

David Sanders, Purdue University

As a persistent advocate for academic freedom, shared governance, and collective bargaining for decades, I wish to serve Region 3 as AAUP National Council member. As Chair of the Purdue University Senate (2016-2017) and both before and after then, as Chair of the Senate Steering Committee (elected 3 times) and Student Affairs Committees (elected 3 times), I worked on protecting faculty and staff benefits and simultaneously strove to preserve tenure and to support nontenure track instructors. I insisted on the primacy of the faculty in determination of the curriculum and academic organization and defended the regional campuses when they were being restructured. I led the resistance to the takeover of Kaplan University by Purdue University and was successful in eliminating many of the most pernicious components that were carried over (forced nondisclosure agreements for faculty, binding arbitration upon students, and immediate notification of the administration of any contact by the media). When there was campus activism to address racial disparities, I actively supported the students with the powers at my disposal. When the state was attempting to restrict LGBT benefit rights, I organized the University Senate to insist that implementation of these policies was inconsistent with Purdue values. I was also the most vocal critic of the recent appointments of the Presidents of Purdue University, which, in violation of the principles of shared governance, were made with no faculty input.

It has always been my contention that expenditures for public higher education are an investment in the future rather than merely a cost. Affordable high-quality education and not solely a credentialing experience should be the goal for our colleges and universities for which we strive, and the faculty are best positioned to make the decisions that render this possible. It is worth noting, that despite being a scientist and being employed at a STEM-dominant university, I have always been a champion for the prerogatives of my liberal-arts colleagues.

Elected as AAUP National Council member At-Large (2018-2022), I was an active participant in the decision to affiliate with the American Federation of Teachers. Although the challenges that we have faced at Purdue University have informed my understanding of the issues that we face, I have always been a proponent of joint efforts to support colleagues at other institutions when they are presented with assaults upon academic freedom and shared governance.

Member of AAUP Grievance Committee since 2021.

As one of the leaders of the AAUP-organized efforts to defeat Indiana SB-202, I recognized its threat early and worked with faculty across the state to oppose the

imposition of partisan-inspired “intellectual diversity” mandates on our state universities that simultaneously impeded academic freedom and began the erosion of tenure.

With extensive legislative (University Senate, AAUP National Council, government) experience, people often consult me when they want something accomplished through parliamentary processes. I would appreciate your support in allowing me to bring my skills and drive to serve you as your District 3 representative to the AAUP National Council.

Biography

David Sanders is an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at Purdue University. He received his B.S. from Yale College in Molecular Biophysics/Biochemistry. He conducted his Ph.D. research in Biochemistry with Dr. Daniel E. Koshland, Jr. at the University of California-Berkeley. His thesis concerned his discovery of a biochemical reaction that underlies how bacteria sense and respond to changes in their environments. As Visiting Scientist at the University of California-San Francisco, he studied signal-transducing GTPases. He began his studies of the entry of viruses into cells, focusing on the inhibition of infection and applications to gene therapy, as a postdoctoral researcher at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research (affiliated with M.I.T.). Dr. Sanders joined the Markey Center for Structural Biology (Purdue) in 1995. He was the discoverer of a biochemical reaction that leads to the entry of cancer-causing retroviruses into cells and is author of two U.S. patents on novel gene-therapy delivery techniques. His Ebola virus research led to participation in the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Biological Weapons Proliferation Prevention Program. His responsibilities included inspecting the Vector laboratory in Siberia, the site of biological-weapons development in the Soviet era. He is a recipient of the National Science Foundation CAREER Award, the Lions Club Cancer Research Award, an American Cancer Society Research Scholar, the Haines Lecturer in Biochemistry (Wabash College) the Moses Passer Lecturer (Cornell University) and the 75th Anniversary of Los Alamos National Laboratory Lecturer on Scientific Integrity. He was also a principal investigator on a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Experiment Grant for the reform of the undergraduate premedical curriculum. Dr. Sanders served on the Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology (FASEB) Science Policy Committee. He has been the yearly organizer of the Professor Miriam Hasson Memorial Lecture named for his first wife, who died from a brain tumor.