
What Faculty say about AAUP-KSU



Claire Culleton, Professor, English, Kent Campus, wrote:

I am a member of KSU's chapter of the AAUP because as a Culleton I come from a long and distinguished line of union members, union leaders, and union contract negotiators. I believe in solidarity. I fight for justice. I like being represented by and protected by something larger than myself, and in a time of budget cuts, administrative

reassessments of individual faculty workloads, and the slow painful erosion of faculty authority across the profession, the AAUP offers powerful solidarity. I wouldn't have it any other way than to be a part of this chapter's AAUP.

Timothy Gallagher, Associate Professor, Sociology, Kent Campus, wrote:

For me, the AAUP at Kent is peace of mind. I know it's one of the strongest in the country with regard to collective bargaining - salary and benefits, intellectual property. Add to that our unique TT Non-TT governance structure and we have a real winner!



Richard Berrong, Professor, Modern and Classical Language Studies, Kent Campus, wrote:

My reason for joining AAUP was very simple. I'm gay, and I know of too many instances when college and university administrations have discriminated against faculty because of sexual orientation. Since my paternal grandfather was executive

vice-president of the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union, I grew up knowing the role that unions have played in protecting minorities from discrimination - my grandfather, being a southerner, spent the early part of his career unionizing southern black railway porters, sometimes even in the face of threats of physical violence from the railway administrations.

William E. Sledzik, Associate Professor, Public Relations, Kent Campus, wrote:

Let's face it—most college professors are underpaid. But in my case it took seven years to discover just how underpaid I really was.

It took my colleagues at AAUP just a few months to correct the problem.

When I joined KSU in 1992, my salary was set 5% below a colleague who joined the same year. The salary discrepancy was arbitrary and unfair, but it was seven years before I learned—through AAUP—that the problem was “actionable” under the collective bargaining agreement (CBA).



One of AAUP's officers counseled me on how to request a salary adjustment under the terms of our CBA. But when “working through the system” failed, AAUP took my side, filing a grievance on my behalf and pursuing it aggressively. In less than 60 days, the university agreed to adjust my salary to correct the discrepancy.

I still consider myself an underpaid college professor. But thanks to AAUP I'm on par with my colleagues!

When the “system” doesn't for work you, AAUP does.

John Ackerman, Associate Professor, English, Kent Campus, wrote:

I joined AAUP because I believe that university faculty must foster a collective presence in society. We do that, with varying degrees of success, through our departments, centers, projects and disciplines, but the union sponsors and promotes a collective vision and consciousness. I see few other ways to assert what it means to be a professor-within the structure of the university and more broadly as a member of society—except through a unified body such as a union.

What I have received in return for membership are two forms of support, specific to my circumstance as a new Associate Professor at Kent State University. AAUP faculty, and in particular the staff and officers, have acted as a departmental ombuds to alleviate tensions that might, without these interventions, have led to a formal grievance. Second, AAUP officers tactfully asked contractual questions of the central administration, that I, as a member of the faculty, could and should not.

I value the consultations and interventions made available to me as much as the obvious and considerable role the union plays in contract negotiations.



Mark Cassell, Associate Professor, Political Science, Kent Campus, wrote:

Unions are typically associated with better wages and benefits, but for me the real value of the AAUP is having formal representation at the table when difficult choices have to be made at Kent State University.

Non-members may have philosophical differences with the union. Some may simply be exercising their right to free ride. But if I could, I would ask every faculty member who is not a member of the AAUP to consider our budgetary situation without the formal assurance of a voice for faculty on important issues like rising health care costs, proliferation of distance learning courses, or increased reliance on part-time employees.

The union is not a panacea. Joining and supporting the organization does not guarantee that unpopular decisions won't get made. When times are difficult and uncertain, we must support the organization that gives faculty a legal say over how decisions are made at Kent State University.

