



SCCAAUP

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) proudly announces the reestablishment of a chapter of AAUP at Sinclair Community College (SCCAAUP) and the initiation of its campaign to establish a collective bargaining unit consisting of members of the faculty of the college.

The mission of the AAUP chapter at Sinclair Community College is to promote the highest quality of education, to promote and protect the professional status and interests of all Sinclair faculty, and to facilitate respect, integrity, and open/honest communication among the faculty, administration, and board of trustees.

The purposes of the SCCAAUP are to:

1. Facilitate meaningful shared governance at SCC.
2. Ensure that faculty have primary authority in curriculum design, delivery, and offerings.
3. Ensure the highest quality of instruction by promoting the hiring of full-time, tenure-track faculty.
4. Advocate fair compensation for faculty.
5. Ensure due process in grievance and disciplinary procedures.
6. Promote and protect academic freedom.

The creation of the SCCAAUP celebrates what has been described as the **NEW NORMAL**, which represents a **N**ew strong voice for faculty, **E**arnest and candid discourse, **W**orking for students as well as **N**otable news affecting faculty, **O**utstanding academics, **R**eal shared governance, **M**utual respect, **A**cademic freedom, and **L**ove of teaching.

The officers of the SCCAAUP include Jim Shimko, president; Lynn Seery, vice president; Bill Lejeune, secretary; and Susan Harris, treasurer. Membership in the SCCAAUP is open to all full-time faculty. Faculty communication is facilitated by a newsletter, *Sinclair AAUP News*, and a website, www.sccaaup.org.

In higher education, the AAUP is distinguished for its commitment to academic freedom and shared governance as well as local autonomy and organizational democracy. Sinclair joins a growing list of outstanding Ohio colleges and universities that host a chapter of AAUP. In fact, faculty at thirteen of Ohio's twenty-three community colleges have unionized, as have faculty at ten of Ohio's fourteen public universities. In terms of equity and quality, efficiency and productivity, salary and security, these institutions establish the standards and benchmarks to which their peers aspire.

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Another View of “Sinclair by the Numbers”

The *Sinclair Buzz* offers “a view of the latest news at Sinclair Community College.” However, there is another view, and fair-minded colleagues usually are willing to consider both views before developing their own view. One of the most important purposes served by SCCAAUP is to provide our faculty with the knowledge necessary for them, indeed for us, to act in our best interest. Our commitment to our students, our academic discipline, and our profession compels us to act in the best interest of the college because the faculty is the college.

A colleague recently asked, “If Sinclair is the best community college in the country, why are we only the third highest paid faculty in the state of Ohio?” His question was prompted by claims made in a *Sinclair Buzz* article (“Sinclair by the Numbers”—Monday, April 05, 2010). In the article, the following assertions are made, and to each we have appended a response:

That the average faculty salary at Sinclair has increased faster than the average faculty salary at all other Ohio top-tier community colleges for the past two years. The problem here is that the other top-tier community colleges are not identified, so we do not know the basis for the comparison. In any event, our average salary increase has enabled us to move from an apparently lesser position to only third place in the average faculty salary sweepstakes.

That Sinclair faculty rank third in highest average salary based on fiscal year 2009. The problem here is that no evidence is offered to support this claim, and the claim itself calls into question the rather dubious practice of using merit bonuses, which are awarded to only some of the faculty, in the calculation of the average salary of all of the faculty. One must also ask whether this calculation is further skewed by the inclusion of the salaries of associate deans and department chairpersons, whose teaching responsibilities have been significantly limited, as well as the full salaries of senior colleagues who retire at the end of the first or second quarter of the academic year.

That Sinclair's average faculty salary is about 17 percent higher than the average faculty salary of all other Ohio community colleges. The problem here is that the comparison is no longer being made between us and other comparable institutions, the so-called top-tier colleges, but instead the comparison is made between us and over twenty other colleges most of whom do not enjoy our size, scope, reputation, or resources. That our average faculty salary is 17 percent higher than the average faculty salary at these institutions is hardly a reason for self-congratulation. Shouldn't the claims we make about ourselves be intellectually honest and academically respectable?

An explanation for the disparity between our average faculty salary and the average faculty salary at Lakeland Community College and Cuyahoga Community College—which is higher than ours—is that the faculty at those institutions have organized themselves into collective bargaining units that negotiate a legally binding contract with the administrations of those colleges. Sinclair's Faculty Issues Team (FIT) engages in discussions with the administration that produce an agreement, which is neither formally negotiated nor legally binding. The integrity and efficacy of that process are addressed in the winter issue (Issue 3, January 2010) of the *Sinclair AAUP News*.

In truth and reality, it's not about the money! None of us became professional educators with the expectation of making a lot of money. Similarly, the reason for being of SCCAAUP is not faculty salary but faculty agency, that is, not only the power to speak for ourselves, but also the ability to organize ourselves as a collective bargaining agent empowered to negotiate as an equal partner with the administration to create a contract to which both parties are legally bound. Such bargaining would cover a range of issues and be done in good faith using honest, accurate information derived from valid, reliable research and facilitated by intelligent, competent analysis. There would be no place for the legerdemain of the numbers game.

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Ms. Janet C. Jones
Director of Human Resources
Sinclair Community College

Dear Janet,

Our letter today comes in response to your missive of April 12. We believe the intent of your correspondence with the faculty was to be informative, but we fear the effect may have been less beneficial due to certain unfortunate assertions and inferences.

For example, the AAUP is not targeting Sinclair faculty for membership in a unionized collective bargaining unit. Sinclair faculty members who are members of the Sinclair chapter of AAUP are contacting their colleagues as part of a campaign to ascertain their interest in organizing themselves into a professional association for the purpose of improving the terms and conditions of their employment through collective bargaining with the administration of the college.

The card campaign is a methodology for achieving the faculty unity and solidarity necessary for us to become legally recognized and empowered not merely to speak for ourselves but also to negotiate legally binding contracts between ourselves and the administration.

It is important for faculty to understand that signing the card distributed to them by SCCAAUP is simply an expression of their desire to have an effective voice and play a decisive role in decision-making regarding the terms and conditions of their employment. Signing the card is their expression of their decision to create, not merely accept, their contract with the college.

Contrary to an assertion made in your letter, failure to sign the card is not an indication that faculty are not ready to have a union speak for them; failure to sign a card merely indicates that faculty are not ready to speak for themselves through a mechanism that ensures, indeed requires, that they are taken seriously. Unfortunately, this lack of readiness may result from misinformation and misunderstanding created by incorrect information or inadequate communication.

Consequently, it is incumbent upon all of us who respect the intelligence and trust the judgment of the faculty to make the case for shared governance and academic freedom, local autonomy and organizational democracy, to the faculty and then allow the faculty to exercise their wisdom and their will in this regard. The SCCAAUP card campaign is not a conspiracy against the administration or a fraud being perpetrated upon the faculty. It is an opportunity for the administration and an invitation to the faculty to collaborate in changing the culture of the college by transforming their relationship to each other.

No one disputes the desirability of respect, integrity, and open/honest communication among the faculty, administration, and board of trustees at Sinclair Community College. No one disputes the desirability of equity and quality, efficiency and productivity, diversity and security, at Sinclair Community College. No one disputes the desirability of a legally binding contract between the faculty and the administration at Sinclair Community College. It is simply the position of SCCAAUP that collective bargaining is the most efficient and effective method to achieve these objectives.

Experience has taught us that the faculty and administration must collaborate as equal partners in addressing these concerns, which means that faculty must acquire the power to speak effectively and act decisively on their own behalf and not merely recommend and then acquiesce to the administration, which has been the case in the past.

SCCAAUP believes that collective bargaining will codify the covenant relationship that should exist between the faculty and the administration just as our professional association will celebrate the compact that exists among faculty members who are members of the community of educators represented by Sinclair Community College.

Sincerely,

SCCAAUP