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## Newsletter, February 2014

AAUP Chapter, Illinois Wesleyan University

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# Illinois Wesleyan Chapter of the AAUP

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NEWSLETTER

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Chapter delegate*

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## Delegate's Report By Jim Matthews

Report to the members of IWU Chapter of AAUP from delegate to the National Conference held in Washington D. C. in June 2014.

It was a privilege to attend the National Conference on behalf of IWU. I attended several stimulating and informative breakout sessions as well as the general assembly where I voted several times on behalf of our chapter. It was also gratifying to see the role Joerg Tiede is taking at the national level. I was proud to think that such a busy representative at the national level came from our own chapter.

The sessions I attended were unified by the theme of "corporate-think" that has seeped into so many administrations of colleges and universities in the last few years. This type of thinking has inevitably clashed with more traditional academic practice, producing conflict mainly between the faculty and the administration. While none so far have risen to the level of the University of Virginia fiasco, these conflicts are troubling in their pattern and their pervasiveness. An excellent example of this trend is the case of the implementation of the Common Core in CUNY's twenty-six institutions. I was privileged to sit in a session devoted to this situation and to hear from CUNY faculty who participated in the opposition to the implementation. It seems the Common Core was imposed on faculty at all 26 institutions in the CUNY system by executive fiat once the Board of Regents and the Chancellor had been persuaded that it was the best means by which to assure an easier transfer of credits within the CUNY system. The Common Core is a program sponsored by the Gates Foundation and other conservative agencies that is intended to provide a common knowledge base across American High Schools, particularly focusing on under-funded districts that have trouble matching achievement of wealthier communities. It relies heavily on standardized testing as a means of measuring student achievement. Some people favor it because they believe it will raise standards of education in challenged school districts. Others oppose it because of its reliance on standardized testing and its inability to measure achievement in certain disciplines.

In the case of CUNY, faculty opposition began in the English Department of one college when it was discovered that the Common Core includes no evaluation of student writing or critical thinking. In addition, as more details became available, it became clear that the Common Core had no requirement for second language learning (no standardized testing available) and had eliminated science labs. The opposition soon spread across the system, and outspoken opponents were singled out for retaliation. The session leaders were adept at bringing us back to a central tenant of AAUP principle: the faculty was not consulted about the changes to the curriculum, and the whole thing was implemented top down, making a travesty of faculty governance.

I also sat through the portion of the general assembly devoted to unionized faculties and was struck by the optimism and the dedication of the folks working on behalf of AAUP to provide an organized alternative for faculties pressed to the breaking point. The successful vote to unionize at the University of Illinois/Chicago was a highlight of this report and we were told the next target would be UIUC.

I came away from the conference believing more strongly than ever that the integrity of our profession, the high quality of our institutions is increasingly the

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responsibility primarily of faculties in the face of organized systematic opposition to the liberal arts and the values that made American higher education an example to the world. I can think of no time in the history of AAUP when adherence to our principles was more necessary than today. The increasing corporatization of American higher education has no place for free inquiry and its inconvenient truths. My experience in Washington convinced me that we need the AAUP more than ever.

### *Dougan Award* nominations due March 1, 2014

The *James D. Dougan Award for Contributions to Faculty Governance*

The AAUP chapter of Illinois Wesleyan created the Dougan Award in 2011 in honor of the late Professor of Psychology, James Dougan. The award seeks to recognize meritorious service in the cause of faculty governance in line with Professor Dougan's staunch commitment to defending the faculty's right to participate in shaping the direction of the university. For details on the award criteria, see [http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/iwuaaup\\_act/9/](http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/iwuaaup_act/9/)

Previous award recipients are

2013: Alison Sainsbury, Associate Professor of English

2012: Larry Stout, Professor of Mathematics

2011: Mike Young, Professor of History

### Announcements

Members' Meeting February 26 at 3:00 PM Memorial Center's Titan Room



At our next members' meeting we will discuss the effect of recent budget and staffing announcements on our ability to deliver the faculty-approved curriculum in Fall 2014. We hope to explore the ways in which the Chapter might advance the interests of faculty at this time.

Our nationally-recognized newsletter needs your voices!



Did you know that in 2012 the IWU AAUP Chapter Newsletter received the award for outstanding chapter newsletter given by the AAUP's Assembly of State Conferences (ASC)? We are a member-driven organization and we welcome all viewpoints of our membership on these pages.

Have some ideas about the Martha Nussbaum book *Not for Profit* that you want to share? Other perspectives on timely topics? We know you're out there thinking about them!

There will be one more issue before the end of the year, so let your voice be heard! Send submissions to the newsletter editor ([mminer@iwu.edu](mailto:mminer@iwu.edu)) by April 7.

Chapter Delegate selection for the annual *AAUP Conference on the State of Higher Education* due April 23, 2014



Each year one of our members attends the national meeting. If you are interested in being the 2014 delegate, submit your name to Meg Miner at [mminer@iwu.edu](mailto:mminer@iwu.edu). If more than one candidate steps forward, the chapter will elect the delegate by secret ballot. The meeting will take place June 11-15, 2014 in Washington, DC.