While Academia has many problems, the one that I have worked hardest towards understanding and fixing is the negative effect of technology on the employment conditions of faculty at all job levels. As more and more college teaching has gone online, the traditional prerogatives of faculty have begun to gradually disappear. These changes have also made it increasingly easy for administrations to fill new positions with contingent faculty. I believe that the AAUP, heading towards its second century, is more important than it has ever been because it is in an excellent position to fight these developments.

Internet courses, competency-based learning, Massive Open Online Courses (or MOOCs) – These kinds of technological changes threaten academic freedom and the professional livelihoods of professors everywhere. I am seeking a national AAUP leadership position so that I can start and participate in necessary conversations about educational technology. From a position on the national council, I would share what I’ve learned about all these technological-based threats with as many of my colleagues as possible.

One of the most important ways to combat our own technological obsolescence is to organize the unorganized. Besides starting an AAUP chapter, I’ve gone out and knocked on doors all over my campus in order to learn what all my colleagues need to help them thrive. That includes organizing non-tenure track faculty. There is simply no way that faculty at any level can maintain the economic position we have now unless we organize every single academic, both on and off the tenure track. As a national council member, I would do everything possible to help bring our contingent colleagues into our organization and to help improve their economic situation, as my colleagues and I in Colorado have already tried to do.

Times have indeed changed in Academia since I entered it some fifteen plus years ago, but there is no reason that all those changes have to be for the worse as far as faculty are concerned.
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Trained as a labor historian, among Rees' books are Managing the Mills: Labor Policy in the American Steel Industry During the Nonunion Era and Refrigeration Nation: A History of Ice, Appliances and Enterprise in America. He is currently working on a book with his CSU-Pueblo AAUP colleague, Jonathan Poritz, that is tentatively titled, Education Is Not an App: The Future of University Teaching in the Internet Age. It will be published by Routledge in 2016. He blogs about academic and historical issues at http://moreorlessbunk.net/blog.