

Monthly General Meeting

Thursday, April 6th, 4-5pm

(1st Thursday of the month)

Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason Street

Come meet your colleagues and organize for a better CSU. We encourage all tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members to attend, regardless of whether you are a member of our national organization. If you are interested in getting involved but cannot attend this meeting, please email us at aaupcsu@gmail.com.

Budget Town Hall

By Anders Fremstad

120 faculty, students, and staff attended our grassroots Budget Town Hall on March 2nd. Panelists highlighted problems with CSU's budget. I emphasized the low pay for faculty and staff and the high cost of tuition, room, and board for students. Kendall Stephenson showed that CSU's institutional debt per student has increased 15-fold over the last two decades. Gretchen O'Dell and Amy Young described the importance of their work teaching and advising students – and the challenge of getting the administration to value their work accordingly. The presenters' slides are [available here](#). The

Coloradoan reported on our event in the recent article [CSU community asks: Why do pay raises have to come from tuition increases?](#) While Chancellor Frank maintains that the only way to pay for much-needed raises is to continue to increase tuition, community members are raising serious questions about the University's budgetary priorities. I encourage everyone to get involved in these conversations and debates. CSU's chapter of the AAUP is planning a campus-wide rally for a fair budget during the next Board of Governors' meeting. Come to our Monthly General Meeting to get involved.

Teaching with Gratitude and Fear

By Denise Apodaca

When I was first asked to teach Music Appreciation, a class of 250 students, I said no. I never had difficulty sitting behind my piano and playing for hundreds of people, but standing in front of 250 students? Terrifying. I also disagreed with having one instructor teach 250 students on pedagogical grounds. As an introvert and a teacher, I wanted to be there for each one of these students, but I recognized it would be nearly impossible to learn not only their

names but also who they were as individuals. However, as a newly hired adjunct instructor, I didn't have much of a choice. I was a single mom and had recently lost both of my parents. I needed to work for my three children, and I also desired to work. I love to teach, and I was grateful for the opportunity to work at CSU. As a First-Generation student myself, I never thought this would be possible. I was told by my childhood teachers that I wouldn't succeed. So here I was, grateful and terrified at this opportunity. I knew that if I were to succeed at this, I would have to view teaching this large class differently. I realized I was given an incredible opportunity to teach music to students of various majors and backgrounds.

To connect with a class of 250 students, I had to think of innovative and creative ways to learn about them as individuals. I assigned short reflective prompts in class that pertained to their personal relationship to music. I read everything, and I responded to each student—all 250 of them! I invited students to present in class. If they knew how to play an instrument, they could perform; if they didn't, they were invited to show a favorite music video and speak to the class about their own connection to music. To my delight, students started to sign up. Some were hesitant to stand in front of so many students, but I shared my story of overcoming this fear and stood with them in support as they discovered a confidence they never knew they possessed. As a class, we learned that one of the most valuable things a person has is their experiences—their stories.

As fulfilling as this experience was, I was exhausted. There were semesters in that I

had 5, 6, and 7 classes, including multiple sections of classes with 250 students. I stayed up for hours responding to each one of these students. No one asked me to do this, but I had to connect with each one of my students, and I had to let them know that they mattered. One day, a student came up to me and asked if I had written to everyone. I said yes, and she said, "I hope this place makes you feel like you matter because you do." I realized that I felt like one of the 250 students in a class; isolated and trying to figure out the system alone. I didn't feel like I particularly mattered. This was when I became the voice for NTT faculty. I sat on several committees advocating for change. Change that involved job security, heavy workload, increased pay and benefits, and career advancement. I learned at a very young age that to change a system, one has to be in the system. We have made some progress with NTT policies, but we have a long way to go. There is more recognition for what we do, and I am grateful for that.

AAUP-CSU Officers

Mary Van Buren, 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

John Phippen, at-large EC member
john.phippen@colostate.edu

Christine Discoe, at-large EC member
christine.discoe@colostate.edu

Jake Keyel, at-large EC member
jake.keyel@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)

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