

# AAUP

# NEWS

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## AAUP Office to open on July 28

The Cincinnati State AAUP will conduct the “grand opening” of its first-ever official campus office on Thursday, July 28.

The office is located in Room 124 of the Main Building.

The campus community is invited to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m., followed by a reception.

After the reception, faculty bargaining unit members will be invited to attend a briefing on the status of contract negotiations.

AAUP Chapter President Pam Ecker said that the opening of the AAUP Office represents long-awaited recognition of the AAUP chapter as an integral contributor to the work of the College.

“It’s not unusual for AAUP chapters to have an office on

campus,” Pam said. “The UC AAUP, for instance, has had an on-campus office for many years.”

“However, it has taken quite a while for Cincinnati State administration to acknowledge the work done by the AAUP and to allocate the room for a small working office,” Pam said.

“For many years, the so-called ‘AAUP Office’ was simply the faculty office of one of the chapter officers,” Pam said.

“The first faculty contract in 1990 said that the administration would provide the AAUP with a couple of file cabinets, but the files and other materials used to carry out the work of the AAUP had to be placed in existing faculty offices. At the moment, about half a dozen chapter officers have various portions of the AAUP materials in their

offices, or in some cases, in their homes,” Pam added.

“In the 2002 negotiations, the administration agreed to provide the AAUP with a separate office as part of the retrofitting of the Main Building following construction of the ATLC,” Pam said. “We’re pleased to finally be able to say that the AAUP office will become a functioning workspace this summer.”

Pam said that along with Room 124 in the Main Building, the AAUP has been allocated a storage closet in the former cafeteria area, which will provide an additional location for storing AAUP records and supplies.

Pam said, “As the chapter celebrates its 15th year of working for the betterment of the College, we’re happy to have a working office to use, too.”



**Get bargaining updates on the  
AAUP Hotline: 513.569.1888  
(Next scheduled negotiation session: 7-13-05)**

**Cincinnati State AAUP:  
15 years strong, and working for your future**

# Letters



## To the Editor:

During the past several years we've seen one assault after another on our traditions of excellence at Cincinnati State. A few examples include:

- A well-functioning committee system and a continuous self-study process that led to maximum accreditation by the North Central Association were replaced by a constantly-changing set of "quality circles" that seem interested neither in genuine quality nor in a "circle" approach that genuinely respects input from all employees.
- The once-proud tradition of Advisor's Day—our statement to the community that we provide all the varieties of education our region needs for the future—seems to be diminished with each passing year.
- An institution that historically has been financially strong was driven to the brink of crisis, and a year later, full-time faculty continue to be "punished" for this administrative failure through unreasonable withholding of overload assignments.

However, the biggest affront to excellence yet is the assault on tenure proposed by the administration at the July 1 bargaining session.

The principles and practices for granting faculty tenure have a long and respected tradition in higher education. Tenure affords faculty the opportunity to advance knowledge by freeing us from the need to simply advance currently-popular theories.

Tenure enables us to participate fully and responsibly in the internal workings of the College, without having to merely support the party line. Tenure is what truly helps the

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College grow, which in turn helps our students grow, and helps our community prosper.

Tenure creates a faculty that is invested in the College and its students. Tenure allows us to develop satisfying long-term careers in higher education, and allows our students and our community to benefit from this stability.

The administration's proposal to create only non-tenure-track faculty positions, on the other hand, would lead to a faculty workforce that is in constant flux.

Ten years from now, many of the current faculty will have retired, and a core group of faculty might well be those

hired in non-tenure-track, short-term positions.

Without the possibility of tenure, it's likely that many of these non-tenure-track faculty members would constantly be searching for better jobs that enabled them to truly have an impact on their students and community.

Without the possibility of tenure, the College faculty would probably be dominated by those who would always be a group of beginners, just feeling their way through the joys and struggles of teaching, with very few senior faculty to serve as their mentors. (And there would also be fewer incentives for faculty to become mentors, since the mentored newcomers would never be guaranteed a role in shaping the long-term future of our institution.)

New faculty are of vital importance to the College—they bring us new knowledge, new ways of interacting, and new ways of examining perennial challenges. But new faculty also need to be able to call on their more experienced peers for help.

Our faculty-initiated and faculty-driven peer mentoring system may need some improvements, but many peer mentoring committees over the past decade or more have demonstrated that effective faculty members are developed through the continuing interactions of new faculty with more experienced faculty. Both the mentor and the mentored grow through this exchange.

In an effective peer mentoring relationship, newcomers are

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provided with help navigating the hurdles and challenges of a higher education career, and experienced faculty are revitalized and given added incentive to bring new elements to their interactions with students and colleagues.

I've attended meetings of our Board of Trustees and heard some Board members express concern that tenure seems "automatic" at Cincinnati State. It's not clear to me why our Board members seem to be unaware of the screening, mentoring, and evaluating processes that occur throughout the four years that precede an application for tenure.

In addition to the work of the formal mentoring committee and informal mentors, College administrators have had plenty of opportunities during these four years to assess new faculty, and—if they think it necessary—to recommend non-renewal for faculty members who aren't demonstrating excellence in their work. When these non-renewals occur, they don't get a lot of publicity—which is how it should be. But Board members ought to be aware of these personnel actions since they vote on them at every one of their meetings.

If our Board members need more detailed or more frequent information about the scrutiny given to every tenure applicant during the years that precede the tenure application, they should be asking for this information—just as they asked for, and recently started to receive, more detailed and more frequent information about the state of College finances.

I've also heard some of our Board members and some College administrators criticize tenure because of its alleged

expense. It's true that most long-time employees earn more than most new hires. But in the work of higher education (as well as other professions where employee longevity is considered to be an asset), experienced employees also provide great value.

We tell our students, our accrediting bodies, and other interested audiences that Cincinnati State's industry-savvy and student-focused faculty provide students with a better and more relevant education, and a more economically-promising future, than schooling provided by the proprietary schools and the other for-profit institutions that rely on a constantly-changing

series of non-tenure-track teachers.

Why in the world does it make "business sense" for Cincinnati State to emulate the flawed business model of these organizations?

The primary concern of Cincinnati State faculty is making it possible to achieve long-term as well as short-term goals: providing the best possible education for our students, and preparing the best possible citizens for our community.

Tenure, and its focus on long-term stability, is a vitally important part of realizing those goals.

Debbie Bogenschutz, Library



### To the Editor:

After reading about the administration's workload proposals in the *AAUP News* (June 27, 2005) I have a few things to say about teaching online classes.

I started teaching online classes many years ago. Before Cincinnati State used Blackboard, and even before we used E-college, I taught classes using email and Microsoft Word. I did it because our students needed the flexibility to take their classes while they were working full-time and accomplishing the other things that our students need to do.

I learned a long time ago that many students are unable to attend college if their only option for scheduling classes is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. I have also learned that many of our students want to take online classes but lack the

resources they need to complete the courses from their homes.

I've seen that students are willing to do whatever it takes to complete their classes. Some students use the computers at their workplace (many employers will encourage this activity if they know the employees are working to improve themselves). Some students use computers on campus while others go to friends or family members to use their computers. Many students have old computers with old software, but they still sign up for online classes.

I have also learned that I need to be available to my online students at many different times to help them with their problems. On the second day of Summer Term, I was on line at 5:30 a.m. because I knew some of my online students would be going into the hospital early and would be looking for answers to

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their questions before they left for work. The first night of Summer Term, I was online for 4 hours, answering questions.

I have learned that the first 2 days of the term are usually the busiest for my online classes. I need to be available many more hours than 2 virtual office hours required by the current contract. Since I have 5 online classes this term, I know I will spend at least 2 or 3 hours each day on my “office hours” for these classes. My busiest days are weekends and holidays, since those are often the times that many of my students will be devoting to their online coursework.

I have also learned that all of my course information needs to be available the night before the class officially starts. My students want to be able to have everything they need for the whole term before their work week begins. So, the weekend before a term begins, I’ll be spending several hours making sure I have everything ready.

In the years since I started teaching online classes, I have made numerous concessions asked for by administration.

- I no longer get workload units for class preparation. I’m told the reason for this is that courses that are already developed are assumed to be easy to update.
- When the College changed from E-college to Blackboard, I had to redo my course materials, and when I changed textbooks I had to redo my course materials again, and I did it without extra compensation. Again, I’m told it’s because updating is easy and doesn’t need workload recognition.
- The last contract settlement took away the extra workload unit I used to get for delivering an online class—which means I taught 1 additional class this year, for the same compensation as the previous year.
- Last year, during the “financial crisis,” I agreed to raise the capacity on my class, so now I have 35 additional students in my online classes.

Many people have suggested that since the “value” of my work in online courses has been

reduced, I should refuse the online assignments.

I continue to teach these classes because they provide an option our students expect. Online learning in college helps to prepare them for the education and training environment they will be experiencing in their futures.

Also, despite the frustrations, I enjoy the experience and the personal learning I gain from online teaching. I hope to continue online teaching as long as I can.

I just wish our administration could truly understand how important it is to our students when we offer them this opportunity. If we expect to continue to increase enrollment, we must provide online classes to our students. The student online discussion boards are filled with information about what our students want.

I would hate to have to tell these students that the administration just doesn’t want to pay faculty what it costs—in time and in dollars—to offer high quality online classes.

Sandy Speller,  
Health & Public Safety

**CINCINNATI STATE CHAPTER  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS  
3520 CENTRAL PARKWAY  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45223-2690**

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