

AAUP Report

Spring 1993

American Association of University Professors
Bloomington Chapter

The Year in Review

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Ed Greenebaum, Chapter President

We have been living in interesting times, and it, indeed, has not been entirely a blessing. The State of Indiana has been supporting us less, but has felt entitled to control us more. Financial exigencies have made it more difficult to negotiate an academic agenda for a changing world and have been occasions for the Administration to consult us less patiently. Issues of managing the University's increasing health care costs have been an especially grievous, but tedious irritant. Throughout the year, the IU-Bloomington Chapter of the AAUP has tried to be useful.

We are very proud of our 3rd Annual AAUP Forum, in January, on **Competition and Community in the University**. The content of the Forum was extensively reported in the February 12 edition of *The IU Newspaper*, and Jim Patterson has made the papers and discussion available in an unrestricted NOTES conference on the UCS Vax cluster (see instructions for access on page 5). We expect to make the papers available in printed version to the Trustees, to administrators and faculty leaders on our other campuses, and to others we think should be interested.

On two of the subjects that have occupied the AAUP chapter Executive Committee this year, namely health care and technology transfer, we have seen progress in structuring consultation processes. The Executive Committee's October 29 letter to the University Faculty Council and the Administration on consultation processes in modification of our health care programs was widely distributed and well received. (I can make the text of this available to you on e-mail.) Our Faculty Council leadership has since worked effectively with the Administration and Trustees to establish a Health Care Commission to coordinate and guide the process of program development and consultation. The Commission has good representation from the affected constituencies. The Commission's function is to facilitate and

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Competition and Community in the University

Jim Patterson, School of Business

On January 26, about 75 members of the IUB faculty participated in a forum sponsored by the our AAUP chapter. In opening the forum, Edwin Greenebaum, Professor of Law and President of the IUB AAUP chapter noted that in higher education today, the way in which faculty, schools, and the University must compete for resources and status are in tension with the missions of our academic community: to nurture the development of our students and faculty and the growth of knowledge and competencies. Competition and community have probably always been in tension, he said, but in recent years it seems especially that, in the Babel of academic voices, we must climb over each other to obtain the resources and attention necessary to make our voices heard. His main concern was that our investment in this struggle for our academic survival diverts us too much from tending to the needs of the academic community.

Keynoting the forum were papers by Scott Gordon, Professor Emeritus of Economics and of the History and Philosophy of Science, and Karen Hanson, Professor of Philosophy. They posed a number of intriguing ways of thinking about the problem that were then discussed by Patrick Brantlinger, Chair of English, and Kenneth Gros Louis, Vice President and Chancellor of the Bloomington Campus.

Following discussion by the audience, Anya Peterson Royce, Vice Chancellor-Bloomington and Dean of the Faculties, Norman Overly, Professor of Education and President Pro Tem of the Bloomington Faculty Council and Co-Secretary of the University Faculty Council, Ronald Smith, Associate Professor of Folklore and Associate Dean, Office of Research and University Graduate School, and Alfred Aman, Dean of the Bloomington Law School, looked at competition and community in the areas of faculty careers, resource allocation, diversity, and external competition.

Access Notes Conference for the text of their comment (see page 5)

Using Objective Criteria for Evaluating University Success

by
Jeff Stake, IU School of Law,
on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Bloomington AAUP

The faculty of Indiana University continues to strive to improve teaching, research, and serve to the community. We understand that the public is concerned about whether their higher education dollars are being spent well. That concern is certainly legitimate. It cannot and should not be ignored. We also understand that it is very difficult for administrators to communicate Indiana University's excellence to the people of Indiana and their representatives.

However, we believe that an attempt to apply objective criteria to evaluate teaching, research, and service and to evaluate efforts to improve each of those products subverts the mission of the University. We join countless educators across the nation in decrying this fad of objective accountability.

The Immeasurability of Valuable Learning

In an ideal world we might evaluate our teaching efforts by measuring the "learning" of students rather than focusing on our teaching behaviors. In the real world, however, the idea that we can evaluate our teaching by measuring the learning of our students is a dangerous one. The costs of evaluating education by objective criteria have long been known to experts in education. First, such criteria necessarily fail to measure many of the things we hope to teach our students. Some teachers, for example, hold that because our world changes so rapidly, it is most important to teach students how to learn and to instill in them a love of learning. Objective assessment criteria and validated measures of this sort of learning do not exist.

Another danger is closely related to the first. Some sorts of learning are more difficult than others to measure. It is certainly harder to measure reliably the amount we add to a student's understanding of competing policies in international dispute resolution than whether we have taught a student to recite the date of the Statute of Wills. It would, of course, be silly to redirect a single minute of our efforts toward the latter goal. Yet that is the incentive created by any criteria determinative enough for accountability. The adoption of objective goals redirects efforts of those desiring success toward those goals and, since time and effort are finite, away from goals on which success is less easily proved but perhaps far more valuable.

The Counterproductive Incentives Created by Measurement

Many indicators of productivity are amenable to falsification. When lifetime work is threatened by imperfect indicators of quality, honorable people will be forced to protect their work through misrepresentation. Those faculty members and units feeling the most need to increase productivity are going to be quickest to discover ways of appearing successful.

Faculty should be free to decide what to teach based on careful analysis of what is best for students. That freedom is lost when faculty salaries, or anything else important, turn on administrative evaluation of progress. The more determinative the criteria, the more the criteria lend themselves to declarations of success or failure, the more the curriculum shifts away from what is good for the students and more toward what improves faculty images. In short, we will get more of whatever we measure. Furthermore, the clearer the measuring tools, the greater that effect will be. There are good reasons to believe that objective measurement of teaching will harm the curriculum and the education of students.

Another major problem with applying objective criteria to the work of faculty is that the results oversimplify and misrepresent the work of a university. Any university, but most of all a major research institution, is a collection of specialists having expertise that extends beyond the knowledge of anyone else in the world. These specialists push forward the frontiers of knowledge by extending their own. Specialists do not thrive if managed closely by nonspecialists. At best, they are slowed in their efforts to learn by having to drag along, by explanation, those who are by necessity not thinking at the same advanced level. At worst, specialists are stymied by the disapproval of their nonspecialist evaluators.

This is not to argue that productivity cannot be improved without loss of quality. The primary ways for administrators to bring about such improvement is to express cogently the need for increased productivity, to point to carefully identified obstacles to productivity, to effectuate a greater participation of the faculty in management responsibilities, and to reward improvements when they occur.

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OPEN LETTER TO THE TRUSTEES

The following is an open letter from Thomas J. Mathiesen, Professor of Music at IU-Bloomington, to the Trustees of Indiana University, originally sent to Trustee Ray Richardson on 8 February 1993:

Dear Mr. Richardson:

Over the past few weeks, I have been reading various quotations attributed to you in the local newspapers, advocating increased teaching loads as a means of improving IU's abysmal faculty/student ratio. I had hoped you were being misquoted on this matter because the ratio of faculty to students is not affected in any way by the number of classes taught. But the most recent article in the *Indiana Daily Student* and other information I have received persuades me that you are indeed vigorously advocating increased teaching loads for the faculty, and I think you and your colleagues need to hear a response from the perspective of a relatively new addition to the IU faculty.

There is surely no question that if the faculty taught a greater number of courses, the total number of available credit hours would be increased; if fully subscribed, these courses would result in greater tuition revenue. This may seem like a grand economy, but it is in fact a false one because it will deplete the university's most valuable resource, its faculty capital, and it will lead to poorer, not better instruction. Consider the following.

When I first started teaching over twenty years ago at another institution, I had five classes each semester, while at IU, I teach two. This may appear to be a greatly reduced teaching load, but there is more to a teaching load than just the number of courses. Because the faculty/student ratio at the other institution was considerably better than IU's, with my ten courses, I taught altogether perhaps sixty students throughout the entire school year. In a typical year at IU, by contrast, with my four courses over two semesters (and a fifth I team-teach with a colleague), I teach--or try to teach--more than 200 students.

With my ten courses per academic year at that institution, I taught in clean, organized, and well-equipped classrooms. My sixty students had adequate library materials and listening resources, and by devoting more or less all my time to the students, I could actually give all of them some individual attention. Over the years, the course loads improved, and the faculty had more time for the students, more time to develop themselves as scholars and become even better teachers, and more time to be of service to the institution.

By contrast, with my four courses per academic year at IU, I teach in drab, poorly equipped classrooms, which are quite often stiflingly hot or freezing. The library and listening facilities are woefully inadequate for classes with 140 students, despite the Herculean efforts of the library staff. Although I hold, on average, fifteen office hours every week, rarely leaving before 8:00 P.M., and still devote more or less all my time to the students, I cannot possibly give any kind of individual attention to more than 200 students a year; most of them must get their individual attention from our overworked Associate Instructors. My AIs are wonderful, but of course this is not the same as the faculty and the students working closely together in a proper environment.

I want to stress that this personal description--or one like it--could be applied to any of my colleagues teaching core undergraduate courses in the School of Music. I also want to stress that I am committed to teaching undergraduates; I think this is, in many respects, the most important teaching I do here. Nevertheless, it does not take much thought to figure out which of the two teaching environments I have described is the better, and the reasons have nothing to do with the number of courses taught.

How can you and your fellow trustees possibly imagine that the quality of teaching (not mentioning research and service, since these are apparently no longer matters of concern to the trustees) will improve if my colleagues and I try to teach an extra class or two each year at IU under such circumstances as I have described? Moreover, where do the trustees think we will teach all these extra classes? In the School of Music, at least, every room is booked solid all day every day, and most of the larger classrooms are also booked every evening.

In the five years I have been at IU, I have brought the institution a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities worth nearly a quarter of a million dollars--not much perhaps by the standards of the sciences but quite unusual for a faculty member in the arts and humanities. I have assumed and have been told that I am the sort of younger faculty member IU would like to keep. But I must tell you frankly that I am very discouraged, and unless I see some significant change in the institution, I have grave doubts about my future at IU. I am by no means the only member of the faculty who feels this way.

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coordinate consultation with faculty and staff councils rather than be a consultative body itself. This principle must be understood and acted upon if the Administration is finally to have our confidence in the health care area.

Technology transfer is just one aspect of the creeping privatization of universities. This has been a sleeper issue with serious implications for academic freedom. The contracts which private enterprises may negotiate in exchange for providing research support may limit free inquiry and free dissemination of research products. In response to financial exigencies, universities may claim ownership and control of the intellectual property (of all kinds) that faculty create. Fortunately, Myrtle Scott has been alert to these issues and insisted that our University community pay attention to them. Her work resulted in University Faculty Council resolutions for the establishment of consulting institutions to guide the development and application of University policy in this area.

The most pervasive and vexing issue is managing demands made on us by external constituencies. We must meet threats to faculty governance in academic matters, such as suggestions of imposing teaching load standards, with political tact, but firmly. Much more insidious, and therefore more dangerous, are changes in our incentives which we may adopt internally and "voluntarily" in an effort to placate those making demands on us. The Executive Committee expressed its concern to the Administration in a statement in December that its insistence that academic units must demonstrate that they can produce more with less resources may corrupt our academic missions.

President Ehrlich and Vice President Gros Louis met with the Executive Committee at our March meeting to discuss these issues, which we hope increased mutual understanding. But the "Politics of Productivity" continues to worry us, and we have made it the subject of our Annual Meeting, announced elsewhere in this newsletter. Please join us for the occasion. For that matter, please join us as members; we need your support to serve you better.

Ed Greenebaum, School of Law

for MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Contact **Richard Carr, Treasurer, AAUP,**
Bloomington Chapter,

by campus mail: Dept. of French.
Ballantine 627

by e-mail: PRISM:CARRR

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Like all people, faculty members think about their jobs and how they could do them better. The tenure and promotion processes force even the few without that natural inclination to review their work and put it into context. Review is essential. Periodic review by (outside) expert consultants provides useful information about teaching and research. The use of ongoing productivity data, however, does not lead to meaningful review. Such data oversimplify a multidirectional university into a focused-output factory.

Legitimation of the Illegitimate

If a university is to be reshaped by attention to objective criteria, of course it is better that the criteria be chosen by faculty than by nonspecialists who do not understand what faculty are doing. But attempts to prevent a greater evil by a preemptive application of a lesser one will have the effect of legitimizing a false approach, an approach that will do great harm no matter how well intentioned. Indeed, the more carefully the criteria are applied, the more harm they will do. The time to stop is now, before well-meaning efforts do irreparable damage to the highly advanced cause of education at Indiana University.

Jeff Stake, School of Law

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It doesn't take a long historical memory to recall the forces that took some of the great state institutions of higher education and developed them after the war into institutions of front rank: (1) visionary leaders, (2) strong and supportive boards of trustees, and (3) state governments that saw themselves and the resources of their states not in narrow parochial terms but rather as a part of a grand national enterprise. You are quoted as saying that the faculty will be embarrassed by statistical revelations on their teaching loads. Faculty embarrassment, let me assure you, centers not on teaching loads but rather on the lack of vision exhibited by the institution's leaders and the anemic response of the trustees to the short-sighted and politically expedient goals of the state government.

If IU moves in the direction the trustees seem to be currently advocating, it will insure that IU does not enter the 21st century as one of the handful of major institutions in the United States--as the farsighted leaders among the faculty had hoped--but rather as a second-rate provincial state college. Can this really be the trustees' vision? If so, IU's tradition and reputation and, most of all, its potential deserve better.

Thomas J. Mathiesen, School of Music

1993 AAUP ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 21

Noon to 1:30

Coronation Room of the IMU

Presentation/Discussion:

"THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTIVITY: Teaching, Research, and Service on the Academic Assembly Line"

How to Access the NOTES Conference

Jim Patterson has created a special NOTES conference for discussion among the members of the AAUP and the faculty at large. It contains the full text of the 1993 Forum presentations and commences discussion of other topics.* To begin using the AAUP conference, you will need to ADD the name of the conference to your "Conference Notebook."

To do this, at the VMS \$ prompt, type
NOTES <return>

Then, at the Notes> prompt, type
ADD ENTRY PRISM::\$DISK31:[PATTERSO]AAUP <return>

To access the AAUP conference you have just added, at the Notes> prompt, type
OPEN AAUP <return>

and go from there. If you need further assistance, at the Notes> prompt, type
HELP <return> [or ask Ed Greenebaum (PRISM::GREENEBA)]

To see the table of contents of the AAUP conference, type
DIR/ALL

To read a specific note, at the Notes> prompt, type its number.
For example, type 2.3 to see reply 2.3. Or just hit return to read additional replies.

To reply to a topic, while reading the discussion of that topic, type
REPLY <return> and follow the prompts.

To send a copy of the item you are reading to an e-mail account (including your own), type
FORWARD/NOHEADERS <return> and then follow the prompts.

or to download the item to your own computer, type
EXTRACT/NOHEADERS, follow the prompts, and download by using
PROCOMM Alt_K command.

To send a copy of the extracted file to a UCS printer, while reading the note, type
PRINT/Q=SPEA151 and then go down and pick it up.

*It might be interesting to see if the Notes conference can be used to provoke discussion of AAUP concerns among interested members of the faculty.

Jim Patterson

1993 AAUP Annual Meeting

**WEDNESDAY
April 21, 1993
Lunch, Coronation Room, IMU**

Presentation/Discussion:

"THE POLITICS OF PRODUCTIVITY: TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE ON THE ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY LINE"

Join us and bring a colleague!

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