President’s Message
Diana Rios, UConn-AAUP President

Given media coverage on State budgeting you know we are working in an economically difficult period. Yet, when I meet with students during special study blocks I’ve set aside for them and am part of interdisciplinary research meetings, I’m reminded that we faculty and other union members find ways to at least sustain our research, teaching, service, lab work, creative endeavors and community outreach in a tough budgeting environment. This year, when speaking at the legislature, and in other “action” venues, I’ve stressed the impressive accomplishments of our talented faculty and all others who make the university function. It is important to underscore our value to the State. Cutting higher education budgets to the bone and carrying out threats of state employee layoffs is demoralizing and damaging to our working conditions and collective abilities to continue excellent work. As the State demands balanced budgets on the backs of state employees, you, the union has systematically elevated activity to new highs. We are in a paradigmatic union-type shift, where we (you and/in the union) are more vocal, communicative, and active.

You volunteered research time, data, insights and finessed new parts of the Contract. Areas included academic freedom, pay equity, and faculty governance. The Representative’s Assembly provided intense discussions on the newly unfolding successor agreement.

Avenues for strengthening connections have been many: one-on-one meetings; department presentations; updates with live streaming; meetings with student groups, reporters; peaceful demonstrations; a dynamic website; surveys; email announcements; digital and paper newsletters.

Heavy-handed critique on higher education is too common when States want a scapegoat. That’s why we need you to keep standing up for your rights—be informed by reading multiple news sources; check your email “clutter” basket for announcements; contact your legislator and tell them to protect higher education and their flagship knowledge engine.

Also, ask questions of university higher administration about budgeting plans and potential restructuring or collapsing of programs. Faculty need a say regarding serious changes in their work environments.

National trends help us with context. This year notable experts came to UConn--Rudy Fichtenbaum, President of National AAUP; Ellen Schrecker, History, Yeshiva University; Risa Lieberwitz, AAUP General Counsel, Labor and Employment Law, Cornell University; and Aaron Nisenson, AAUP Senior Counsel. This June, several of us from AAUP will be in Washington, D.C. at the National AAUP Conference. We will lobby on Capitol Hill, vote at AAUP general assemblies, attend workshops, and present research.

In closing, we members make this union what it is. Keep connected, keep active and keep strengthening our union.

2016 Negotiations: Collective Bargaining or Political Football
Michael Bailey, UConn-AAUP Executive Director/Chief Negotiator

After spending three months negotiating a successor collective bargaining agreement with the Board of Trustees, the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Associations (UCPEA) submitted their agreement to the legislature for approval of funding.

Normally, the legislature allows for contracts to be ratified through a default option in the legislative rules. After 30 days, if a contract is not acted upon by the legislature, it is automatically ratified without votes in the House and Senate. But
with tax revenues nose-diving and projections of a $900 million deficit for FY 17, the Governor and legislative leaders could not allow contracts to be ratified without a vote of approval.

This dynamic created a difficult situation for the legislative leaders with the November elections fewer than 9 months away. Constituents might see a vote of approval on a contract that called for increases in salary as not being fiscally responsible given the looming deficit. A vote to reject a contract might hurt the very people that supported the legislator two years ago and could lead to someone losing an election in the Fall.

For the first time since 1997, when a Department of Corrections contract was set aside, the Appropriations Committee held party votes on the UCPEA negotiated agreement. The Senate caucus rejected the contract and the House caucus supported the Agreement. The contract would now move to the floors of each chamber where rejection from either chamber would send the contract back for further negotiations, or even possibly to arbitration.

How might the Governor and legislators avoid this pending political nightmare? Their decision was simply to instruct the state agency heads not to submit any newly negotiated agreements for approval of the legislature during this legislative session. To avoid a negative vote, UCPEA members decided to withdraw their submitted contract.

So, what should have been negotiations between an employer and employees, has turned into a political football that is set to be lobbed back and forth during uncomfortable conversations with constituents in the lead-up to the November elections.

Our faculty negotiations resulted in the following: 16 negotiation sessions; 3 mediated sessions, 22 team meetings, 17 Temporary Agreements (TA’s) and dozens of proposals and counter-proposals on almost every article in the current agreement. Your negotiating team is in the process of securing all of this work into a document that will be reopened when the legislature allows for contracts to be submitted for funding approval. That may occur in the Fall, or even in the 2017 legislative session.

If the present contract does expire on June 30, 2016, Section 5-278a of the General Statutes of Connecticut will control and states “in the event an agreement expires before a new agreement has been approved by the employee representative organization, employer representative and the legislature, the provisions of the expired agreement concerning (1) salary, excluding annual increments, (2) differentials, (3) overtime, (4) longevity, and (5) allowances for uniforms,........ shall remain in effect until such time a new agreement is reached and approved in accordance with Section 5-278.” In essence, we will be extending the provisions of the current agreement until a successor agreement is reached. All of your rights and protections will be in force and effect without a lapse of coverage.

On the question of whether merit will be awarded in August 2016, several issues come into play. First, merit is a negotiable subject of bargaining and both sides submitted proposals with differing percentages applied. Nothing has been agreed to by the parties. But, if we were to apply last year’s process, according to Article 19 of the current contract, a merit pool would be established comprised of 2.06% of the combined salaries of the bargaining unit members employed on December 31, 2014. That percentage of salary was distributed according to Article 25 Merit on August 7, 2015. So the merit pool was established on December 31, earned in the 2015-16 year, but needs to be funded out of the 2016-17 budget. If there is a 0% increase in salary for the 2016-17 year, you may have earned your merit, but the 0% of funds will leave nothing to be distributed. You have received an email from the Provost on this issue, but you will also receive one from UConn-AAUP. Please watch for that email.

Don’t go to that meeting alone!
David Amdur, UConn-AAUP Associate Director

If UConn-AAUP members are contacted by the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) because a discrimination complaint has been filed against them, they are entitled to have UConn-AAUP representation at these meetings. You do not have to go alone to these meetings.

ODE is the office on campus where UConn faculty, staff, and students can go if they feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race, ethnic background, religious orientation, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. It is a neutral office charged with investigating such complaints of discrimination and harassment. If a complaint is made against a UConn-AAUP member, an ODE staff person will first meet with the complainant to get the important details. If, after a merit screening process the complaint is considered to have possibly violated UConn’s policies on discrimination and harassment, then an investigation will start. Our members can receive an unexpected phone call from ODE saying there is a complaint and that there is an investigation. This call is then quickly followed up with a letter outlining what the complaint is. It’s important to note, however, that there may be more specific details of the complaint than are put in the letter. ODE sends a copy of the letter to the member and the UConn-AAUP.
We advise our members to contact the UConn-AAUP office to set up a meeting. This is important because we want to hear our members’ perspective on the complaint. UConn-AAUP members have the right to have a UConn-AAUP representative go with them to these ODE meetings. They are quasi legal investigations, so having UConn-AAUP representation is important.

**The Representatives Assembly: A Year in Review**

*Chris Henderson, UConn-AAUP Internal Organizer*

With new leadership at the helm of the UConn-AAUP, there has been a consistent effort to work towards a more member-driven union often called the organizing model. This model encourages members to be active in their Chapter, exercise their voice in Chapter operations, and help shape their union. An example of this shift has been the formation of the Representatives Assembly who has served in a vital role in informing and educating their unit colleagues while providing input and direction to Chapter leadership during these historic contract negotiations.

In the last year, the Assembly members have been relaying information to their colleagues on terms discussed in negotiations, seeking feedback on those terms from their fellow faculty members and bringing them to the leadership. Overall, we are seeing members take charge and responsibility for the work of the Chapter. Members of the Assembly have encouraged their colleagues to attend negotiation sessions as observers per the negotiated ground rules, a unique opportunity in a unionized setting. The Assembly has elected a faculty Speaker and Vice Speaker to run the Assembly in keeping with the spirit of a member-driven union. The Speaker and Vice Speaker have seats on the elected UConn-AAUP Executive Committee and express the concerns of the representative body. The Assembly has been instrumental in mobilizing faculty to attend our Fall Lecture Series or our rallies on Academic Freedom and the definition of “the University”. These actions were attended by faculty, staff, and students who cared about the working conditions of faculty. As a result of this participation and these actions, the UConn-AAUP has been able to succeed on many issues at the negotiation table including, Academic Freedom, Shared Governance, Department Head Selection, Student Evaluations of Teaching, and maintaining the Tenure Appeal process in the contract.

Additionally the Assembly has been helpful in encouraging all faculty to become active members of the Chapter and joining the National AAUP. As a result of these efforts from staff and representatives, membership has risen by 6%.

I urge you to ask how you can enhance your involvement; by becoming a representative on the Assembly if your department does not have one; by joining the National AAUP; or by continuing to be informed what is happening across the University and higher education as a whole.

Remember this is not the union but your union. Let’s keep moving forward together.

**Compensation Survey Results**

**Question 1: For the first two years of the contract, the UConn-AAUP compensation proposal should give primary consideration to which type of increase?**

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<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses (percentage)</th>
<th>Responses (total votes)</th>
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<td>Percentage Increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat Dollar Increase</td>
<td>30.03%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merit Increase</td>
<td>19.22%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Question 2: For the second two years of the contract, the UConn-AAUP compensation proposal should give primary consideration to which type of increase?**

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<td>Percentage Increase</td>
<td>52.52%</td>
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<td>Flat Dollar Increase</td>
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<td>Merit Increase</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>794</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Congratulations to the newly-elected UConn-AAUP Executive Committee! The newly-elected officers and members-at-large will hold office from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. They are as follows:

**PRESIDENT**
DIANA RIOS
COMMUNICATION & EL INSTITUTO

**VICE PRESIDENT**
THOMAS J. PETERS
COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGR

**SEC/TREASURER**
OSKAR R. HARMON
ECONOMICS – STAMFORD

**REGIONAL CAMPUS REP**
YVETTE “YAELE” SCHACHER
AMERICAN STUDIES – HARTFORD

**Members-At-Large**
CAROL ATKINSON-PALOMBO
GEOGRAPHY

THOMAS BONTLY
PHILOSOPHY

MARIA-LUZ FERNANDEZ
NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

MARY GALLUCCI
ENGLISH

ANDREA HUBBARD
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

AMY KENEFICK MOORE
NURSING

DAVID KNECHT
MOLECULAR & CELL BIOLOGY

JEFFREY OGBAR
HISTORY

REBECCA RUMBO
ENGLISH

ROBERT STEPHENS
MUSIC

Elected members of this Executive Committee will represent this Chapter at National AAUP meetings and vote on behalf of the UConn-AAUP Chapter.

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Check out the website at www.uconnaaup.org