

Candidate Statement

Rick Feinberg
Kent State University

I was inspired to study anthropology by a commitment to social justice and an appreciation of the value of human diversity. I devoted my career to higher education because it provided an opportunity to share insights about diversity, integrity, and social justice with young people who seemed likely to make a positive difference in the world. I'm a long-time advocate of workers' rights, an alumnus of the 1960s' civil rights movement, the Berkeley student movement, and the peace movement. I've been connected to Kent State University since 1974, have been a member of the university's collective bargaining unit since it was established by a vote of the faculty in 1975, and have served on the governing council of Kent's AAUP chapter. As a member of KSU's Faculty Senate for almost thirty years, I have advocated for free speech, academic freedom, shared governance, and campus diversity—both in the curricular foci and the composition of our faculty and staff. In this time of economic uncertainty, an increasing disparity of wealth, and the push to privatize all aspects of our educational system, it is critical for university faculty to stand together, both with one another and with others who are threatened by the forces that surround us. We must encourage faculty at schools that do not yet have collective bargaining to organize, motivate non-members at unionized schools to join their local chapters, and show solidarity with workers in other sectors of our complex economy.

In May 2018, I retired from my Kent State faculty position; last summer I completed a semester as Fulbright Distinguished Chair of Anthropology at Palacký University in the Czech Republic; and in November I completed my three-year term of office on the American Anthropological Association's Executive Board. Over the past decades my research, teaching, and responsibilities to a host of scholarly societies have kept me from devoting the time I would have liked to AAUP leadership. And, admittedly, since retirement I have been unable to remain involved in the day-to-day travails of my academic unit. These are indisputable liabilities for someone seeking a position on the AAUP's National Council. On the positive side, my years of experience have given me a good sense of how organizations work as well as an understanding academic structures and functions. Moreover, I finally have fewer competing responsibilities to distract me from AAUP-related tasks. Therefore, if elected, I will have sufficient time to dedicate to our association's business.

Candidate Biography

Rick Feinberg
Kent State University

I am an emeritus professor of anthropology, having retired from Kent State University in May 2018. I served as a member of the KSU anthropology faculty for over four decades, beginning in 1974. In 1975, when Kent State's faculty voted to institute collective bargaining, I became a charter member of the bargaining unit. Initially, as an affiliate of both the AAUP and the Ohio Educational Association, it was known as the United Faculty Professional Association (UFPA). In 1986, I was elected to the university's Faculty Senate and, with a one-year hiatus, served until 2015. As a Senator, I served on many committees and spent a half dozen years as a member of the Senate's Executive Committee. That included two years as vice-chair and one as chair. While chairing the Senate, I became a founding member of the Ohio Faculty Council, a body composed of representatives from the Faculty Senates of all Ohio's public universities. In addition, I have held leadership positions in several scholarly associations, serving as president of the Central States Anthropological Society, chair of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, and three years as Section Assembly Convener and Executive Board member of the American Anthropological Association. My record of scholarship includes writing or editing over a dozen books and special issues of journals, approximately 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, election as "Honorary Fellow" of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, and, last year, six months as Fulbright Distinguished Chair of Anthropology at Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic.