Karin Rosemblatt

Bio
I am a Professor of History at the University of Maryland, College Park, and Vice President of our campus AAUP chapter. I lead my chapter’s organizing committee. Before coming to the University of Maryland in 2008, I taught for thirteen years at Syracuse University. At the University of Wisconsin, where I completed my PhD studies, I served as shop steward for the Teaching Assistants’ Association, one of the first graduate student unions in the United States.

The UMD AAUP chapter formed in 2021 in response to faculty, staff, and student concerns concerning workplace security during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a chapter leader, I have worked closely with AFSCME Local 1072, which represents staff on the campus, and actively supported our graduate student organization in its efforts to gain collective bargaining rights. I have also backed our Undergraduate Students against Sweatshops who are fighting for a $15/hour minimum wage for student workers. Along with my chapter members, I am working to secure improvements in working conditions for contingent faculty and graduate students and to create a more equitable campus that supports all faculty members.

In my scholarly life, I study twentieth-century Latin America and write on how state policies and social movements shape gender, labor, race, and indigeneity. As a teacher and immigrant, I seek to create an inclusive classroom that serves the many first- and second-generation immigrant students who take my classes. As the director of Latin American Studies programs at both Syracuse University and UMD, I have sought to serve the immigrant communities surrounding the universities and the many Latinx immigrant workers who work there.

Candidate Statement
I am running for the Region 2 Council seat on the Faculty United for the Common Good slate. The candidates of the Faculty United for the Common Good slate share a belief that higher education is in a crisis that stretches back at least fifty years, beginning with the racialized and gendered divestment from our postsecondary institutions. This crisis has led to mounting student debt, commodified education, a devalued contingent workforce, and attacks on tenure and academic freedom at colleges and universities, which far too often exploit the communities where they reside. As the administrative class grows, both faculty governance and the educational mission suffer. This long crisis in higher education has been accelerated by the pandemic, where over 650,000 workers in the sector lost their jobs.

The sheer magnitude of the crisis across higher education demands a new approach in order to build the power necessary for the collective transformation of the sector. To that end, we believe that AAUP and all higher ed workers must focus on a broad vision of wall-to-wall organizing in and beyond our campuses. For us this means tearing down the barriers that divide us to build advocacy chapters, coalitions, and collective bargaining units across job categories: from professional staff and grad workers to dining staff, adjunct faculty, and tenure track faculty. It means confronting contingency at our institutions and demanding that all higher ed work be treated with dignity. It means aligning ourselves with students to cancel student debt, while winning free public higher education in two and four year institutions. It means recognizing that our campuses have no borders and we must organize for and with the communities to which we
belong. It means recognizing and making reparations for the present-day and historic harms that academia has wrought on communities of color: labor exploitation, land displacement, and scientific experimentation. And this recognition demands that our institutions go beyond declarations and reports to undertake reparations in our broader communities. Another university is possible.