

Candidate Bio

Matthew Thomas Miller is Assistant Professor of Persian Literature at Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland, College. In 2020, he helped re-establish University of Maryland's AAUP (UMD AAUP) chapter after nearly a decade of dormancy and has played a leading role in building the chapter since. He is passionate about academic labor and organizing with faculty and graduate workers to protect higher education for the common good. His academic research focuses on Persian literature, Sufism, Orientalism, and the history of sexuality, the body, and affect/emotion in the Islamic world. He also serves as the Director of the [Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities](#) (PersDig@UMD) and as the co-PI for the multi-institutional [Open Islamicate Texts Initiative](#) (OpenITI) and the [Persian Manuscript Initiative \(PMI\)](#). He has received generous funding for these projects from [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#), [The National Endowment for the Humanities](#), and [The Islamic Manuscript Association](#). In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family, running, and hiking.

Candidate Statement

My name is Matthew Thomas Miller, and I am a candidate for the position of delegate in the AAUP Advocacy Local 6741 of AFT. I have decided to run because I want to help make AAUP and AFT into the unions that higher education needs to meet this dangerous moment we are facing.

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>.