

AAUP

NEWS

The resolution below was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee of the Cincinnati State AAUP on Feb. 20. It was delivered to President Wright's office the same day.

American Association of University Professors
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College Chapter

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, President Ron D. Wright in December 2001 expanded his Cabinet to include representatives of the College's unions, saying that he viewed the new structure as a "revolutionary change" that he hoped would help the College to "move and grow in a purposeful way"; and

WHEREAS, the Cabinet has gone from meeting once a week to once every two weeks to once a month, calling into question the President's commitment to its legitimacy; and

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2003, President Wright informed our colleagues in the SEIU that their representative was no longer welcome on his Cabinet and further that he would not have any discussion with the SEIU President unless it "be witnessed by a third party of [President Wright's] choosing"; and

WHEREAS, the AAUP Executive Committee believes that assigning a place at the President's Cabinet as a reward and taking it away as a punishment is retributive and vindictive and demonstrates a lack of willingness to entertain diverse viewpoints within the College's governance structures; and

WHEREAS, the AAUP Executive Committee has no confidence that the President's offer of a place on his Cabinet remains meaningful; and

WHEREAS, the AAUP Executive Committee has no confidence that the President truly believes in the principles of shared governance;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

that henceforth the AAUP President will no longer attend meetings of the President's Cabinet unless and until President Wright shall re-invite the SEIU to the Cabinet and indicate his willingness to respect all points of view.

Good decision making is crucial to our success

-- by Marc Baskind

Cincinnati State has been my place of employment for more than 25 years. During those years, I've filled many different roles. Currently, I serve as co-chair of the AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Project) Accreditation Team, as chair of the Academic Policies and Curriculum Committee and, at the request of the President, I serve as the Faculty Liaison to

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Let's make a real commitment to Quality

-- by Paul Davis

Throughout Dr. Wright's presidency, a theme frequently shared with the College community has been encouraging the use of quality improvement tools to make decisions and establish directions for the future of the institution. The President has asked us to "get on the bus" for quality and he has asked us to watch him "walk the walk" toward quality.

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Certainly, in an organization that uses quality management tools, it is still the administration's responsibility to supervise the daily business of the College that is carried out by faculty and staff. It is also a responsibility of senior administrators to set the direction for organizational strategic planning.

However, inherent in the concept of quality management is the idea that those who are "stakeholders" have a strong vested interest in organizational success.

In the case of Cincinnati State, this means it is the responsibility of the individuals who work here to speak out when we believe that the daily workings of the College, or the long-term directions being established for the College, are not in the best interests of students, employees, or the community at large.

Also inherent in the concept of quality management are the ideas that it is appropriate for stakeholders to share their views—positive and negative—about items of concern, and that the process of sharing views should be "safe."

Those who offer opinions different from those of senior administrators should be expected their opinions to be considered with respect, and should expect to suffer no retribution for having expressed concerns.

Quality management is built on trust. Trust must be earned, and actions speak louder than

words. Where could we be as an organization if we actually trusted one another and worked together consistently to implement our common goals?

The College has growing enrollment that we celebrate daily. Why isn't it possible for us also to celebrate daily a genuinely shared process for achieving institutional progress?

At the moment our multitude of "quality based initiatives"

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includes (to name a few examples) exploring a calendar change, adding a Weekend College, hiring a consulting company to manage institutional technology deployment, implementing a Welcome Center, coping with staffing gaps in the Financial Aid and Registrar's Offices—not to mention constructing a new building, preparing to renovate the old building, and considering responses to a possible significant reduction in State of Ohio financial support for higher education.

Yet despite our "quality management," and our ever-increasing number of Teams, we can't get the online grading system to work accurately and efficiently, and we can't implement priority registration or computer-facilitated prerequisite checking. We can't accurately count the number of pre-major and fully-admitted students in our programs. We can't publish accurate preliminary term schedules because we keep switching times and don't have enough suitable rooms or qualified teachers for new classes we're asked to add.

A lengthy and often-repeated series of institutional forums, surveys, and consultant-led processes have affirmed important values shared by every member of this College community.

Among other things, we all want to offer the best education possible to a diverse community of learners, to assist

those learners in achieving their goals and improving their lives.

So how do we resolve problems and implement decisions that help us carry out our shared institutional values?

Currently we have a multitude of structures, with components that include a Quality Council and various Quality Teams, a President's Cabinet, a Dean's Council, four AQIP Project Teams, a CQIN Team, a Faculty Senate standing committee structure, and (when the

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the President. Because of these activities I believe I can provide some history and some perspective on decision-making processes in the College.

Ensuring appropriate participation in institutional decision making has been a concern of our faculty for many years. In fact, one of the primary reasons the faculty chose in 1988 to form a faculty union was to ensure and protect the appropriate role of faculty in decision-making processes.

More recently, with the advent of formal Quality initiatives,

such as applying for the Ohio Award for Excellence and, most significantly, participating in the Quality-based AQIP process for maintaining our College's accreditation by the North Central Association (NCA), the College administration has publicly committed to the use of processes that require input of all relevant stakeholders in organizational decision making.

As a part of the AQIP accreditation process, the College was required to prepare for and send a team to a three-day Strategy Forum held in Chicago in April, 2002.

The team members (in addition to me) included the College President, the College Board of Trustees (represented by Lisa FitzGibbon), the Executive Vice President (then Dr. Dorsey), the Academic Vice President (then Dr. Kelz, who did not attend the Strategy Forum), the Director of Organizational Effectiveness (Jan Donley), the Director of Institutional Research & Planning (then Dr. Posey), the Faculty Senate President (then George Armstrong), the AAUP President (Pam Ecker), and the

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decisions really matter) an Executive Team.

The budget-building process, which is supposed to include widespread stakeholder participation and is supposed to be connected to the institutional vision and mission and values, has few clear connections to any of the other structures or processes.

Leaders and members of the two largest employee unions, AAUP and SEIU, have seen that too often, in order to get some attention paid to significant institutional concerns, we have to file grievances, or at least threaten to file grievances. This is not the method we would choose if quality management were actually working.

Unfortunately, however, conflict and confrontation have produced some desirable administrative actions when nothing else seemed to work.

The first week of Winter Term, the SEIU took strong actions to call attention to what they perceived as unresolved institutional problems.

President Wright responded to those actions with several other actions—some of which could turn out to be positive steps toward resolving long-standing problems.

But some of the President's actions do not promote positive change, including the President's decision to rescind SEIU's seat on the President's Cabinet.

Punishing SEIU for speaking out does not improve relations with any group of College stakeholders. This punitive action violates the quality management principles that the College claims to adhere to, and it does not foster trust among those who wish to find collaborative solutions to shared concerns.

President Wright's *Open Letter to the College Community*, which responds to SEIU's actions, ends with the statement that he wishes that "civility should be our guiding principle." The President's banishment of SEIU from the Cabinet does not promote civility.

There is no point in pretending that the College administration believes in quality management principles when it does not act in accordance with quality principles. Quality management includes a genuine interest in hearing every opinion, whether the opinions are pleasant to hear or not.

This College has many really important issues that need to be addressed.

This College also has many employees who wish to participate in addressing and resolving issues, and in contributing to the continuous improvement of this institution—using a structure that clearly defines responsibilities and accountabilities, and clearly identifies processes, so problems can be addressed effectively, efficiently, and with appropriate stakeholder involvement.

It would be wise for Cincinnati State's senior leaders to make a real commitment to real Quality.

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SEIU Vice President (Wayne Herbers).

The membership of this team was determined in part by NCA/AQIP requirements and in part by the College administration.

It is important to recognize the representation on this team because of some important shared understandings that were reached at the Strategy Forum.

Much of the Strategy Forum focused on selecting and refining ideas for specific projects to be carried out as the focus for our AQIP activities.

The projects we selected deal with making specific improvements in four areas: advising students; providing effective, accurate answers to questions from current and prospective students; defining the general education competencies of our graduates; and providing effective, consistent classroom technology support.

However, in one of those “aha” moments that occasionally occurs in an intensive workshop, all of us who participated in the Strategy Forum came to realize that three things are critical to genuine Quality improvement at Cincinnati State: improved relationships (trust), improved

decision-making structures (collaboration), and resolve (shared vision and commitment).

The Strategy Forum team talked about a concept that became known as “the Baskind rule,” which is: “until we focus

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Trust and resolve are outcomes of long term collaboration. So we should focus on improving our decision-making processes and structures.

on these three critical concerns, nothing else can get done.” These three concerns are a prerequisite to genuine institutional progress.

We also came to understand and agree that trust and resolve cannot be achieved through a specific project. Rather, they are an outcome of long-term collaboration.

In other words, it became obvious to us at the Strategy Forum that the one area where

we can and should focus our organizational attention is on improving decision-making processes and structures. Any specific Quality program ought to be based on relevant stakeholder input and genuine shared decision-making processes that are clearly known to all. If those things are truly happening, trust and shared vision will follow.

So where are we now, nearly a year after the Strategy Forum?

The promise some of us felt was possible remains unfulfilled.

Yes, we have AQIP “Vital Few” Teams operating. Yes, we have lots of other Teams and Committees and Task Forces and Initiatives occurring. Yes, we are doing a somewhat better job of communicating

some information.

But decisions which should be made at the lowest possible level still are being made at the highest level. Instead of structures and processes that are “horizontally integrated,” we have vertical approval processes. When a decision is made at a division level, it requires approval “from above.” So-called budget managers don’t manage their budgets at

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all. Everything requires approval, justification, and far too often, delays.

In my Liaison role I attend the President's Cabinet, and have been pleased to do so. The Cabinet is a useful tool for information dissemination, opinion sharing, and networking. It is not, however, a decision-making body.

Departments and Divisions and Teams and Committees of the College—as well as individuals with assignments—occasionally make presentations to the Cabinet and sometimes those presentations include recommendations.

The Cabinet, as a group, may endorse those recommendations or may make its own recommendations. Sometimes, Cabinet recommendations are required to move laterally to

another part of the overall organizational structure (for instance, to the Quality Council or to another Team or Committee).

Often, the Cabinet recommendations are required to move “up the chain of command” for approval, going to the Executive Team of the President and his four Vice Presidents—all of whom are also members of the Cabinet.

At the end of Late Fall Term, it was decided that the Cabinet would reduce its meeting schedule to once a month. This was done because of the large number of recommendations that were “bottlenecked,” waiting for a meeting of the Executive Team to be scheduled.

Keeping in mind the shared understandings that came from the Strategy Forum, and keeping

in mind the fundamentals of genuine continuous quality improvement, it is time for the College to refocus.

We must restructure our decision-making processes to enhance collaboration, by empowering employees to make decisions and to carry out those decisions.

We must improve our processes so that decisions are made in a timely and efficient manner.

We must ensure that Cincinnati State has a collaborative, effective, universally-understood decision making structure. And that structure must include genuine commitment to the kind of Quality that will allow all of us to serve with excellence our growing community of students.

FACT develops list of “critical steps” in hiring processes

The FACT/Hiring Processes Team has developed a list of “critical process steps” related to hiring and will soon be working on specific recommendations for ways to improve hiring processes at Cincinnati State.

According to John Battistone, the Faculty co-chair of FACT, meetings on Feb. 6 and Feb. 13 resulted in an agreed-upon list of eight critical components of any employee search and

selection process. The eight components are:

- Position Approval Process
- Determining Expectations for Position/Employee
- Determining the Scope of the Search
- Reviewing Initial Responses
- Establishing and Carrying Out the Interviewing Process
- Reference checking

- Identifying the Final Candidate(s)
- Making the Job Offer

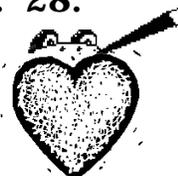
John said the FACT/Hiring Process Team members have been discussing many specific process steps which need to be clarified, and some questions that need to be resolved. The FACT timeline mandated by the AAUP contract is to recommend improvements to College hiring processes by the end of Spring Term.

“Our shared goal is to develop a set of comprehensive recommendations for processes that will allow us to hire the best person for each job, and to do that in an expeditious way,” John said. “I hope that within the next few weeks, we will be well on our way to formulating those recommendations, and thus achieving our goal.”

**Have a Heart; Do Your Part
Help Fill the Sick Leave Bank!**

Kick-off campaign concludes Feb. 28.

**Pick up/drop off donation forms
in the Human Resources Office.**



Sick Leave Bank collects 139 days in first week of campaign

The employee Sick Leave Bank has obtained 139 donated days during the first week of the "Have a Heart; Do Your Part" campaign.

"It's gratifying to see such a good start to the efforts to 'fill the bank,'" said AAUP Chapter president Pam Ecker.

"The AAUP distributed about 50 donation forms during the past week," Pam said.

Pam said the AAUP also distributed "Have a Heart" Froggie cookies and informational brochures to each of the academic division offices.

Donation forms may be obtained from the Human Resources Office, or from Pam.

Pam said the "Have A Heart" campaign will continue until February 28. However, the contract language describing the Sick Leave Bank [Article X(E)(2)] states that a call for donations may be issued any time the balance in the Sick Leave Bank is less than 50 days.

Any member of AAUP Bargaining Unit 1 who has accumulated at least 35 days of

sick leave may donate time to the Sick Leave Bank. The donations can come from "old" accumulated leave days.

A faculty members who donates time to the Sick Leave Bank may also participate in the annual "cash out" of unused sick days, as long as the faculty member maintains an accumulated balance of at least 35 days.

Any full-time College employee may submit a request to use time from the Sick Leave Bank, by filling out the application form available in the

Thank you to Sick Leave Bank "founding contributors"

Marc Baskind

Debbie Bogenschutz

Stewart Bonem

Paul Callahan

Paul Davis

Pam Ecker

Carla Gesell-Streeter

Marc Green

Jill Haft

Marcha Hunley

Joan Jackson

Human Resources Office.

Note: The Feb. 12 AAUP News stated, incorrectly, that the administration intends to permit employees not in Faculty Bargaining Unit 1 to donate leave days using the guidelines in the AAUP contract. No such formal procedures have been established.

Employees who are not covered by the AAUP contract and are interested in donating time to the Sick Leave Bank should inform Human Resources Director Gene Breyer.

Mike Jones

Bob McLain

Cindy Kief

Al Leicht

Alice Palmer

Joyce Rimlinger

Sandy Speller

Ken Stoll

Diane Stump

Nancy Walters

Geoff Woolf

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