

Candidate Statement

I'm Nikolas Bowie, and I'm running for reelection to the AAUP Council to represent Region 5 (New England). I joined the Council only recently to fill a vacancy, but the urgency of this moment is why I'm asking for a full term. Higher education is being targeted by coordinated political attacks, and many of our institutions are still governed by systems that insulate decisionmakers from democratic accountability.

Since joining the Council, I've helped set the direction for AAUP's newly created political committee. Our goal is to engage the 2026 midterms by supporting member-led candidate vetting and endorsements and then converting those endorsements into governing relationships strong enough to win policy in 2027, especially in state legislatures.

I am committed to building collective power for higher education workers and to insisting on democracy in our universities and in our public life. We need this democratic power to defend academic freedom, protect research and teaching from outside attack, and win durable improvements in working conditions for faculty, academic professionals, staff, postdocs, and graduate workers.

I also want to focus our energy where it can be most effective: coordinated, state-level legislative campaigns that no single chapter can do alone. I believe AAUP should build a legislative program in New England and beyond with clear, winnable goals, including protections against discipline or termination for the exercise of academic freedom; robust collective bargaining rights for higher education workers, including graduate employees; and protections for science and medical research funding.

I also believe AAUP should revitalize state conferences in New England and elsewhere as the durable infrastructure for chapters to share strategy, model bills, organizing tactics, and political relationships, and to sustain campaigns beyond a single crisis or election cycle. Finally, I plan to help strengthen AAUP's role in the broader labor movement, because attacks on academic freedom and attacks on workers' rights are part of the same project, and they require the same kind of cross-campus, cross-sector solidarity to defeat.

This moment requires us to organize and demonstrate what shared governance truly means. I'd be honored to earn your vote.

Candidate Biography

Nikolas Bowie is the Louis D. Brandeis Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. A legal historian, he teaches and writes about democracy and constitutional law at the federal, state, and local level.

Bowie is a co-founder and executive committee member of the AAUP–Harvard Faculty Chapter. Since starting in 2024, the chapter has grown rapidly while taking on national work defending academic freedom and the independence of university teaching and research. Working alongside the national AAUP, the chapter prevailed at the trial level in two federal lawsuits

against the Trump administration to restore funding to Harvard and to block the administration's ideological deportation policy.

Bowie has served on the AAUP Council as the elected representative for Region 5 since October 2025. In that role, he has worked to help shape the direction of the AAUP's political work ahead of the 2026 elections so faculty and academic workers can win policy and not just resist attacks.

Bowie's scholarship has appeared in leading journals, and he is the coauthor (with Daphna Renan) of *Supremacy: How Rule by the Court Replaced Government by the People* (W. W. Norton, 2026). He is also active in civic and civil rights work in the Boston area.