my twenty years of work in postsecondary professional development, I have never participated in anything as intense or rewarding—and the results of the work were all generated at the instructor level, with few if any additional institutional resources required.

So successful was this model of faculty-inspired scholarship that I organized two other writing projects. Gathering input from more than fifty faculty, students, and staff members on campus and elsewhere, as well as from representatives of nonprofit agencies and a local business, I led the effort to produce a practical book of instructional ideas for different audiences, *147 Tips for Teaching Sustainability*. A third book in this series, *147 Tips for Teaching Peace and Reconciliation* (forthcoming in 2009), will draw contributions from instructors, students, staff, and others on various campuses in the United States and overseas.

### ***Conclusion***

We could wait for campus administrators to demonstrate more leadership for instructional improvement and innovation, but few are prepared to push much beyond content coverage, the surface of traditional teaching. “Publish or perish” has a way of focusing attention on what the elite research universities deem important. In the 1990s, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching issued three widely read reports—the first which is often referred to as the Boyer Report—on the state of teaching and learning in higher education. These reports concluded that undergraduate education at research universities, in particular, suffers from a skewing of the faculty reward system toward research and grant writing. Because of the financial rewards that come with externally funded grants, campus administrators are often reluctant to take the time to move much beyond what is instructionally conventional and efficient.

Moreover, the divide within the academy between what low-cost adjuncts are paid, what tenure-track faculty members are paid, and what administrators are paid is

	<p>growing. Who wants to rock the institutional boat and push for more substantive attention to teaching and learning when there are substantial extra salary dollars for administrative work? In its <a href="#"><u>2007–08 Report on the Economic Status of the Profession</u></a>, the AAUP details the growing gap between top administrators, in particular, and those whose primary responsibility is to teach.</p> <p>While we must push for more equity in pay at all levels, we as instructors can do much to improve our own teaching, deepen student learning, and support our colleagues locally and elsewhere. Conducting formal midsemester student feedback sessions and developing other mechanisms for soliciting input can resolve problems, boost morale, encourage collegial support and assistance, and provide valuable material for the scholarship of teaching.</p>
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