

My name is **Heather Ferguson**, and I am a candidate for the position of **Executive Committee Member** in the AAUP Advocacy Local 6741 of AFT.

I am running as part of the [United Faculty for the Common Good \(UFCG\)](#) slate. We share the conviction that higher education is under attack 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, politically-appointed boards of trustees, and wealthy donors. A business as usual approach will not secure the increased funding we need to reverse the adjunctification of the professoriate and stop burdening students with spiraling 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, 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 landscape of higher education is possible and worth fighting for. I am also asking for your support for this UFCG slate as I believe that Local 6741 should be represented by leaders of advocacy chapters who have organized their communities and built alliances in often difficult institutional landscapes. We collectively embody a range of geographic and institutional contexts and have worked against external donor influence, the marketization of higher ed and resulting adjunctification of teaching, and the privatization of administrative searches that close out the core work of education as a public good. As a part of the UFCG slate, I want to support advocacy chapter organizing, to amplify our core principles of academic freedom, and to build alliances across our chapters.

Join us and help us build higher education for the common good. For more on our slate, visit: <http://www.unitedfacultyforthecommongood.org>.

Bio:

Heather Ferguson is Associate Professor of History at Claremont McKenna College. She helped found the Claremont Consortium AAUP Chapter in the Summer of 2020 and has served in that chapter as Executive Committee member and President and currently serves as the Vice President of the chapter. The unique features of a 7-institution chapter demand persistent efforts to organize across difference and to build consensus to unify our efforts to defend and protect. Within the chapter, Ferguson participated in campaigns to support student and dining hall staff unions, helped advise as our consortial library staff unionized, worked to reinstate benefits stripped during the pandemic, and helped spearhead a working group specifically focused on supporting contingent faculty even as we fight the escalating adjunctification of the curriculum.

In addition to campus and consortial organizing efforts, Ferguson is the Faculty Co-Director of Claremont McKenna's Open Academy Initiative, which aims to ensure constructive dialogue across difference. She lives in Upland, California with her partner, her father, one lap cat and one demon cat, and four rowdy chickens.