



CSU Newsletter

November 2021

Monthly Membership Meeting

Thursday, November 4th, 4-5pm

(1st Thursday of the month)

Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason Street

Come meet your colleagues and plan our next steps following last week's panel on the new opportunities for unionization. We encourage all tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members to attend, regardless of whether you are a member of our national organization. Social time follows the meeting at 5pm.

The forecast is sunny and warmish, so we will meet outside on the back patio. Avo's is a child-friendly venue with a treehouse. If you have young children and would benefit from AAUP providing a dedicated caretaker during the meeting, please email us at aaupcsu@gmail.com.

Unionization at CSU?

By Anders Fremstad

In recognition of Campus Equity Week, over 80 professors, graduate students, and community members attended the AAUP's event on "Unionization at CSU?" on October 28th. Gretchen O'Dell (Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and AAUP) moderated the panel consisting of Rep.

Andrew Boesenecker (District 53), Alex Wolf-Root (United Campus Workers, CU-Boulder), Alex Pelissero (Graduate Workers Organizing Cooperative), Dennis Dougherty (Exec. Dir., CO AFL-CIO), Carolyn Siegel (lobbyist) and Adrian MacDonald (Chair of the Classified Personnel Council). The panelists discussed how the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Bill being considered by the Colorado State Legislature this year would enable unionization at CSU.

The proposed bill would provide all public sector workers in Colorado with the right to form a union, including all full- and part-time faculty and staff at CSU, regardless of whether they are students. The bill would allow workers to set their bargaining unit and ensure that employers remain neutral during any unionization drive. Under the law, a union could win legal recognition by either (1) convincing a majority of workers in the bargaining unit to join the union, or (2) winning a majority vote in a secret-ballot election. Dennis Dougherty stressed that the bill gives workers the power to decide for themselves if they would like to bargain collectively with their employer over wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Many CSU workers expressed that they feel ignored by the administration. The AAUP-

CSU recently [collected reflections from dozens of our NTTF colleagues](#) that speak to the financial hardship, insecurity, overwork, and disrespect they endure. Alex Pelissero noted that CSU pays a minimum stipend to graduate students that is about 20% less than peer institutions, while it charges them twice as much in fees. Alex Wolf-Root estimated that he is paid just 5-10% of the tuition dollars he generates at CU, a sentiment shared by some CSU instructors.

Rep. Boesenecker praised unions for protecting workers and reducing the gender pay gap. Both he and Rep. Cathy Kipp (District 52) support the proposed legislation, but Carolyn Siegel stressed the importance of contacting other legislators and the governor. CSU workers are encouraged to sign up for a [lobbying training](#) to get this bill across the finish line. However, passing this bill is just the first step. As Alex Wolf-Root noted, “A collective bargaining bill is only as powerful as the union.” We urge you to [join the AAUP](#) and attend our monthly meetings.



Shared Governance

By Mary Van Buren

Shared governance is defined as “meaningful faculty participation in institutional governance.”¹ The AAUP has explicitly supported shared governance since 1920 and in 1966 issued a joint statement – along with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the American Council on Education – describing its scope, which includes budgeting, personnel decisions, employment of administrators, and the shaping of educational policies.² Over the years, Colorado State University has endorsed and celebrated shared governance,³ and the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual establishes the centrality of the faculty in governing the university.⁴

In the spring of 2021, the CSU Faculty Council Committee on Faculty Governance proposed revisions to the existing Faculty Manual so that reference to shared governance occurred in all applicable sections of the document. These revisions were passed by the Faculty Council, but then rejected by the President and Provost on the advice of the Office of General Counsel, the attorneys who work on behalf of the Administration.

The Administration’s rejection of the proposed changes to the Faculty Manual reflects a lack of respect for the faculty and, specifically, for shared governance. This attitude suggests that faculty and other

¹ See <https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/shared-governance>

² See www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities

³ See <https://about.colostate.edu/shared-governance/>

⁴ See <https://source.colostate.edu/a-century-of-shared-governance/>

stakeholders in the University are well advised to explore additional forms of representation that would be enabled by the passage of the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Bill by the Colorado legislature.⁵ This additional form of representation – namely a union – would strengthen shared governance at CSU. That, in our view, would be consistent with courageous strategic transformation.

Academic Freedom for NTTF

By Steve Mumme

Faculty Council recently received Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs Sue James' report on the Continuing, Contract and Adjunct (CCA) Faculty Task Force's findings on matters pertinent to NTTF.⁶ Among the concerns reported were uncertainties related the roll-out of recent reforms aimed at bettering NTTF employment at CSU. These reforms, approved by Faculty Council⁷ and adopted by the Board of Governors in 2018, among other things, established three tiers of NTTF employment: adjunct, continuing, and contract status.

There has been a good deal of confusion concerning these ranks and what they mean for the rights and privileges of NTTF (now referenced as CCAF — Continuing, Contract, Adjunct Faculty — in CSU-speak). Vice-Provost James seemed to acknowledge as much in her chat with Council. Subject to the

parameters given in the Manual, Section E., the implementation of these new appointment types is left to Colleges and Departments. Given this decentralized approach, it is no wonder that uncertainty abounds. This is sure to be an ongoing discussion as units work to adapt the new appointment types to their instructional and research missions.

That said, there is one thing beyond dispute. Adjunct and Continuing appointments are “at-will” appointments. Contract appointments, short as they may be, are not. As such, Contract faculty enjoy the necessary protections for practicing academic freedom for the term of their contract. Adjunct and Continuing faculty have no such protection. Contract faculty have recourse to an appeal procedure should their employment be terminated prior to the date specified in the contract. Adjunct and Continuing faculty have no such recourse.

Some administrators are sure to dispute this, pointing to language in Section E.1. that assures that all faculty, irrespective of appointment type, enjoy academic freedom.⁸ Unfortunately, in the absence of contract, those are mere words. The AAUP has long argued that absent contractual language guaranteeing access to due process appeal or grievance rights, the promise of academic freedom, however nobly intoned, is mere rhetoric. Don't be

⁵See https://www.coloradopolitics.com/legislature/majority-leader-daneya-esgar-plans-bill-to-allow-any-public-employee-to-join-a-union/article_3fc6ca12-a76f-11eb-bebb-4b3f3e5bd8e3.html

⁶ See [CCAF Task Force recommendations presented at October Faculty Council meeting.](#)

⁷ April 3, 2018. Fac. Council approves changes to Manual Section E at: [minutes-20180403-amended.pdf.](#)

⁸ The Manual states, “All faculty members shall have the academic freedom enjoyed by tenured faculty members, regardless of the type of appointment.” See: [Faculty Council – Section E](#)

deluded. At-will employees do not enjoy academic freedom, *period!*

The AAUP's Colorado Conference has been fighting this battle since its formation in 2004. Some history is in order here. The conditions that enabled CSU to grant up to 3-year contracts to faculty, undergirding the 2018 NTTF reform, stem from legislation the Colorado AAUP pushed through the General Assembly in 2012 with the support of the representative Randy Fischer and Senator Bob Bacon. Until then, the only CSU employees besides tenured faculty with term contracts were the university president and the football coach. The 2012 Fischer bill, HB 12-1144 made it possible for Colorado state colleges and universities, excepting community colleges, to offer up to 3-year term contracts to NTTFs.⁹

The reason the Colorado AAUP pursued this legislative reform was to extend the protection of academic freedom to NTTFs, knowing that, absent a contract, all NTTFs endure extreme precarity as a condition of their employment.

CSU has since 2018 made some progress by taking advantage of the opportunity created by the Fischer bill. But we have a long way to go. While adjunct and continuing faculty do enjoy some gains in compensation and professional development, the extension of contract appointments has advanced at what appears to be a snail's pace.

If the 2018 reforms are to advance in the direction of academic freedom our faculty should keep track of how this is going. NTTF

faculty across the campus should monitor their academic freedom status and be better positioned to hold the administration accountable in an effort to broaden the mantle of contracted appointments. This should *not* be confusing.

AAUP-CSU Officers

Ross McConnell, Co-President
rmm@cs.colostate.edu

Mary Van Buren, Co-President
mary.vanburen@colostate.edu

Gretchen O'Dell, VP for NTTF
gretchen.odell@colostate.edu

Dimitris Stevis, Treasurer
dimitris.stevis@colostate.edu

Anders Fremstad, Secretary
anders.fremstad@colostate.edu

Steve Mumme, CO Conf. Co-President
stephen.mumme@colostate.edu

Bill Timpson, at-large EC member
william.timpson@colostate.edu

Connect with the AAUP

Email: aaupcsu@gmail.com

Website: <https://aaupcsu.org>

fb: www.facebook.com/CSUAAUP/

insta: [aaup_colostate](https://www.instagram.com/aaup_colostate)

twitter: [@aaupcolostate](https://twitter.com/aaupcolostate)

AAUP CO Conf.: <https://coloradoaaup.org>

AAUP National: www.aaup.org

⁹ See text of Fischer Bill:
http://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018A/bills/2018a_1144_enr.pdf