INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIZING

THE **WHAT** AND **WHY** OF BUILDING FACULTY POWER AT ADVOCACY CHAPTERS
Advocacy Chapter Context and Challenges
What Organizing Is (and Isn’t)
Collective Faculty Power
From Reacting to Planning
Advocacy Chapter Successes
ADVOCACY CHAPTERS

COMMON DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES
CYCLE OF REACTION

• Most ACs **swing into action** in response to a **crisis**
• A few **dedicated activists** push for chapter and action
• After crisis, chapter left with task of **self-perpetuating**
• Original core **burn out** and leave, chapter dissolves

**Result:** Short lived, unsustainable, and ultimately ineffective chapters
LEGAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- Minimal labor law protections for “concerted action”
- State law might prevent full unionization
- Hostile political climate

If you can’t BE a union, you can still ACT like a union
### THREE MAIN VARIETIES OF ADVOCACY CHAPTER

#### Watchdog
- Small group of engaged faculty
- Keeps other faculty informed of issues
- Hope/trust that information is enough

#### Faculty Voice
- Informs, but also mobilizes/convenes faculty
- Creates independent process for faculty discussions
- Chapter educates and advises faculty on issue, who then return to the formal channel armed with alternative option

#### Organizing Chapter
- Informs and arms faculty, but also organizes
- Plans and executes “issue campaigns” to push for changes outside of formal structures
- Goal is to build critical mass of faculty power to change status quo

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**Chapter Power**
ORGANIZING CHAPTER STRENGTHS

• **Organizing chapters** still rely on core leaders, but always focuses on expanding that core

• Organizing chapters are the ones who “get the most done” and **affect lasting change** to the status quo

• Goal of this webinar series is to **help you move toward** the Organizing Chapter model
SELF-EVALUATION EXERCISE

WHAT KIND OF CHAPTER ARE YOU?
ORGANIZING

WHAT IT IS (AND ISN’T)
Organizing is building relationships between similarly situated people and converting those relationships into collective power through strategic direct action in order to affect the change they desire.
## WHAT ORGANIZING ISN’T

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Mobilizing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agents of Change</strong></td>
<td>Chapter leadership, staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff, lawyers, elected leaders</td>
<td>Symbolic actions, backroom deals, message-centric, supporters-only</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theory of Power</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal strategies, established formal channels</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Member Role</strong></td>
<td>Props for organization, called upon only when deemed necessary by leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal, if at all; Transactional</td>
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## WHAT ORGANIZING IS!

### Organizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents of Change</th>
<th>Members themselves, winning the victory is equally important as building the chapter; staff relegated to support role</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Power</td>
<td>Collective and majority direct action; confrontational with decision makers; mobilizing members is a TACTIC, not the whole strategy; Expand base of supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Role</td>
<td>Central, members involved in all stages of the campaign from planning to victory; power derived from numbers, not (only) expertise or access</td>
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INDEPENDENT FACULTY POWER

WHY DO WE NEED IT?
WHAT ABOUT SENATES?

• Faculty senates and other internal mechanisms for shared governance are **important pieces of the faculty voice**, but they are **not independent faculty bodies** and their scope is limited.

• Senates are **not often prepared** to challenge the status quo.

• Senates are **not always focused** on representing a broad base of faculty.
INDEPENDENT FACULTY ORGANIZATION

• Fully independent from administration and formal channels
• Collective and deliberative decision-making, rather than individualist lobbying
• Majority power, not voting blocs
• Senate is one possible mechanism for change, made more effect by AAUP chapter organizing
The only way we can make change happen is to build an organization that is **large enough** and **cohesive enough** to **compel a decision maker to do what we want**. This means centering **power building** outside of established structures.
ORGANIZING WITH FACULTY

COMMON CHALLENGES (AND THE SOLUTION . . . )
## Academic vs. Organizing Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Organizing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>Progress only emerges through direct confrontation with decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality and civility norms frown on open and forceful dissent</td>
<td>Democratic, inclusive, driven by shared priorities and not executive decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hierarchies</strong></td>
<td>Changes to the institution only occur if there is the collective power to make them happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy built on hierarchies from undergraduates to deans</td>
<td>Risks shared by the group because status quo is intolerable</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theories of political change can be abstract without practical application</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incentive</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong individual incentives to accept status quo, both pre- and post-tenure</td>
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COMMON CHALLENGES

Faculty are **BUSY**: tenure clocks, teaching, graduate students, service, family, publications, multiple jobs, etc.

Faculty are **BROKE**: Dues to a non-union organization difficult to accept, contingent faculty salaries

Faculty are **SCARED**: Immense pressures to not speak out or ‘rock-the-boat’

Faculty are **INDEPENDENT**: Trained to work by themselves and challenge intellectual authority
Faculty are **BUSY**: Organizing grows the membership, meaning the work can be better delegated and shared

Faculty are **BROKE**: Dues are not a service fee; it is how we pool our collective resources to advocate for ourselves

Faculty are **SCARED**: Collective action breeds courage, and makes retaliation difficult

Faculty are **INDEPENDENT**: Organizing reveals shared problems, and the solution in collective action, not isolation
FIGHTING FOR CHANGE

BUILDING YOUR CHAPTER BY TAKING ON IMPORTANT ISSUES
Institutional Policy
- Chapter pushes to include as many AAUP policies and best practices as possible in institutional policies
- Often looks like: senate work, committee representation, handbook revisions, etc.

Shared Governance
- AAUP holds that faculty have “primary decision-making authority” over educational issues
- Chapter works to defend this faculty prerogative from administrative encroachment
- Push to include faculty voice in other areas of decision making (such as budgets)

Member Engagement
- Creating space for faculty to deliberate policy questions
- Develop toward representational authority (i.e., “we are the faculty”)
- Member-to-member outreach, mobilizing faculty to take specific action, building membership
ISSUE ORGANIZING

- The best way to recruit new members and build your chapter is to **fight for things your colleagues care about**.

- People generally **aren’t motivated** to change the status-quo if they aren’t invested in the change.

- Organize around problems that are **deeply and widely felt**.

- We **pressure decision makers** to give us solutions to those problems.
STOP REACTING, START PLANNING

• To change the status quo, we need a long-term organizing plan.

• This helps get us out of the unsustainable reaction to crisis.

• We identify shared problems, and then develop a plan to progressively apply pressure to compel decision makers to change.

• This allows us to both build the chapter and improve the lives of faculty.
CAMPAIGN VISUAL

Target = Decision Maker

Resolution
Did we win?

Start Here

Strategy

Escalation

Time

Action

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress

★ = assess progress
CAMPAIGNS BUILD YOUR CHAPTER

• We recruit new members through participation in actions.

• We build up the skills and confidence of faculty to challenge the administration.

• We achieve real wins that demonstrate the value of the chapter to faculty.

• We speak as the legitimate, representational authority of the faculty voice.
RECENT ADVOCACY CHAPTER SUCCESSES
GMU-AAUP is an advocacy chapter that in one year:

- Increased membership to **over 100**;
- Successfully organized to **change presidential search policies**;
- Added a required period of **faculty consultation** for all finalist candidates; and
- Built an **organizing committee** that recruits faculty and builds power!
In 2018, the AAUP chapter at Hampshire College saved their institution:

• Administration was set on layoffs of staff and faculty.
• Faculty built their chapter to record numbers in coalition with other stakeholders.
• The chapter organized to force their president and board chair to resign.
• They compelled the new president to work with them, and jointly developed a budget proposal that resulted in ZERO faculty layoffs.

“Organize even if you can’t unionize. An organized faculty is always stronger than a fragmented one.”
Formed almost thirty years ago, Fairfield’s AAUP advocacy chapter **bargains with the administration** like a union:

- The chapter built enough power that they **negotiate the faculty handbook, pay, and policies** with the president and board.
- The administration *must* **contend with the chapter**, because they know it can organize and mobilize faculty to fight.
- You don’t need to be a union to **build power** and fight back!
LET’S GET ORGANIZING!