

# The IOWA ACADEMIE

NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

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Greg Scholtz, Editor

## AAUP activist and accreditation expert to speak at spring conference meeting

The spring meeting of the Iowa Conference of the AAUP will focus on the faculty role in institutional accreditation. The event is being hosted by UNI-United Faculty, UNI's AAUP chapter, and will take place on the University of Northern Iowa campus on Saturday, April 19 (see schedule at right).



Rossmann

Jack Rossmann, professor emeritus of psychology at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, will be the keynote speaker. Rossmann, an AAUP leader and an expert on both assessment and institutional accreditation, will discuss the importance of accreditation and the ways in which faculty should become involved in its processes, especially in light of the AAUP's 1968 statement *The Role of the Faculty in the Accrediting of Colleges and Universities* (accessible at <http://home.mchsi.com/~wartburgaaup/files/Accreditation.pdf>).

After growing up on a farm near Harlan, Iowa, Rossmann earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees in sociology at Iowa State University and a Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Minnesota.

He joined the Macalester College faculty in the Department of Psychology in 1964. From 1978-86, he served as Macalester's vice president for academic affairs, and he chaired the psychology department from 1989-2000. Rossmann retired

after the 2006-2007 academic year.

Rossmann's research interests have focused on the assessment of student learning outcomes. He was the lead author of a 1975 book on open admissions at City University of New York and wrote a 1987 American Council on Education monograph on assessment in higher education.

Since the 1970's, Rossmann has served on forty-five visiting accreditation teams (most of which he chaired) for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

Rossmann has served the AAUP in a number of capacities, including chapter and conference president. In 2001 he was the recipient of the Minnesota conference's Robert E. Sloan Award for his "significant personal contributions in support of academic freedom and shared governance."

For more information about the meeting, contact Frank Thompson ([frank.thompson@uni.edu](mailto:frank.thompson@uni.edu)). For directions to UNI and the Curris Business Building, point your browser to <http://www.uni.edu/resources/visit/index.shtml>.

### PROGRAM

#### Spring Meeting of the Iowa Conference of the AAUP

Saturday, April 19, 2008

Room 332, Curris Business Building  
The University of Northern Iowa

- 9:00 **Registration** (free of charge) and Complimentary Refreshments (coffee and pastries)
- 9:15 **Welcome and Introductions**  
Benjamin Allen, President, University of Northern Iowa  
Frank Thompson, President, Iowa Conference AAUP
- 9:30 **Keynote Address:** *"The Role of the Faculty in the Accrediting of Colleges and Universities: What Has Changed since 1968?"*  
Jack Rossmann, Macalester College
- 10:15 **Break**
- 10:30 **Discussion/Response to Keynote Address**  
Panelists: Joel Haack (UNI), Norb Pienta (U of Iowa), Nancy Reincke (Drake), Greg Scholtz (Wartburg)
- 11:30 **Iowa Conference Business Meeting, including Elections**
- Noon **Adjournment**

## Scholarships available for Annual Meeting and Summer Institute!

### AAUP Annual Meeting

June 12-15

Omni Shoreham Hotel  
Washington, DC

Thu. 6/12 Capitol Hill Day, CBC meetings

Fri. 6/13 Council and ASC meetings

Sat. 6/14 Combined AM Plenary/Council meeting, Awards banquet

For more information, go to <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/about/events/AM/>.

### AAUP Summer Institute

July 24-27

University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, RI

AAUP members from collective bargaining chapters, current and potential activists, and members interested in developing their chapters and conferences into more effective organizations of faculty advocacy will all gain from attending the Summer Institute.

Financial support adequate to cover virtually all the costs of attendance at these AAUP events is available through the Iowa Conference.

Go to the AAUP website ([www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)) to learn more about these events, choose which one you are interested in attending, and then contact Iowa conference president Frank Thompson (contact information in box on next page) to apply for financial assistance.

**If you want to go, we'll find a way!**

## Burgan critiques politicization of higher education

One of three presentations that former AAUP General Secretary Mary Burgan gave during her very busy September 28-29 weekend in Waverly, Iowa, was the talk entitled "Higher Education and Politics: From the NEH to the U.S. Office of Education" that she delivered at the Iowa Conference meeting on Saturday. Though space does not permit a full synopsis, her key points bear repeating.

The first was that the focus of federal politics—and with it, resources—shifted in the 1980's away from an emphasis on access for students to an emphasis on ideas favored by people like William Bennett and Lynn Cheney.

More recently, forces in federal politics have tended to "trust in the market to adjudicate all value" and to see higher education in entrepreneurial terms. Influenced by this

"managerial ethos," the U.S. Department of Education under Margaret Spellings has exerted pressure on the regional accreditation system to "depend on 'countable' outcomes and standardized curricula that would mandate automatic transfer of credits from one institution to another, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of for-profit and online educational ventures," who have had more than one place at the table in the ongoing debates on accreditation.

Burgan also talked about the ideologically driven rise of powerful academic centers for the study of various subjects, some with immense endowments. These centers often exist outside the governance system of the colleges and universities with which they are associated, with predictably deplorable consequences for liberal

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## Need Help?

The colleagues whose names, addresses, and phone numbers appear in the box above are prepared to assist you. Don't hesitate to contact one of them if you encounter problems related to your academic freedom or rights to due process.

Send letters/submissions to  
**Greg Scholtz**  
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Wartburg College  
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-or-  
[greg.scholtz@wartburg.edu](mailto:greg.scholtz@wartburg.edu)

education and shared governance.

With these powerful political and ideological forces at work on the national scene, Burgan said, we must work even harder to protect academic freedom and the faculty's role in shared governance, especially its primary responsibility for faculty appointments, educational policy, student admissions, and curriculum.

## From the President:

### Academic hiring and evaluation: what is the faculty's role?

**A major responsibility of the institution is to recruit and retain the best-qualified faculty within its goals and means.**

*—Statement on Procedural Standards in the Renewal or Nonrenewal of Faculty Appointments, AAUP, Policy Documents and Reports, 9th ed., 2001, p. 17.*

Faculty status and related matters are primarily a faculty responsibility; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal. The primary responsibility of the faculty for such matters is based upon the fact that its judgment is central to general educational policy. Furthermore, scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues; in such competence it is implicit that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments. . . . Determinations in these matters should first be by faculty action through established procedures, reviewed by the chief academic officers with the concurrence of the board. The governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.

*—Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, AAUP, Policy Documents and Reports, 9th ed., 2001, p. 221.*

**[T]he Statement on Government asserts the expectation that faculty members will have a significant role in the selection of academic administrators, including the president, academic deans, department heads, and chairs. As a corollary, it is equally important that faculty members contribute significantly to judgments and decisions regarding the retention or nonretention of the administrators whom they have helped select**

*—Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators, AAUP, Policy Documents and Reports, 9th ed., 2001, p. 228.*

The faculty role in the selection, retention, and evaluation of both faculty colleagues and academic administrators is fundamental to the academic integrity and quality of an institution of higher education. Because of their many years of training, research, and work within a chosen discipline, faculty members have the expertise, commitment, and understanding to be able to select and evaluate not only only



A. Frank Thompson

their own colleagues but their academic administrators.

The strong record of success in American higher education owes a great deal to the longstanding tradition that faculty play a primary role in choosing and evaluating faculty colleagues and a significant role in selecting and evaluating academic administrators.

Even though there is a tradition and a set of AAUP principles that justify active faculty participation in the selection, retention, and evaluation of colleagues and academic administrators, recent changes designed to institute a "corporate culture" in higher education impede this longstanding academic custom. Recently, some universities have started to incorporate business leaders, students, staff, and other administrators on search committees for academic appointments.

The rationale for the inclusion of these non-academic participants in academic searches is the apparent need to accommodate the interests of business leaders, students, and staff who desire to play a significant role in decisions to hire a academic dean, a provost, or a vice president for academic affairs. However, including a large number of these lay persons on academic search committees often results in a dilution of the faculty role in making such appointments, appointments that will directly affect teaching, research, and faculty governance at the university.

For the past several years, astute observers of higher education have observed that the faculty's primary responsibility for the appointment and evaluation of fac-

ulty peers has been similarly weakened.

At some institutions, the work of faculty personnel committees is viewed as being advisory to such an extent that the administration customarily overrides faculty decisions. At some institutions, university administrators have restricted the work of faculty personnel committees exclusively to the evaluation of tenure-line faculty. Given the increased use of contingent faculty under separate appointment contracts, administrators have in this way been able to bypass faculty evaluation of teaching in a significant number of classes.

By not permitting faculty review of courses taught by part-time and temporary full-time instructors, administrators have overlooked the need for maintaining quality within the college curriculum. If the purpose of evaluating tenure-line faculty is to provide meaningful feedback designed to improve educational outcomes, why would that purpose not also apply to contingent faculty?

In some cases when hiring new faculty, administrators have pre-negotiated the tenure of incoming faculty without review by faculty committees. Administratively granted tenure in such circumstances disservices the faculty who have earned tenure through the regular promotion and tenure process, the faculty who serve on promotion and tenure committees mentoring and evaluating those going up for tenure, and the university officers seeking to build a quality institution.

In some colleges the promotion and tenure process has become a black box system, where nothing of the process is visible but inputs and outputs. Furthermore, just as corporate America has utilized a system of merit review that may be based on year-end reviews defined by ambiguous standards, some colleges have made promotion and tenure a moving target whereby standards can change markedly over a seven-year period.

For example, I recently became aware of a faculty member here in Iowa who was being evaluated in

*continued on page 4*

## Scholtz to take post at national office

Greg Scholtz, the editor of this newsletter, has accepted an appointment beginning in September as director of the Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Shared Governance at the AAUP's national office in Washington, D.C.

Scholtz will be replacing Jonathan Knight, who will retire as director at the end of June after hav-

ing served the AAUP and Committee A with notable distinction for nearly thirty-one years.

Scholtz, a professor of English at Wartburg College, joined the AAUP in 1992 at the urging of his colleague Warren Zemke. In the intervening years, Scholtz has performed a variety of roles for the Association on the local, state, and national levels.

## From the president: hiring and evaluation

*continued from page 3*

the fifth year on the tenure track. In the years leading up to this most recent evaluation, this faculty member had received feedback indicating a high standard of achievement.

However, in the fifth year, despite a similarly positive assessment from the promotion and tenure committee, the administration suddenly decided that this faculty member's performance was problematic enough to deserve a recommendation of "continuation with difficulties." This information came as a surprise to the faculty member given the fact that these same administrators had noted no problems with this faculty member's work in any prior year. When asked to provide an explanation for this abrupt change, the administration's response was "criteria for promotion have changed in your area."

It is not only a matter of common sense and basic decency but of basic academic good practice (as set forth at length in the above-quoted *Statement on Procedural Standards in the Renewal or Nonrenewal of Faculty Appointments*) that faculty should be informed at the time of appointment by what standards they are going to be evaluated, that they should receive a fair and unbiased assessment of their work, and they should receive meaningful feedback on how to remedy any deficiencies in sufficient time to meet tenure standards.

If administrators can temporarily change or suspend the rules for evaluating faculty for tenure, the ability to evaluate fairly and thus to retain good faculty members suffers considerable damage. Ultimately, an institution that consistently follows these practices will only succeed in eroding its educational quality.

Turning from the evaluation of faculty to the evaluation of academic administrators, it appears that although most schools have periodic and robust assessment of faculty

performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service, faculty review of academic administrators is sparse and infrequent. It is difficult to determine how administrators are being evaluated every year for the merit raises that usually are significantly greater than the increases that faculty receive. At this time it does not appear that performance in the hiring, retention, and development of faculty is a measure commonly incorporated into the evaluation of administrators.

Should the college be concerned if a highly respected faculty member leaves for a position elsewhere? Should a university be concerned if, because of the lack of a fair and clearly defined promotion and tenure process, a school cannot fill a position in a particular discipline?

If governing boards and college presidents are truly interested in creating quality educational institutions, why are faculty being marginalized within the faculty evaluation process, being excluded from yearly reviews of administrators, and experiencing the dilution of their voice on academic appointment committees?

Institutional accreditation by the regional accrediting commissions is one of the few opportunities for colleges and universities to receive an impartial review by an outside group of trained evaluators. One of the questions that many of us have posed is whether or not accreditation can serve to address problems of central concern to faculty and to the AAUP, such as the diminishing role of faculty in the selection and evaluation of peers and academic administrators.

Hopefully, this question and many others will be answered at the upcoming spring meeting of the Iowa Conference, where Minnesota AAUP activist and North Central evaluator Jack Rossmann will talk about the AAUP and regional accreditation. I therefore encourage

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each of you to attend that meeting, which will take place Saturday, April 19, in room 332 of the Curris Business Building at the University of Northern Iowa. My prediction is for warm weather and the absence of snow for our meeting. I look forward to seeing you there. In the meantime, best wishes for a productive semester!

# AAUP Dinner and Iowa Conference Meeting Wartburg College

28-29 September 2007



English professor and former AAUP general secretary Mary Burgan addresses dinner-goers from the podium of Wartburg College's elegant Hagemann Castle Room.



Clockwise from top: Dave Hampton, Yvonne Losch, Frank Thompson, Julie Breutzmann, Josef Breutzmann, Susan Vallem. All are Wartburgians except Frank who is from UNI.



Mary talks about "Service in the Academy."



Clockwise from left: Barbara Zemke, Warren Zemke, Eric Wachmann, Paula Survilla, Kate Payne, and Tom Payne. In the background, Wartburg Treasurer Paul Hedeem.



Brian Jones (Wartburg), John Zelle (Wartburg), Mary Burgan, and Warren Zemke (Wartburg)

—photos by David Hagan (Wartburg)



# Yes! I want to join the AAUP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Please choose appropriate membership category:

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(i.e. spouse already belongs)

***Dues include National and Iowa Conference AAUP membership.***

**Note:** National dues are tax deductible as a charitable contribution except for the \$30.00 attributable to *Academe*.

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