

AAUP Report

American Association of University Professors
Bloomington Chapter

Spring 2001

IU-Bloomington: Quality and Community Why Are We Worried? What Should We Do?

The year now ending has been marked by concern about the direction in which the Bloomington campus is headed and the significance of the near-total administrative transition that is underway. To give voice to faculty views on these matters, the Bloomington AAUP devoted its Spring Forum, held on January 30, to consideration of these issues. Three colleagues initiated the discussion: Vic Viola (Chemistry and Physics), Jeff Wasserstrom (History), and Don Gray (English). About 100 others joined the forum in the Law School Moot Court Room.

The initial themes addressed by speakers included Bloomington's disappointing position in this year's national rankings, growing divisions on campus, both generational and disciplinary, and the effects on campus community of basic trends concerning hiring, tenure, and faculty participation on the campus level.

Vic Viola focused on the issue of rankings, and highlighted the gaps between our reputation, which remains very strong, and persistent and growing problems that threaten to diminish that reputation in the future. Among the problems Vic pointed to were, in the research area, sharply declining federal grant funds, relative to inflation, and a substantial net loss in prominent senior faculty; in the teaching area, Vic pointed to high numbers of large classes and a student body SAT profile about 100 points lower than top-ten ranked public institutions, which would make this campus seem far less attractive to outstanding potential applicants and their parents. More generally, Vic noted that while state dollars to IU, adjusted for inflation have not been declining, central administration assessments on units to cover administrative and non-instructional service costs have increased to the point where units are in deficit before the first student enrolls. Vic also pointed to Bloomington's unfavorable salary scale for junior colleagues, relative to Big Ten institutions, and contrasted this, and the low salary increments of

recent years, with unusually high increments for upper level administrators this past year.

Comments during and after Vic's presentation noted that Bloomington's disappointing ranking in some key areas may be a product of its unique profile as a campus with great strength in arts and humanities, but without medical or engineering schools, units which typically have large positive impacts on research funding and salaries. Other points included the argument that central administration assessments on units include substantial funds for tuition discounts designed to attract out-of-state students, ultimately increasing unit tuition revenues. High out-of-state enrollments may be a significant indicator that Bloomington's national reputation continues to be a strong draw for potential applicants and their families. On issues of salary and faculty raiding, it was noted that part of the reason for low salary increments is aggressive retention offers to prevent the loss of outstanding colleagues.

Jeff Wasserstrom, who came to Bloomington in 1991, noted that since he has been here there has not been a single year where average salary increments were significantly in excess of inflation; a "merit increase," even for very productive faculty, has come to mean little more than breaking even. Moving up in salary has become tied to outside offers and negotiated retention, at the cost of salary funds available for colleagues who do not seek or receive outside offers. This pattern reinforces a growing tendency in academics towards individualistic professionalism and free agent attitudes, which undermines loyalty to the institution and campus community, even for those who are persuaded to remain, and creates sharp divisions among faculty. Another area of division, increasingly important in Bloomington, is the division between the pre-1989 "18/20 generation" and those who arrived on campus too late to partici-

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pate in the legacy of Herman B Wells's policy of unusual generosity. To the degree that the security provided by 18/20 reinforced a strong existing sense of campus community, that sense of community is weaker for an increasing sector of the faculty. Jeff went on to point to other sources of campus division, such as the tendency of RCM to create or widen divisions between units. Now that the living symbol of Herman Wells is not present on campus, it will be much harder to encourage junior colleagues, who are "professionalized" in their disciplines at increasingly early stages of their graduate careers, to see the rewards of collegial participation on the campus level.

Don Gray came to Bloomington in 1956. He contrasted the campus now with its features in the heart of the Wells era, when faculty shared cramped offices with no amenities, taught four classes a term to students passing minimal admissions standards, and earned truly meager salaries. Despite these factors, the campus was entering an era of enormous growth in student numbers and federal funding, and faculty were optimistic and devoted to the community. Plenary faculty meetings on campus issues were not uncommon; they were well attended and intellectually substantive. Don pointed to some specific decisions – not necessarily unwise – that are part of the background of the weaker sense of community today, such as the decision to halve teaching loads and so double class size. Most central has been the change in tenure standards. Where standards were once flexible, there is now less of a sense that there are many ways to contribute to a campus like Bloomington. The extreme difficulty of earning tenure leads us to protect our junior colleagues by keeping them isolated from full campus participation, a type of prolongation of graduate school. After ten or twelve years of taking care of themselves, how reasonable is it to expect colleagues to be ready and anxious to join a conversation about the campus? These processes have contributed to a faculty "back on our heels," overmastered by the complexity of the challenges that face us in guiding the direction of the campus. In restoring a campus space for faculty interaction and discussion, Don stressed the important role of the AAUP, as the only campuswide professional organization, and one that keeps in view that fact that academics do many things, and are not simply researchers or teachers, or unintegrated composites.

The long and active discussion that followed responded to the ideas of the speakers and also introduced new issues. A number of colleagues questioned the current effectiveness of faculty governance, both the Bloomington Faculty Council and BFC committees. Others pointed out that if

governance is weak, we are responsible for that situation; the administration in Bloomington has a strong record of responsiveness to faculty governance policies and decisions. A number of comments focused on the need to create more forums for campuswide debate among faculty and between faculty and administrators, whether through a strengthened faculty senate, or through faculty meetings on key issues. The fact that decisive initiatives, such as the establishment of Informatics, have passed without such campuswide debate, indicates that we have allowed campus divisions and increasing pressures of research and teaching to loosen our engagement in the campus community for which we are responsible. Without a conscious effort to guide junior colleagues to do a better job of rebuilding campus community than we have so far done, we are unlikely to reverse these trends and prevent the complex issues we face from overmastering us.

Bob Eno, EALC

Academic Freedom Isn't Free Join the AAUP!

Our chapter's recent membership drive has increased our numbers and strengthened our ability to influence events, but to fulfill our commitment to academic freedom and faculty governance, we need more colleagues to join us.

For membership forms and information on payroll deduction plans, please clip this form and let us know of your interest. Thanks!

Name _____

Campus Address _____

Please send this form to chapter treasurer Julie Bobay, Library E002, or just send Julie an email message at: bobay@indiana.edu.

Report on Committee A

Providing advice and support to faculty with grievances that raise issues of academic freedom and due process is one of AAUP-IUB's most important functions. Committee A, the Committee on Academic Freedom, is the organ of the chapter Executive Committee responsible for this task.

This has been a busy year for our Committee A; the number of colleagues asking for assistance this year prompted us to add a third member to the committee. The increase in faculty coming to Committee A for assistance may be both a cause and an effect of our chapter's increased membership and visibility. Our general approach has been to help colleagues explore options for formal or informal mediation as a first path, and help guide them through the often complex and stressful procedures of appeal, in the event that administrative action makes that necessary.

In acting as advocates in appeal contexts, Committee A protects structures essential to academic freedom by monitoring full implementation of due process for faculty. Due process procedures are important for fairness, and also for requiring administrators to account for their actions. Our consistent monitoring of due process ensures that administrators and departments will be less likely to take action against faculty on pretext of misconduct where the motivation may really be the faculty member's expression of views protected by academic freedom. Committee A's regular role in these matters establishes a safeguard that benefits all members of the university.

Among the interesting and important issues that have arisen in this year's cases are appropriate processes for handling misconduct charges that arise in the context of promotion and tenure cases and the process due to faculty in salary grievances. The chapter leadership is interested in pursuing these sorts of matters beyond the specific cases, to determine whether these experiences may allow us to help develop better procedures or find ways to implement existing procedures that better protect academic freedom. Our role in an Associate Instructor's grievance last year has led, through the efforts of colleagues in faculty governance, to proposals currently before the BFC for improved standards for managing AI employment and grievances.

In general, for better and worse, we observe that, while the new Bloomington faculty misconduct procedures have yet to be formally

invoked, they are in mind and influencing behavior of faculty and departments as they manage the grievances they have against each other.

Ed Greenebaum, Law

Revised Policy Governing Academic Appointments

The University Faculty Council has approved revisions in the policy governing academic appointments, with particular attention to the structure of non-tenure-track faculty appointments. The policy statement has been strongly recommended to the Trustees by President Brand, and approved by the University Policies Committee. It is expected that the Trustees will act on the policy at their May meeting.

This is the culmination of five to six years of work in the faculty affairs committees of the various faculty councils. Bill Burgan led the efforts in the early years and Ed Greenebaum has been instrumental in developing the current policy statement. We are very fortunate to have colleagues such as these.

The main focus of the work has been to create a home within the faculty classifications for those whose activities are focused on teaching and service. This is done by creating a classification and developing regulations for appointees in a lecturer category, who would have access to long-term contracts following a probationary period. The policy also extends academic freedom protection to lecturers.

The policy requires faculty in each school to specify the minimum percentage of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty allowable on an FTE basis. This is a substitute for the "cap" feature of the current clinical appointee policy. Irrespective of this specification, in units where clinical and/or lecturer appointees participate in faculty governance, the tenure-track faculty must retain at least 60% of the voting weight.

In many ways, the clinical and lecturer classifications are parallel, both focused on instructional and service activities. Given this, it is expected that units will make appropriate choices when filling non-tenure-track faculty lines, reserving clinical appointments for those cases where work is "primarily in the clinical setting". At present it seems that a number of the clinical appointments on the Bloomington campus are questionable from this point of view.

A final version of the policy should soon be posted on the University Faculty Council website, at <http://www.indiana.edu/~ufc>.

Ted Miller, SPEA

AAUP Systemwide

Members of AAUP chapters from five IU campuses convened at the April meeting of the Indiana AAUP State Conference. Representatives from IUPUI, Bloomington, IU-East, IU-Northwest, and IU-South Bend shared views on a number of issues that have impact on membership across IU campuses. The principal items concerned the still incomplete process of revising campus provisions for faculty misconduct or post-tenure review and the draft IU strategic plan for distributed education.

Post-tenure review issues remain unresolved on many campuses. Currently, only Bloomington and IUPUI have adopted procedures that have been approved by the Board of Trustees, and discussion focused on campus specific issues that have delayed this process elsewhere.

The impact of distributed education will affect all our campuses, with profound implications for matters of workload, compensation, intellectual property rights, all with impact on our academic mission and issues of academic freedom. As the new Office of Distributed Education's planning document approaches Trustee consideration, faculty on all campuses need to intensify their scrutiny of DE decisions and decision making.

The Executive Committee wants to hear from both chapter members and non-members about matters that you think should be on the AAUP agenda.

Executive Committee Members, 2000-1

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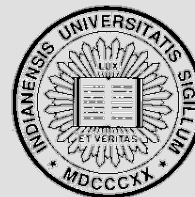
Visit our web page: www.indiana.edu/~aaup

Standards of academic freedom and tenure built up by the AAUP over 80 years represent a body of persuasive professional opinion with high levels of organizational endorsement. The AAUP also seeks to strengthen faculty governance, provide fair procedures for resolving grievances, promote the economic well being of the faculty, and advance the interests of higher education.

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