

## **Candidate Statement: Dr. Leonard Bright for AAUP District 2**

I am honored to stand as a candidate for AAUP District 2. As a professor and chapter president at Texas A&M University, I have seen firsthand how the core principles of academic freedom, shared governance, and faculty voice are being tested in unprecedented ways. This moment calls not only for vigilance, but for leadership that is organized, strategic, and unafraid to act.

Over the past several years, I have worked to strengthen our chapter's presence by building coalitions with faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community leaders. Together, we have elevated critical issues affecting higher education—defending academic freedom, responding to political interference, and supporting faculty facing retaliation. This work has reinforced my belief that effective advocacy requires both principled clarity and collective action.

If elected to represent District 2, I will focus on three priorities:

### **1. Defending Academic Freedom and Faculty Rights**

Across our region, legislative and institutional pressures are reshaping what can be taught, researched, and said in the classroom. I will work to ensure AAUP remains a strong, visible advocate for faculty rights and provides meaningful support to those under threat.

### **2. Strengthening Chapters and Building Capacity**

Our strength lies in our local chapters. I will prioritize outreach, mentorship, and resource-sharing to help chapters grow, organize effectively, and respond quickly to emerging challenges.

### **3. Advancing Strategic Advocacy and Public Engagement**

We must engage beyond our campuses—educating the public, working with policymakers, and building alliances that reinforce the value of higher education in a democratic society. I will bring an active, forward-looking approach to this work.

This is a pivotal time for higher education. The decisions we make now will shape the future of our profession and the institutions we serve. I am committed to ensuring that AAUP District 2 is not only responsive to these challenges, but positioned to lead.

I would be honored to earn your support.

## **Dr. Leonard Bright Biography**

Dr. Leonard Bright is a professor, author, and higher education leader committed to strengthening public education and preparing future public servants to lead with integrity

and purpose. With more than 22 years of experience in higher education — including over 15 years at Texas A&M University — he has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in public service, ethics, and leadership development.

Dr. Bright serves as President of the Texas A&M chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), where he works to promote academic freedom, shared governance, and constructive dialogue across the university community. His leadership focuses on ensuring that institutions of higher education remain places where knowledge can be pursued openly, diverse perspectives can be discussed respectfully, and students are equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world.

As a public speaker, Dr. Bright engages audiences on topics including public service, educational leadership, ethics, and the role of universities in democratic society. He believes strongly that public education is a public trust that benefits communities, strengthens civic life, and expands opportunity.

Dr. Bright has been married to his wife, Christina Bright, for over 30 years. They are guided by a deep commitment to service, faith, integrity, and helping others discover their capacity to make a meaningful difference.