

# AAUP

# NEWS



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## AQIP Strategy Team discusses concerns about accreditation, and reasons for strained relationships

The members of Cincinnati State's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) Strategy Team learned at a meeting on Aug. 12 that the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (NCA) is concerned about Cincinnati State's progress toward reaccreditation using processes based on continuous quality improvement.

Faculty members who attended the meeting said that much of the four-hour session

was frank and open discussion of reasons for mistrust and strained relationships among various stakeholder groups at the College.

The Aug. 12 meeting was facilitated by John Jasinski, an AQIP staff member.

According to faculty members who attended the meeting, Mr. Jasinski said that NCA is concerned because Cincinnati State has not conducted a complete accreditation self-

study since 1990, and the AQIP process for maintaining accreditation through demonstrated commitment to continuous quality improvement does not appear to be working smoothly at the College.

Meeting participants included President Ron Wright, Board of Trustees member Lisa FitzGibbon, Vice Presidents Monica Posey and Carolyn Anderson, Acting Director of Organizational Effectiveness

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## Let the sun shine

-- *The Cincinnati State AAUP Executive Committee*

On July 16, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported (on page B4) that Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro had sent a letter to state institutions of higher education warning them that their Boards of Trustees should be certain to hold their meetings and discussions in public.

Attorney General Petro was quoted in the story as having written to Ohio State President Karen Holbrook saying, "Every year, your Board of Trustees makes many

important decisions involving millions of dollars of public funds. . . . I urge you to make certain that public business is discussed, debated, and acted upon only in public meetings that are lawfully noticed and advertised in advance so that the media and the public may attend."

A story on the same topic, published by the Associated Press on July 13, and posted on the Lexis-Nexis.com website, said that some Ohio State trustees had discussions and

"briefing sessions" with the OSU President prior to voting on issues in their public meetings.

The Chair of the Ohio State Trustees was quoted in the Associated Press story as acknowledging that "all board votes have been unanimous" and she said she "discusses board initiatives privately with other board members."

According to the *Enquirer* and Associated Press stories,

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# AQIP/continued from 1

Paula Houston, Faculty Senate President Diane Stump, Past Senate President George Armstrong, SEIU Vice President Wayne Herbers, AAUP President Pam Ecker, and AQIP Co-Chair Marc Baskind.

Institutional Research Director Anne Foster, a Strategy Team member, was not able to attend the meeting.

Marc said, "As someone who has been part of the AQIP process at Cincinnati State since the very beginning, I thought the open, honest give and take that happened at the Aug. 12 meeting was something that could potentially lead us down the right road."

Diane said, "I'd like to be optimistic, since we started taking steps toward rebuilding relationships through open communication."

"However, more needs to happen before we can say we are an institution that is committed to doing quality work in all aspects of our operations," Diane added.

The Academic Quality Improvement Program is an approach to accreditation that is based on infusing the principles of continuous improvement into

the culture of colleges and universities.

Cincinnati State was invited to become a charter member of AQIP in 2000.

The AQIP Strategy Team, which was selected to represent key stakeholder groups within the College, participated in an AQIP Strategy Forum in April 2002, and formally defined Cincinnati State's initial set of Action Projects. A number of employees have participated in AQIP training programs on and off-campus.

Institutions that are part of AQIP are expected to be continuously working on 3 or 4 Action Projects that are vital to the organization.

AQIP institutions also must periodically submit to NCA/AQIP documents which describe progress on specific activities and also describe the fundamental quality improvement systems used throughout the organization to accomplish goals and get work done.

(More information about AQIP is available at [www.aqip.org](http://www.aqip.org).)

George said, "We were told at the meeting that we must stay in AQIP—apparently NCA is not

going to let us switch back to the 'old' method of accreditation. So we must do what we can to succeed in building a quality Cincinnati State."

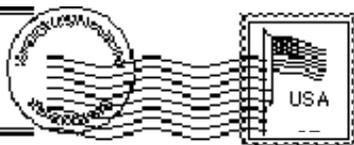
George continued, "At the meeting, we started to identify some of our shared values such as passion for education, and we reaffirmed that mutual trust and respect are essential if we are going to achieve what NCA says we must achieve to retain our accreditation."

Pam said, "The meeting on Aug. 12 just started to scratch the surface of some of the longstanding sources of mistrust and divisiveness at Cincinnati State."

Pam added, "At this moment, I'm not sure where things will end up, but I certainly think it's important for the members of the AQIP Strategy Team to continue to try to figure out the reasons for our differences. Ultimately, we need to resolve differences one way or another if we want to move forward for the benefit of our students and our community."

The faculty members said they expect the next meeting of the AQIP Strategy Team to be scheduled for sometime in Early Fall Term.

## Letters



### To the editor:

I'm quite distressed by what I've heard about the bargaining between the SEIU and the administration.

The SEIU members keep this College going in so many ways. They help our students get admitted, help them receive financial aid, and help them into

our classrooms. They support our teaching and learning mission in every possible way. And yet the administration seems to be viewing this group as merely a way to start balancing the budget.

The SEIU made a very reasonable proposal at their first bargaining session-- a three-year

contract with 4% raises each year, keep everything else the same, and get back to the business of running the College.

The administration decided to continue to bargain with animosity throughout the summer.

The administration proposed 1.5% increases each year, which would be more than eaten up with new health care costs. The administration's health care

# Letters



**Dear Cincinnati State Staff,  
Faculty, Administrators:**

As you may know, SEIU is currently in negotiations for a new contract. The old one expires the first day of the Early Fall term.

On the plate of the membership of SEIU is the responsibility to negotiate health care benefits that will ultimately affect every worker in this College.

We have worked with the administration to get through every management crisis they have encountered, and there have been many. Now, we are being offered a contract that is worse than a zero contract. It would cut every member's pay check by roughly \$2,500 a year.

We requested to be on the agenda for the Tuesday, August 24, Board of Trustees meeting.

After speaking to the College PR representative, who spoke to President Wright, who then, we are told, spoke to the Board, the membership of SEIU was denied the right to officially address the

Board. The reason given was that it would be inappropriate because we are in negotiations.

Let me make this clear: our intention was never to discuss negotiations, but to have the chance to express who we are as a group—many of the College's own graduates.

President Wright will not accept meetings with the leadership of SEIU, and Dr. Anderson, Executive Vice President, does not take our calls. We have absolutely no line of communication.

We are frustrated, and feel like we are warning the entire College of a huge problem, health care. The membership of SEIU is not equipped to be responsible for everyone's health care without support from the College community.

On behalf of all of us, PLEASE attend the Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday next week. If you have problems with family obligations, please feel free to bring the family. This is a public event and everyone is welcome.

As it stands, we are INVISIBLE to the Board, just an abstract bottom line. It is outrageous for SEIU members to take huge benefit cuts in order to make income (that's what it is) for the College. There are many other ways, if we could just talk about it.

We speak in concern for ourselves and also concern for the well-being of Cincinnati State. If there is an administrative plan, or an objective, please share it with us. The Cold War that the current administration has been waging with the rest of the College community is shredding the fabric of our mission.

Please pass this on to anyone who cares about the service they provide the community through their roles at Cincinnati State.

**This College Still Works,  
Because You Have Always  
Cared.**

The Board needs to see that you are real, and not just another economic chip going into a big black well that has no bottom.

Paula L. Harnist  
Chapter President, Local 1199  
SEIU, AFL-CIO

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proposals were truly frightening.

The hard-working, and not generously compensated SEIU members were asked to pay 25% of the actual costs for buying health insurance. For 2004-5, this would mean \$1,186.11 for those with a single plan, and \$3,081.75 for those insuring their families. And what would they get for this out of pocket expense? More out of pocket expenses! The cost of a doctor's visit

would go up to \$50. The cost of prescription drugs would go up to as much as \$50, with the least expensive generic drugs costing \$12. SEIU members would pay \$50 for all outpatient services, and 10% of the actual costs of inpatient services. In short, the administration offered expensive insurance and minimal coverage.

Apparently, the administration was impressed by the offer the Delta pilots

made to take cuts to keep the airline afloat. But many of Delta's problems are the result of outside forces. Cincinnati State's fiscal problems are solely the result of administrative failure. To try to balance Cincinnati State's budget on the backs of the SEIU workers is unconscionable.

Debbie Bogenschutz  
Coordinator of Information  
Services,  
Johnnie Mae Berry Library

# Let the sun shine/ continued from 1

Attorney General Petro warned that the Ohio State board's private discussions appeared to violate Ohio's Open Meetings Act (often referred to as the "sunshine law"). He said that decisions not made appropriately could be invalidated by the Ohio Supreme Court.

Many faculty at Cincinnati State have long been concerned that our Board of Trustees might be discussing public business like the annual College budget in executive sessions, away from the public scrutiny intended by Ohio's "sunshine laws."

In light of the College's recent financial crises, one would think that our Board would welcome a little state-mandated sunshine into discussions leading to the building of the College budget, but, apparently, there is nothing new under the sun.

At the June 29 meeting, the Board approved a 52.5 million dollar budget for Fiscal Year 2005 that contained only 15 line items, and the Board had virtually no public discussion.

No one asked how the budget numbers were derived. No one can discern from the one-page budget document how much money was cut from one area or shifted to another. No one can figure out from the document that was approved in what way our budget priorities are aligned with our academic mission.

In the President's Report (which occurred several agenda items after the vote on the

budget), President Wright told the Board about several "changes in spending policies and procedures" and he promised that spending would be "monitored carefully" this year. The President also said that becoming more conservative in our spending would not lower our academic quality.

As in previous years, this year's budget-building process included the administration engaging in what some faculty

**We're apprehensive about the condition of the College as we enter a new year. . . so we hope for as much "sunshine" as possible.**

view as mere lip service to the contractual obligation that says the Faculty Senate should be participants in the process.

The final part of the exercise was a Spring Term meeting of the Senate with the College's new chief fiscal officer. The Senators asked a lot of questions, and made some recommendations for improvements in processes.

The new CFO said she'd try to get answers to the questions, and she'd write down the recommendations so they could be applied in the future.

One of the questions the Senate asked ("what is the intercollegiate athletics budget

this year?") still hasn't been answered fully.

To our knowledge, no faculty member was afforded the opportunity to provide meaningful input into setting institutional financial priorities for this year. Some of us heard the academic Deans' opportunity for input described as "just trying to keep what you have."

With respect to our Board of Trustees, there seem to be only two possibilities:

(1) The Board discusses budget details in private in its executive sessions, or in other non-public discussions. As the Attorney General has made clear, this is illegal.

(2) The Board does not discuss budget details and simply relies on the President's assurance that the budget is appropriate. Given our recent history, this is unfathomable.

At the June Board meeting the President and some Board members engaged in public back-slapping and mutual congratulations about how everyone pitched in, tightened belts, and thus averted our being put on "fiscal watch."

President Wright even told the Board he "appreciated" that the AAUP "helped people understand the financial situation" through the publication of the financial analysis prepared by Dr. Fichtenbaum of Wright State.

Nevertheless, we don't feel like shouting a lot of huzzahs and hallelujahs over passing the OBOR's fiscal assessment with a D- instead of failing outright.

# Letters



We find it hard to be excited about starting a new academic year knowing that the new “conservative spending” mandate recognizes the value and importance of experienced, dedicated teachers by posting rules for reducing so-called “excess income” earned through overload.

We find it hard to stay upbeat while advising new students and also noticing that the admissions process has slowed considerably because staff members are being asked to take on the work of temps and student workers who were eliminated in Spring, and evidently aren’t going to be replaced.

And we find it hard to have a lot of confidence in a chief executive officer who-- in the face of the first ever, two-year-running deficits-- told the *Cincinnati Business Courier* (July 9, 2004) regarding the decision not to raise tuition for several years, “If we had to do it all over again, we’d do it all over again.”

We’re more than a little apprehensive about the condition of the College.

But because we care deeply about the College, and its ability to continue to achieve its mission with excellence, we hope for as much “sunshine” as possible-- in all of the discussion of all of the plans and all of the processes that will determine the future of Cincinnati State-- for us, and for our students.

## To the Editor:

One of the most impressive attributes of Cincinnati State is the collective skills and wisdom of the faculty, staff, and administrators.

Our teaching faculty have expertise in hundreds of fields. Our coordinators have contacts in business and industry that any Fortune 500 company would covet. We have esteemed colleagues who counsel, advise, and provide a vast array of special services to our students.

On top of all the things you would expect to find in any college, collectively our Cincinnati State employees possess enough technical skills to do all of the following:

- Build bridges, factories, hospitals, and a variety of other buildings.
- Recruit, hire, and train the work force for a wide range of organizations.
- Collect, compile, interpret, and analyze data, trends, and issues.
- Write comprehensive computer programs, manage database systems, install hardware systems, and provide state-of-the-art web-based services.
- Provide comprehensive medical services from cradle to life’s end.
- Manage budgets and business activities for diverse industries such as: restaurants, hospitals, accounting firms, engineering companies, computer software companies, retail establishments, advertising and marketing firms, government and social

service agencies, schools, and almost every industry sector in the Greater Cincinnati area, and beyond.

- Motivate, evaluate, cross-train, build confidence, and in other ways improve workforce skills and worker satisfaction.

Collectively, our faculty, staff and administration should have the information, knowledge, and skill required to get over the rough patches in our own organizational life.

Collectively, we should be able to plan for a dynamic future that will provide success for Cincinnati State and will contribute even more to the success of the Greater Cincinnati community.

So, why does it seem that our College has failed to benefit from this collective wisdom? What will it take for all employees to be empowered to contribute? When will the collective knowledge be accepted as a contribution, rather than viewed as meddling and “trying to take control”?

Collectively, the employees of Cincinnati State have all of the answers to all of our institutional problems.

What we need are senior leaders who will ask, listen, and then do what is right—based on our collective wisdom.

Charalee Allen  
Business Technologies

# Join AAUP for Pre-BOT Pizza and Conversation



Tuesday, Aug. 24



4:15 to 5:15 p.m. - Room TBA



Attend the BOT Meeting  
5:30 p.m. - Conference Center

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