

AAUP Nominee Biographical Information and Candidate Statement

Dr. Gretchen McNamara
Wright State University
Senior Lecturer of Music

Biographical Information

Dr. Gretchen McNamara is a Senior Lecturer of Trombone at Wright State University, a position she has held since 2007. She began her higher education activism when Non-Tenure Eligible Faculty unionized on her campus in 2012. Since then, she has held positions with-in her campus chapter and currently serves as the Chief Negotiator in contract negotiations between the faculty union, AAUP-WSU, and Wright State University's administration. She was recently elected to her third term as President of the Ohio Conference of OCAAUP and is completing her first term as a Council Member representing Region 3 of the American Association of University Professors. Dr. McNamara's primary union activism mentors are Rudy Fichtebaum, Paul Davis, and Jim Vance. In addition to her responsibilities with the trombone studio at Wright State University, she also teaches Instrumental Music Education and supervises Field Placements. Dr. McNamara has presented numerous artist-educator clinics locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally focusing on her pedagogical interests which include efficiency of movement and sound production as well as mental focus of attention. She has also served as the guest director and, or adjudicator for numerous honor bands and festivals. Alongside her position as an artist-educator at Wright State University, A native of Seattle, Washington Dr. McNamara has earned a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, a Master of Music degree from Kent State University, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Washington. Before beginning the DMA, Dr. McNamara was the director of bands at Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts in Baltimore, Maryland.

Candidate Statement

I've had the honor of serving members of the AAUP in various capacities for fourteen years. My involvement with AAUP began, as most do, in a local crisis. Ohio mandated all public universities on quarters convert to semesters and at the time, only Tenured and Tenure Eligible Faculty were unionized. They were charged with developing a cost-neutral and workload-neutral system for TET faculty, and the Non-Tenure Eligible rank was being given the leftovers. It was time to act. I worked as part of the organizing campaign that followed, helped unionize my colleagues, merged our two units together into one, and helped negotiate NTE workload campus wide and in my own program. Since then, not only has my campus survived a near death sentence of a financial crisis, but in 2019 our members were pushed to, and participated in, one of the longest higher education strikes on record. The fight continued.

I've held positions in local leadership that have evolved over time, giving me the opportunity to learn and grow as a leader. I am currently AAUP-WSU's Chief Negotiator and leading negotiations for the second time, though under the extreme conditions of Senate Bill 1 which my university is taking great advantage of, with extreme proposals that massively overreach the law. I'm prepared for the fight that continues.

In 2022 I was elected to the office of President of the Ohio Conference of AAUP and will soon start my third term. During this time Ohio has seen massive attacks on higher education and we have fought back aggressively. We were successful for two years fighting Senate Bill 83, until the 2024 elections, after which we were doomed. Senate Bill 1, the Advance (*Destroy*) Ohio Higher Education Act became the legislation's top priority in the new year. We are now seeing tenure, academic freedom, and shared governance erode in our state. It's heart breaking. I'm prepared for the fight that continues.

While leading in Ohio, I also had the distinct opportunity to serve on the National Council of the AAUP. I came to this position by nomination and approval of the Council, rather than election, as I filled a vacant position after the devastating passing of my colleague John McNay. It is with confidence I can say that I have contributed positively to the council for three and a half years. As a state conference president and a local negotiator, I bring leadership, experience, and a unique perspective to the Council. It is with commitment, that I am running to be elected for Region 3 Representative of the AAUP. I have watched the working conditions in my state and others deteriorate and recognize that the fight is a political one. The time to stand up, organize, grow power, and fight back continues. As a Representative on the Council, in conjunction with the collective vision of AAUP elected leaders, I vow to continue the fight, for my state, for the region, and for the survival of higher education.