

NEWSLETTER

University of Iowa chapter – AAUP
December 22, 2006
Lois Cox, Newsletter Editor
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The Executive Committee will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 137 Schaeffer Hall. Members are always welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings. If you would like to become a member of the Executive Committee, please contact President Peter Hansen at peter-hansen@uiowa.edu

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Dec. 20, 2006, issue of the New York Times included an article titled “Public Universities Chase Excellence, at a Price.” The article focuses on the “tough balancing act” of trying to achieve top-10 status by increasing tuition and recruiting high-achieving, out-of-state students, as opposed to providing broad access to relatively low income, in-state students.

The University of Iowa is certainly no stranger to this dilemma. Provost Michael J. Hogan has stated, “We aspire to become a top ten public research institution.” (I believe this is even a part of the university’s most recent strategic plan.)

The recently approved Regent Admission Index, which replaces the long-standing 50-percent rule (requiring Iowa’s Regent universities to admit all Iowa high school graduates in the top half of their classes), clearly disadvantages students from poor, rural high schools offering few Advanced Placement classes, the very students who are likely to become first-generation college students.

Clearly our university’s 83.4% in-state tuition increase (2000 to 2006) has forced many students to choose our much cheaper community colleges.

Some have even proposed that the university should offset its lower state appropriation by recruiting greater numbers of out-of-state students who, of course, pay much higher tuition.

I would argue that if we wish to continue to receive a generous state appropriation and remain a truly “public” institution, we must be very careful about striving to become an elitist institution. Iowa’s taxpayers will consent to support the University of Iowa only if we continue to educate their children.

Peter Hansen

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HOSTS MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

The Executive Committee invited all state senators and representatives who represent any part of Johnson County to attend its December meeting. Despite the many demands placed on them during this busy time of year, State Senator Joe Bolkcom and State Representatives Mary Mascher and Dave Jacoby were able to come. President Peter Hansen welcomed the guests. As required by university policy, he explained the status of AAUP as a private organization, and that the members of the Executive Committee speak for themselves rather than for the university. The vigorous conversation that followed dealt primarily with budget issues, the use of the General Fund to support basic teaching and research, and the consequences of earmarking legislative appropriations for particular purposes. The group also discussed perceptions of the university community shared with Johnson County legislators by their colleagues in Des Moines. All participants considered the meeting a great success, and agreed to stay in touch during the upcoming legislative session.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PASSES RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FACULTY SENATE "NO CONFIDENCE" VOTE

In response to the recent Faculty Senate vote of "no confidence" in the leadership of the Board of Regents, the Executive Committee adopted the following resolution, which it shared with Faculty Senate and the press.

"AAUP RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FACULTY SENATE VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

WHEREAS the University of Iowa Faculty Senate, by a near-unanimous vote, today expressed its lack of confidence in the leadership of the Board of Regents, and

WHEREAS Regents Gartner and Wahlert have repeatedly demonstrated their disdain for the faculty, staff, and students of the University of Iowa, as well as their inability or unwillingness to conduct the sort of open search process likely to produce a university president in whom the various University of Iowa constituencies may repose trust, and

WHEREAS Faculty Senate President Sheldon Kurtz, in his address to Faculty Senate, eloquently marshaled the evidence that Regents Gartner and Wahlert have misused the power reposed in them to exercise leadership in higher education in the State of Iowa,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the University of Iowa chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) hereby expresses its strong support for the Resolution of No Confidence in the Leadership of the Board of Regents."

December 12, 2006

The December 21, 2006 editions of both the IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN and the CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE reported that the statewide AAUP organization has joined

its voice to ours, endorsing Faculty Senate's no confidence vote in the Board of Regents' leadership, and going further to call for faculty representation on the Board of Regents.

FORMER STATE SENATOR SPEAKS OUT ON STATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR REGENTS UNIVERSITIES

The following opinion piece by former State Senator Arthur Small appeared in the CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE on Sunday, Dec. 17, 2006. The article is reprinted here with the kind permission of Sen. Small and the Gazette.

Educational Excellence and Picking a New President

Since the departure in June of David Skorton, who left the UI for the presidency at Cornell University, much attention has been focused on the matter of the search for a new president. Across the state, and certainly within the University community, it has been a major subject for discussion. Certainly having a quality president of the university is extremely important and almost every public figure of any note in Iowa has expressed an opinion on the subject. Less attention has been devoted to what is a more serious and less correctable problem: the serious under-funding of Iowa's three Universities.

A new president will ultimately be found, even though the process by which that individual is selected probably will not meet with universal approval. That new president will be gratified to find Iowa's politicians quite willing to articulate strong support for higher education in the state. During the most recent campaign the state Democratic Chair said Iowa Democrats would "secure educational excellence" while "making college more affordable" and the Republican Chair said his party had "a positive vision to achieve world-class education" and would "strive to provide our children a world-class education." Further, both candidates for Governor promised to address the problem of ever higher tuition increases.

Great sentiments. But when that newly selected president looks closer he or she will find a different and more difficult reality. The total sum appropriated for Iowa's Regents Universities in Governor Branstad's last year of office was \$628,572,092. But for the past 5 years the amounts appropriated have been \$16.5, \$40, \$54, \$39 and \$55 million **below** that amount. In addition, and making matters worse, during the eight years of Governor Vilsack's term the Consumer Price Index has risen over 18 percent and the Higher Education Price Index has jumped 27.8 percent. Also, during the same period, at the University of Iowa alone the number of undergraduates has increased 11 percent and the number of tenured and tenure track faculty has decreased 3.4 percent. To help make up for the shortfall, tuition and fees have been more than doubled. This certainly has not been a recipe for "world-class education."

The new president will soon find the reality behind the political rhetoric is not pretty. Will the new Governor and new Legislature address this funding problem? Who knows? That issue has not been much discussed. It will take money, serious money. To find a

new president the Regents simply have to get their act together and pick one. That shouldn't be all that difficult and there does appear to be an adequate supply of qualified candidates. But it will take a lot more effort to get the needed funding. Will the new Governor, the new Legislature and the new Regents have the desire or the will to be up to this more difficult challenge? In short, will they find a new recipe for the promised "world-class education"?

Arthur A. Small
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AAUP Dues Reduction for New Members

In recent years, national AAUP policy has been to welcome all new members by offering them a dues reduction. New members who are untenured pay only 50% of the announced rate during the first year of membership, and may qualify for up to an additional three years of reduced dues at the same rate. Others receive a dues reduction of 50% during the first year of membership. In an effort to retain new members and to attract more, the Iowa chapter has chosen to subsidize by 50% the dues of all new members, tenured and untenured, for a total of three years. If you or your colleagues may be eligible for this reduced rate, pursuant to either national AAUP policy or local chapter policy, please contact Treasurer Kathy Clark at mary-clark@uiowa.edu

Committee A

Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure exists to provide advice and assistance to members of the university community, both faculty and staff, who encounter procedural unfairness in connection with their employment. If you could benefit from Committee A's advice, or if you know someone who could, the person to contact is committee chairperson Ekhard Ziegler at ekhard-ziegler@uiowa.edu

If you know of colleagues who would like to join AAUP, membership information is available at our chapter's website <http://www.uiowa.edu/~aaupweb/>

or at the AAUP link on the Faculty Senate webpage through the university's website. Alternatively, you may reply to this e-mail and I will forward membership forms to you. Academic freedom and shared governance are particularly imperiled at the University of Iowa at this time. Please consider becoming more active in AAUP work. And please encourage your colleagues to join us now.

Enjoy the holidays!

Lois Cox