



Sinclair Community College

May 10, 2010

Dear Colleagues:

We write to you today to express our concern about some troubling incidents that have taken place over the past couple of weeks.

The assistant dean of the Business and Public Services (BPS) division has been visiting faculty door-to-door gathering signatures on a petition against SCCAAUP. She may not be aware of this, but she is inadvertently using her position of authority to coerce faculty into signing this petition. Think just for a moment about what is at stake here, especially for junior faculty. As a faculty member, would you oppose the will of your division's assistant dean who has the political and administrative power to influence the outcome of your evaluation, promotion and tenure, and merit applications among other things? We believe this act (although possibly unintentional) has intimidated faculty and is tantamount to an unfair labor practice.

Unfortunately, this assistant dean has simultaneously started a campaign to remove our colleague, James Shimko, from faculty senate, by alleging that his affiliation with AAUP and participation in Faculty Senate create a conflict of interest. Jim is currently serving in faculty senate as a senator representing the faculty in the BPS division and has one more year left in his current term in this capacity; he is also one of the founders of our SCCAAUP chapter. We are concerned that he is being singled out simply because he is one of the people associated with our endeavor to educate and inform our faculty about the benefits of AAUP collective bargaining. She recently sent Jim a couple of emails with some questions and concerns to which he already responded; you can read her emails and Jim's response on our website (<http://sccaaup/documents/>). This was followed by a couple of emails from other BPS faculty also sent to Jim questioning his ability to serve as senator. One bluntly told Jim, "...I call on you to resign your position as senator or sever your ties to the AAUP organization immediately." Ironically, when Jim ran for his current senate seat, he identified himself to his constituents as President of SCCAAUP.

We, SCCAAUP, condemn and denounce this campaign of intimidation and call on all parties involved to return to calm. We are in an academic institution, where debate, exchange of ideas, and disagreements should take place in an atmosphere of dignity and decency, courtesy and civility that reflects tolerance and respect for different points of view. Jim is being reviled for his criticism of the status quo, and for his willingness to inform faculty about how AAUP collective bargaining can benefit them.

The attempt to personalize the collective bargaining campaign and silence dissent is an attack on academic freedom. The attempt to remove a faculty senator—against his own will before his term is up and without elections—shows a clear contempt toward senate, its constituents and bylaws, and represents an attack on shared governance. This abuse of authority is precisely why we need AAUP collective bargaining, as it enables us to codify protections of academic freedom and shared governance in a collective bargaining agreement enforceable by law. Furthermore, a

legally binding contract will allow faculty of all ranks to speak freely and voice criticism when appropriate without fear of reprisals and repercussions, which have implications for their careers. How can we, faculty, have a meaningful voice and say in the governance of our college if we are allowed to speak only when we are supporting or promoting the status quo?

Furthermore, we, SCCAAUP, do not see a reason for the antagonism that threatens to poison relations between faculty. We intend to continue to respect the position of faculty who may be adamantly opposed to AAUP collective bargaining, just as we intend to continue to honor the requests of faculty who may need additional information to make an informed decision regarding their affiliation with AAUP. We also welcome the expression of interest and concern that seeks to correct misinformation and false assumption. For example, allegations that faculty senates and faculty unions are incompatible are false.

Instead of making assumptions or accepting opinions from dubious sources about the relationship between the work of the Faculty Senate and the work of AAUP on behalf of faculty, we would encourage unprejudiced inquirers to read the AAUP's national policy on the relationship of governance and bargaining (http://sccaaup.org/documents/Academic_Government_for_Institutions_Engaged_in_CB.pdf) and the AAUP's statement on the importance of strong senates (http://sccaaup.org/documents/Senates_and_AAUP_2_2010.pdf). We also invite unbiased questioners to look at the collective bargaining agreements from sister institutions in Ohio (<http://sccaaup.org/samplecontracts.html>) where language about the prominence of senate as a body and its role in governance is clearly discernible. The SCCAAUP is committed to these principles and to the full flourishing of and respect for our senate and other centers of faculty governance. One of our primary goals is to impress upon the administration the respect it should give to the senate and its work and its recommendations. The SCCAAUP is no more a monolith of positions and ideas than this senate or the administration. As individual faculty, we may have different views about faculty life, our approaches to teaching students, the role faculty can or should play in institutional decision-making, and other issues. As an organization, the SCCAAUP is committed to fortifying the faculty senate and its hardworking committees, especially the FIT and other faculty bodies, preferably through collective bargaining.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at sccaaup.comm@gmail.com should you have any questions or concerns. Further, if you did not receive a card, misplaced or lost yours, or simply need a new one, just let us know via email. If you have not been visited yet, and would like to schedule an appointment to discuss AAUP collective bargaining, just let us know, and we will be glad to arrange a meeting. Please keep in mind that lately messages from our email address to Sinclair email account seem to end up in the CanIt mail filter, so we ask that you check it frequently. Also, some faculty do not receive our emails because their security settings seem to block GMAIL accounts. As a workaround, we are posting every email and other communications to our website, so we suggest that you visit <http://sccaaup.org/> frequently.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
SCCAAUP Communications Committee
<http://sccaaup.org/>