

AAUP

DECEMBER 8, 2011

YEAR END

The year now in the rear view mirror was one of the most difficult in the last twenty-five.

The state financial picture was dire and the resolution of the pension, health care, and compensation bargaining was painful. The national picture highlighted the national frustration with replenished banks but not replenished personal accounts as people occupied Wall Street with a quick series of imitating actions from London to California.

Health care costs continue to gobble up income faster than a sitting at Thanksgiving.

Still it looks like a footing has been found for pension and health care stability in Connecticut for the state workforce, while the same cannot be said in many other states.

We hope that the coming Holidays and the New Year will be a time to consolidate the stabilized economy of the state and the University, and that the faculty and staff will see the same kind of consideration in decisions about them as they had in making decisions with the state in SEBAC negotiations.

AAUP OFFICIALS MEET WITH GOVERNOR MALLOY

AAUP Legislative Advocate Peter ("PJ") Cimini facilitated a meeting with AAUP officials to discuss some ongoing UCONN and higher education related matters. President Lyle Scruggs addressed the need to have the University retain faculty in a period where there might be tendencies for other institutions to recruit at UCONN, and for the institution to be able to address the issue of salary compression in an era where wage freezes create problems with hiring new employees at market rates.

Other issues discussed were the information technology initiative, the Jackson Laboratory and related research opportunities, and Storrs research support. Governor Malloy expressed his appreciation for all that the AAUP membership and others have done in crisis management in the past year.

HYBRID RETIREMENT PLAN ADVANCES

The hybrid retirement plan is advancing, albeit slowly. There will be some understandable information soon, with examples of salary levels and years of service for comparison. It has been a very long process, but progress is coming. The information will be posted on the AAUP website (www.uconnaaup.org) and in a newsletter as soon as it is available.

AAUP – EDWARD C. MARTH MENTORSHIP AWARD

The AAUP Executive Committee authorized the creation of a new mentorship award to recognize the contributions faculty make in conjunction with graduate students. The Marth award might be for a contribution to the arts, a patent, a paper or any noteworthy project, and is intended to recognize faculty, whose mentorship activities foster graduate research. It should be awarded in the Spring of each year. Many people have contributed to this fund through the retirement gatherings held for Executive Director Ed Marth.

THANK YOU ED MARTH

This is to say thanks to the very long line of professionals I have had the privilege of working for and with for the last twenty-five years. From Chapter President Judith Bridges in 1986 to Lyle Scruggs today, the faculty and other professionals in the AAUP have been well served by committed officers, Executive Committee members, and members of so many committees that have made positive results for the members. It is the spectacular work of the faculty, coaches, research professionals, and many administrators that makes the efforts of the AAUP so worthwhile. It has been an honor for me to help. I will continue in a minor role of assisting, but I wish Peter Nguyen much good fortune and hope he will have the pleasure I have had in working with the UCONN community.

DIRECTOR PETER NGUYEN

It is my honor to succeed Ed Marth as Director of the University of Connecticut Chapter of the AAUP upon his retirement at the end of this calendar year. Ed's legacy of service to the UCONN faculty, and, by extension, the University as a whole, is one which I will honor and seek to build upon in the coming years with your help and support.

These are challenging times with national movements afoot to de-professionalize what we do as educators and strip away collective bargaining rights that have historically safeguarded our profession and the working class in this country. Add to these, a backdrop of economic uncertainty and dwindling

public resources, and it becomes clear we have our work cut out for us. But please be assured that I am no stranger to overcoming adversity.

I was born into a family of educators. My maternal grandfather founded and served as headmaster of a school in Saigon in which my mother, aunts, and uncles taught. Vietnam was a very poor country then, and, in any given month, nearly one-third of the students were unable to pay tuition. Yet, my grandfather, out of a sense of civic responsibility to the neighborhood, and, in recognition of the inherent value of education, never turned any family away, even at great cost to his own. Accordingly, I was raised with the heart-felt belief that education was a fundamental right and essential to each person's self-actualization.

When my mother's family escaped Vietnam in 1975, shortly after losing my father who was a casualty of war, we arrived into the United States with no language skills or possessions. Even through very lean years when the adults in the family worked as domestics, laborers, and, eventually, small business owners, the youngest among us were directed to aspire towards higher education as the best way to vindicate the American Dream. Even though they were not themselves educated in the United States, my elders always seemed to know what the requirements were for us to qualify for the best universities and demanded that we exceed them!

Consequently, I am a proud product of public higher education in the Golden State, where I completed my undergraduate degree in Psychology and Political Science at the University of California, Davis, which was established in 1908 as the agricultural branch of UC Berkeley. Since becoming a general campus in 1959, UC Davis has matured into a respected, multi-faceted tier-one research institution in its own right. In addition to pursuing my studies, I was elected President of the Associated Students during my senior year, testified before the higher education committees of both the state senate and assembly, served on numerous academic senate and chancellor's advisory committees, lobbied on behalf of the University in Sacramento, and addressed the UC Board of Regents regarding Affirmative Action and diversity within the system.

The next chapter in my academic career led to me to the law school at UCLA, one of the only elite American universities founded in the twentieth century (1919 to be precise). I was greatly impressed by, and tremendously benefitted from, the high standards of teaching and research exemplified by the faculty. While focusing on coursework in Critical Race Theory, civil rights, and labor/employment law, I was mentored by academic luminaries such as Kimberle Crenshaw (a prominent critical race and feminist legal theorist), Erwin Chemerinsky (a leading constitutional law scholar and founding dean of the UC Irvine School of Law), and Cruz Reynoso (former California Supreme Court Justice and Vice-Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights during the Clinton administration).

After a brief and unsatisfying stint flirting with the Dark Side at a large management-oriented law firm, I decided that I needed to pursue a career that prioritized doing good over doing well. Since that time, I have represented professional unions such as the Screen Actors Guild (“SAG”), California Faculty Association (“CFA”), and California Federation of Teachers (“CFT”). During my labor career, I have run national and state-wide organizing and political campaigns, managed major events during the longest strike in Hollywood history, served as chief negotiator on over a dozen education collective bargaining agreements, and represented hundreds of employees in grievances, mediations, and arbitrations.

I am confident that my recent experience in California, the unfortunate epicenter of the current wave of state budget crises, will prove valuable as we negotiate our own rough financial currents in Connecticut. As I learned on the west coast, there is always hope, for, even in the midst of such tumultuous times, labor succeeded last year in pushing through a constitutional amendment making it easier for the Democratic majority to pass the state budget and elected education-friendly Democrats to every single constitutional office.

The quality and caliber of the UCONN faculty was my major reason for accepting this position with AAUP, and I will strive to defend and improve our working conditions as professional employees. I look forward to meeting and working with you in the near future.