

Candidate Statement for Rudy Fichtenbaum

When the Organizing for Change slate -- Rudy Fichtenbaum, Henry Reichman, Michele Ganon, and, starting in 2016, Caprice Lawless -- took office in 2012, the AAUP was hemorrhaging members. We regularly needed lines of credit to meet payroll. Chapters and members complained that the national office was often unresponsive. Staff morale was low. Today membership is growing and we have several million dollars in the bank. More organizers have been hired and members have seen the impact of our new digital organizing program and the Association's expanded social media presence. New activists like Caprice Lawless, whose creative ideas have energized community college adjuncts, have stepped forward at all levels. The Association's talented and dedicated staff, under the leadership of executive director Julie Schmid, are working more effectively than ever. The AAUP's visibility and stature are higher than in decades. Our support of academic freedom and shared governance has intensified.

At the same time, both the AAUP and the entire academic profession face unprecedented and severe challenges. As Henry Reichman discusses in the January-February *Academe*, Donald Trump's election presented higher education with a new reality, posing profound threats to the hallowed principles on which the AAUP was founded. The likelihood that the U.S. Supreme Court will soon overturn precedent and, on the basis of a spurious First Amendment argument, bar union chapters from collecting fees from non-members whom they must represent poses a grave danger to our finances and ability to function.

Fortunately, owing to the hard work and devotion of so many AAUP leaders and members on campuses and in state conferences across the country, we are in a strong position to weather the storms ahead. But it certainly won't be easy!

In the immediate aftermath of the 2016 election we pledged to:

1) oppose the privatization of our public higher education system and fight for higher education as a common good, accessible and affordable to all;

2) oppose discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or national origin and fight for an equitable and welcoming educational environment;

3) oppose attacks on unions and the economic security of faculty and staff and fight for the rights of everyone engaged in teaching and research, whether on the tenure track or in contingent or graduate employee positions, full- or part-time;

4) oppose violations of academic freedom and the broader rights to free expression in the academic community and fight for strengthened protections for and renewed commitment to academic freedom and shared governance.

This remains our program today.

The Organizing for Change slate is proud of what we have helped the AAUP accomplish. With both a sober recognition of the ominous threats we face and an optimism fueled by the support and energy of our colleagues, we are eager to build on our successes to meet the daunting challenges ahead. As always, the best answer to those who attack our colleagues, our students, our principles, and the common good is clear: Organize! Organize! Organize!

Rudy Fichtenbaum, Economics, Wright State University

Biography

In 2015, after 35 years as faculty member at Wright State, I retired and currently am an Emeritus Professor of Economics . My Ph.D. is from the University of Missouri-Columbia. I have authored more than forty-five articles and chapters in books, dealing primarily with race and sex discrimination, changes in income distribution, the impact of unions on wages and benefits, and the effect of occupational structure on earnings. I served twice as Faculty President from 1990-91 and 1996-97. In 1997-98 I helped organize the faculty at Wright State and have served as the Chief Negotiator, since 1998. I currently work as an advisor to the AAUP-WSU executive committee. I served as President of the Ohio Conference and the chair of the Conference Committee on organizing, helping to organize the faculty at BGSU. I helped lead the fight against SB 5 on my campus and throughout Ohio, testifying before House and Senate Committees and speaking at several rallies. From 2002-2007 I served as a member of the National Council of the AAUP and was again elected to Council in 2011 and on served on the Executive Committee of Council. I also served two terms (2004-2007) as a member-at-large on the Executive Committee of the Collective Bargaining Congress (CBC) and two terms as Treasurer of the CBC. Since 1999 I have been working as a consultant analyzing the finances of colleges and universities for AAUP and have presented numerous workshops for faculty on understanding university and college finances, costing contracts and health benefits. In 2010, I was the recipient of the CBC's Sternberg Award. In 2012, I was elected as part of the Organizing for Change slate to be the 50th President of the AAUP and was reelected in 2014 and 2016.