



Dear New Faculty Member,

On behalf of the Francis Marion University chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP-FM) I bid you greetings and welcome to our academic community. It is a pleasure to include you among our colleagues, and we look forward to the important work we will accomplish this year as we fulfill FMU's mission "to provide students with an excellent education, stimulate inquiry and research, and serve the Pee Dee region and the state of South Carolina."

We have a strong and active chapter presently at 40 members, and our goal this year is to increase faculty awareness of and participation in shared governance through a series of activities and meetings. These include:

Sept. 10	New Faculty Introduction Seminar
Sept. 11	AAUP-SC Fall State Conference at FMU
Oct. 7	AAUP-FM Fall Chapter Meeting
Oct. 26	AAUP-FM Fall Forum
Feb. 22	AAUP-FM Spring Chapter Meeting
Mar. 31	AAUP-FM Spring Forum

Our chapter will also meet with the School of Health Sciences each semester to discuss and create a professional development approach on how AAUP membership and involvement can enhance faculty development from new hiring, to tenure and promotion, to full professor status and beyond. A key in this approach will focus on balancing and integrating disciplinary imperatives with the larger university mission. In support of these AAUP-FM chapter priorities, let me offer some brief thoughts on the importance of the AAUP to our profession.

The AAUP is the most important organization most faculty have never heard of. If you like your profession, you should thank the AAUP. If you think the university system needs to be fairer and put education at the center of its mission, then you should join the AAUP.

Here are some of the AAUP's accomplishments:

- **Inventing and expanding the idea of academic freedom**
Before the AAUP's work began, 100 years ago, even full professors at research universities could be fired for publishing, speaking out, or teaching on then-controversial subjects such as child labor, the gold standard, or evolution. Of course, academic freedom is a meaningless ideal without meaningful actions and policies to back it up.
- **Developing the idea and practice of tenure**
Tenure is not just a reward for past behavior, it is the basis for ensuring that faculty can exercise academic freedom and professional judgment in all aspects of their professional life. The AAUP developed the policies that explain why decisions over whether individual faculty members should be hired, promoted, tenured, and/or

disciplined are a faculty responsibility. The extent to which colleges and universities follow AAUP policies determines the extent to which faculty enjoy academic **due process**.

- **Creating a system of meaningful shared governance.**
AAUP policies specify that faculty should exercise primary responsibility over areas of faculty expertise and interest (such as curriculum). Faculty should also have meaningful input over areas such as the budgetary decisions that affect education, such as setting institutional priorities.

Founded over a century ago, the AAUP has made the lives of full-time professors a reasonably secure profession. AAUP policies can justifiably be referred to as the “common law” of higher education. However, an increasing number, the majority of faculty members, do not enjoy job security, a living wage, due process, or shared governance. That is not by design of the AAUP, it is something we abhor, and we have policies that would sharply limit abuses. The AAUP believes that faculty at all levels should be evaluated fairly, and be provided with opportunities for job security. This includes, but does not mandate, some form of continued employment for faculty members who have been evaluated over seven years. The goal is to reduce arbitrary decisions about employment and to give contingent faculty a greater measure of academic freedom.

The AAUP has begun its second century of work. It has many important accomplishments, but there is much remaining to be done. In 1970, 70% of academic positions were tenure track; today it is approximately 30%. In 1970, about a third of faculty were members of the AAUP; today, most have never heard of the organization.

My AAUP colleagues and I ask you to join so that, with your help, we can better fulfill FMU’s mission, and that and we can strengthen academic freedom and shared governance at campuses across the state of South Carolina.

Sincerely yours,



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