

Union News

Connecticut State University
American Association of University Professors

CSU Lobby Day

On March 29, over 46 CSU-AAUP members and SUOAF-AFSCME members participated in CSU Lobby Day at the State Capital. The event was organized to generate support for Senate Bill 354, An Act Concerning a Full-time Faculty Plan, which if passed would allow CSU to hire 63 additional full-time faculty members FY2006-07. The faculty and staff participants also lobbied legislators to support a current services budget for CSU.

While faculty participation decreased this year as compared to last year, legislator participation increased significantly. There were over 35 legislators and/or legislative staff present at the breakfast as well as the Lieutenant Governor, State Comptroller, and the Deputy Secretary of State.

Two CSU-AAUP members even briefly spoke with Governor Rell as they dropped information off at her office regarding the need for more full-time faculty. The staff from our lobbying firm, Betty Gallo & Company, who helped to organize the event, were extremely pleased with the legislator turnout, noting that it was one of the best attended breakfasts they had seen in the past decade.

In addition to the legislators who came to the breakfast, participants met with their individual legislators and members of the Appropriations Committee. Several members also spoke to Christine Stuart, a reporter from CTNews Junkie.com, a self-described news website featuring "original reporting on the state's political, legal and business universe". Julian Madison, professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University, challenged the legislators in the article to support Senate Bill 354. "Everyone says

they support higher education. It's easy to pay lip service, but let's see what actually happens to this bill that's good for the students and good for the state." The entire article, entitled "Lip service? or Investment?", can be found at http://ctnewsjunkie.com/index.php/2006/03/29/good_intentions_or_lip_service.

Unfortunately the Appropriations Committee released its budget on March 30, and it did not include current services funding for CSU or additional funding for the purpose of hiring more full-time faculty. CSU-AAUP will continue to work with the CSU System Office on these two issues. We thank all of the members who participated in Lobby Day, both the members who came to the Capital and the members who wrote or called their legislators that week. Focusing legislators' attention on our priorities is a difficult task, but hearing from their constituents really does make a difference.

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CSU-AAUP Contract Re-opener Ratified

Great news! The CSU-AAUP Contract Re-opener has been automatically ratified by the General Assembly since it was not acted upon within the 30 days time limit. The agreement provides for an aggregate pay increase of 5% for the CSU-

AAUP membership for AY06-07, and a 5% increase in special funds, which include travel, faculty development, research grants, curriculum-related activities and retraining funds.

Funding for the Connecticut Teacher's Retirement System

CSU-AAUP members have the choice of three retirement plans, if they meet the eligibility requirements: the State Employees' Retirement System (SERS), the Alternate Retirement Plan (ARP), or the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS).

As you may already know, there has been a pattern of chronic underfunding of the teachers' retirement system over the last decade. While the gross dollar amount proposed by Governor Rell in the FY05-07 budget increased over the last biennium, the percentage of the state's contribution remains at 66 percent of the actuarially recommended amount.

Without a commitment to additional funding, participants in the plan are concerned that the benefits they are counting on will not be there for them when they retire. There are significant consequences for taxpayers as well because underfunding now will compound the burden taxpayers face later to make up the difference.

There have been 16 bills introduced in the General Assembly on this issue so far this session. However, it is likely that this issue will be decided in the budget debate. CSU-AAUP's lobbying firm, Betty Gallo and Company, feels there is a good chance that some of the state's surplus money will be allocated to the Teacher's Retirement Fund (TRF). Both Democrats and Republicans have expressed support for allocating additional funds to the TRF, but the amount which will be allocated will depend on how much support it generates from members of the General Assembly. Contacting your state legislators and asking them to allocate additional funds to the TRF could go a long way in helping to generate support for this measure.

CSU-AAUP and the other higher education unions continue to advocate that the General Assembly approve the highest possible contribution.

CSU-AAUP Council Notes

- WCSU-AAUP reported that a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs has been hired at WCSU. Linda Rinker currently serves under the same title at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. She will begin her duties at WCSU on July 1.
- SCSU-AAUP reported that the SCSU Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling for discipline matters to be first addressed by the Provost rather than Human Resources. This resolution hopes to address the growing number of Article 16 disciplinary cases which have been filed since the new Administration took office.
- CSU-AAUP obtained the number of full and part-time AAUP members by campus for Spring 2006 from the Administration. The breakdown is as follows:

Campus	Full-time	Part-time
Central	456	463
Eastern	210	221
Southern	439	603
Western	226	311
CSU	1331	1598

Negotiating Team Update

The CSU-AAUP Contract Negotiating Team has met several times to review the contract survey results as well as other issues that were raised during the contact negotiation forums that were held on each campus, or brought directly to team members. All member concerns, raised during a forum or through the survey, have or will be presented during a team meeting. The negotiating team will report to the CSU-AAUP Council at its April and May meetings, and the Council will establish priorities at the May meeting. If you have not returned your survey or communicated your concerns, please make an effort to do so as soon as possible.

CSU-AAUP Negotiating Team Members

CCSU - Carol Shaw Austad, Psychology; George Murphy, Math; Cindy White, Communication
ECSU - Emil Pocock, History; Elena Tapia, English
SCSU - John Kavanagh, Math; Virginia Metaxas, History
WCSU - Michele Ganon, Accounting; Vijay Nair, Library
Staff - Gregg Adler, Attorney; Caryl Schiff-Greatorex, Director of Member Services

Special Groups Providing Input in Contract Negotiations

Special groups within CSU-AAUP, including librarians, counselors and department chairs, have met with or spoken to their counterparts on all four campuses to discuss contract concerns specific to their special group. These meetings have been useful in recognizing inconsistencies across the system and have enabled the special groups to identify possible priorities for negotiations. This approach has proven to be a very effective tool for the negotiating team, and they have expressed a desire for the part-time faculty, coaches, and athletic trainers to organize and produce a similar result.

The CCSU-AAUP Part-time Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly about contract negotiations for over a year and have thoroughly researched alternative contract language pertaining to their negotiation priorities. The negotiating team has reviewed all the surveys, including those from part-time members and the concerns of the CCSU-AAUP Part-time Advisory Committee. However, the Part-time Advisory Committee expressed an interest in talking

with part-time members from other CSU campuses regarding priorities for upcoming contract negotiations. If you would like to participate in a four-campus dialog about contractual issues that pertain to part-time faculty, please contact Michelle Malinowski, Assistant Director of Member Services for CSU-AAUP, at (860) 832-3790 or malinowskim@ccsu.edu.

While recognizing that the interests of coaches may vary due to their NCAA Division designation, CSU-AAUP would be willing to facilitate a four-campus dialog between the coaches/athletic trainers (Article 6). If you would be interested in participating, please contact Caryl Schiff-Greatorex at (860) 832-3791 or greatorexc@ccsu.edu. In addition, the CCSU coaches will be meeting on April 20, and the AAUP is also assisting in arranging a meeting of the SCSU coaches.

The negotiating team will be reporting to the CSU-AAUP Council at its April and May meetings and the Council will establish priorities at the May meeting. Additional input will be accepted throughout the summer while specific proposals are being drafted.

Grievance Training Workshop Offered

On April 20, 2006, CSU-AAUP will be sponsoring two two-hour Grievance Training Workshops with Pat Shaw, a labor attorney from the National AAUP Department of Organizing and Services. Effective grievance processing helps ensure that the protection and benefits provided by our collective bargaining agreement are properly enjoyed by our members. This workshop will explore the basic principles of contract enforcement, the counseling and representation of grievants, and analyses of case studies through role playing. This workshop should be invaluable for present and prospective members of grievance committees, grievance officers, and contract administrators.

There will be two sessions, scheduled at 2:00 and 4:30, each lasting approximately two hours. Both workshops will be held in the CCSU Student Center, Bellin A & B. There is no charge to register. If you have an interest in learning about the grievance process and training to become a grievance officer, please contact Michelle Malinowski at (860) 832-3790. Slots are available for the 2:00 session and participation will be

determined on a first come first serve basis with preference given to those new to the process.

CSU-AAUP hopes you will seriously consider taking advantage of this unique training opportunity.

Elections

Chapter Elections for AAUP are currently underway on each campus. Please remember to vote and if you have not received a ballot, contact your campus AAUP office.

National AAUP ballots are due by close of business on April 17. If you have not already mailed your ballots, please do so as soon as possible. Candidate statements can be found on National AAUP's website at www.aaup.org/aboutaaup/06Election/candidates.html.

Financial, Health Care and Retirement Notes

- SEBAC composed and sent a letter to State Comptroller Nancy Wyman mandating resolution on the UnitedHealth Dental plan "balance billing" matter. When UnitedHealth was chosen as the new dental provider, it was on the condition that their reimbursement rates were comparable or better than those of the Anthem dental plan. Therefore, patients should be charged less. However, complaints have been received from members by all the state employee unions that plan participants are being charged more by UnitedHealth. SEBAC's letter asks Comptroller Wyman to reinstate the Anthem dental plan effective July 1, 2006 if United does not demonstrate that they can and will fix the "balance billing" issue.
- The Retirement Commission approved adding the TIAA-CREF Institutional Social Index Fund to the selection of funds in the state's Defined Contribution Plans. This fund will be available as of May 1. The fund employs a "Socially Responsible Investing investment approach", excluding "companies based on revenues from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, weapons production or nuclear power." "Remaining companies are evaluated using qualitative criteria, including environmental, employment and product-quality practices."
- As of April 1, the Connecticut Stable Value Fund for the Deferred Compensation (457) Plan, Alternate Retirement Plan

(ARP) and the 403(b) Plan will credit a net interest rate of 4.75% to participant accounts. This is the second increase this year. Comptroller Wyman announced the increase in a news release, stating that "our goal is to continually monitor the interest rate environment to make sure that participants in all three defined contribution plans earn the highest interest that can be supported by economic conditions."

- The Petition for Certification filed asking the Supreme Court to hear the appeal of the Longley case was approved. The Longley case, reported on in the last CSU-AAUP Newsletter, involves two retired attorneys from the Attorney General's office who asked the court for their "final average earnings" to be calculated by including payments made for accrued vacation time as part of their regular salary for their final year of state service. The lower court ruled in favor of the two attorneys, which has the potential to raise an employee's benefit up to 6%, with an estimated impact of \$650 million on the retirement fund and an additional \$118 million cost to the state for the employer contribution. A decision by the Supreme Court will likely be rendered at the end of 2007 or beginning of 2008.
- CSU-AAUP offers its part-time members access to a voluntary benefit program from MetLife Auto & Home®. MetLife Auto & Home® is currently available to full-time members through the state's Supplemental Benefits Program. Through this program, part-time members will have the opportunity to apply to purchase auto, home, and other property and liability insurance beginning May 1, 2006. Special group rates will apply. Additional information outlining the details of this new benefit will be distributed soon.
- CSU-AAUP will now be receiving the *Adjunct Advocate*, the news magazine for adjunct college faculty, in both its original format and as a PDF file. If you would like to receive the PDF version by email, please contact Ellen Benson (860-832-3793 or matulewicze@ccsu.edu) and request that she add you to the mailing list.

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