

Laura Bray
Delegate Candidate, AFT Local 6741

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

My name is Laura Bray, and I am a candidate for the position of Delegate in the AAUP Advocacy Local 6741 of AFT. I have decided to run because now is a critical time to grow and strengthen the labor movement within higher education, especially in the South.

I am running as part of the [United Faculty for the Common Good \(UFCG\)](#) slate because we share a conviction that higher education is under assault and we need to organize and fight back. The crisis of higher education is decades in the making and won't be fixed with a business-as-usual approach. Issuing declarations and reports alone will not stop the attacks on academic freedom from politicians, unelected boards of trustees, and wealthy donors, nor will it secure the increased funding for higher education that we desperately need to reverse the adjunctification of the professoriate and stop burdening students with spiraling levels of debt.

We believe that the only way to create the system of higher education that we need is through a commitment to building labor power and solidarity, uniting faculty of all ranks and building coalitions with our other campus (non-faculty) colleagues, and expanding political power through coalitions with allied student, climate, and social justice organizations at the local and national levels, among others. We take inspiration from other grassroots and rank-in-file labor organizations—foremost [Higher Education Labor United \(HELU\)](#), but also those in K-12 education and other sectors, such as [Caucus of Rank-in-File Educators \(CORE\)](#), [Unite All Workers for Democracy \(UAWD\)](#), and [Teamsters for a Democratic Union \(TDU\)](#)—that are focused on transforming their unions, local and national communities, and the broader political landscape through organizing and direct political action.

Members of the UFCG slate believe in the radical idea that higher education should serve the common good. It must be an incubator of critical inquiry, unapologetic dissent, and rigorous research free from political, donor, or corporate interference. Higher education should be a building block of a healthy democracy and an economy that works for all. It must be an engine for social mobility, challenging forms of systemic oppression based on race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, age, (dis)ability, immigration status, or colonialism. And all who work in higher education must be paid fairly and enjoy job security.

I am asking for your support for my candidacy and those of my fellow UFCG slate members because we believe a better university is possible and worth fighting for. Join us and help us build higher education for the common good. For more on our slate and its principles, please visit: <http://www.unitedfacultyforthecommongood.org>.

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I am a sociologist and research scientist at the University of Oklahoma's (OU) Center for Applied Social Research, where I've worked since receiving my PhD from North Carolina State University in 2021. I've been active in higher ed labor organizing for the past four years, beginning as a rank-and-file member of UE150, the NC State Graduate Workers Union. As graduate workers, we organized alongside other campus workers for greater workplace safety as part of the statewide [Safe Jobs Save Lives](#) campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also helped lead the [Another UNC is Possible](#) campaign, a partnership between UE150 and AAUP chapters in the UNC System advocating for a justice centered pandemic response and reversal of the state's disinvestment in higher education.

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Shortly after joining [OU AAUP](#) in 2021, I became treasurer and member of the executive committee. Our primary focus in recent years has been [fighting legislative attacks](#) on academic freedom and democratic governance, including Oklahoma's classroom censorship and anti-CRT law (HB1775) and the recent executive order restricting campus DEI activities (EO 2023-31).

Beyond the university, I volunteer with the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) as a researcher on their [Younger Worker Listening Project](#), focused on supporting young workers organizing at the intersection of labor and climate. I also recently became a volunteer organizer with the [Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee](#) (EWOC), a national organization that provides training and support for nonunionized workers organizing their workplace. With other grassroots organizers and rank-and-file union members, I'm in the process of forming a [local EWOC](#) to build a stronger labor movement in Oklahoma.