

# NEWS

## Meetings continue between faculty leaders & Trustees; focus of talks is College budget & strategic planning

Discussions between College Trustees and representatives of faculty, originally conducted as part of the lead-up to AAUP contract negotiations, have continued during Spring Semester 2024, at the request of the Board of Trustees.

Trustees participating in the meetings are Justin Howe, the Vice Chairperson of the Board, and Cynthia Booth, the Board Secretary.

Faculty representatives are Cincinnati State AAUP President Abbey Yee, AAUP Contract Compliance Officer Greg Klein, and Faculty Senate President Milene Donlin.

President Monica Posey and Provost Robbin Hoopes also attend these meetings.

During Spring Semester, the group gathered twice in person for a meal and conversation.

The Board members hosted a lunch meeting on January 8 at the Queen City Club.

On April 11, the group met for a dinner at the Summit Restaurant, with food prepared and served by students enrolled in the Culinary Production class (CUL 205).

“At both of these meetings, we’ve talked a lot about the College budget, including the need for more transparency in how the budget is developed and how budget priorities are established,” Abbey said.

“Faculty members have insights that Board members might not have about where additional spending could improve our support for students and make a big difference in their success,” Milene added.

“The Budget Advisory Team (BAT) that includes faculty

representatives was added to the AAUP contract several years ago to try to improve budget transparency and increase faculty involvement in budget decisions,” Abbey said.

“But for the past few years, faculty serving on BAT have felt frustrated that the BAT wasn’t functioning effectively, and opportunities for more strategic investment might have been overlooked,” Abbey added.

Faculty members said much of the discussion at the April

***see Faculty meetings  
with BOT / 2***

**All College employees are invited to enjoy**  
**AAUP Happy Hour  
& Post-Commencement Celebration**

**Sunday, May 5, 2024**  
**MadTree Brewing - Oakley Taproom**  
**3301 Madison Rd., Cincinnati 45209**

**(AAUP is happy to facilitate comradery & conversation  
but please plan to purchase your own food & drinks)**

## **Faculty meetings with BOT / continued from 1**

meeting examined how College budget decisions can contribute more effectively to promoting success for students and faculty.

Greg said, "The Board members asked us how they can help faculty, and we said we hope the College can 'loosen the purse strings' and invest more in initiatives and services that will let faculty do more to assist student success.

"It seems like a lot of the Board's budget focus in the recent past has been on putting aside funds for maintenance and construction projects," Greg said. "That's understandable given the condition of some College facilities. Nobody wants more problems like the water line break."

"At the same time, the College needs to look at ways to become more proactive, rather than reactive, in meeting student and employee needs," Greg added.

### **Recent meeting focused on shared governance and strategic planning**

During the April meeting, the faculty representatives described how shared governance processes are carried out at the College, including the responsibilities of the appointed and elected committees listed in Article 6 of the AAUP contract.

The faculty members also helped Board members understand other ways faculty share responsibilities for College decision-making, such as serving on screening committees for new faculty and administrators, and serving on the Academic Response Team that made critical decisions related to pandemic-era operations.

"The Board members commented that faculty

being involved in so many ways shows a lot of passion for achieving the College's mission," Milene said.

"They asked us why we put so much effort into governance work, and we explained that working as a faculty member isn't just a job," Abbey said. "It's a career, and we do everything we can to make a positive difference in the lives of our students."

"We also talked about ways Board members could gain deeper understanding of faculty work, perhaps by visiting some classes or participating more directly in events like ENGAGE," Abbey said.

At both the January and April meetings, some of the time was spent talking about processes that might be used to put together the next Strategic Plan.

Since the current Strategic Plan (available on the College [website](#)) covers the time period 2020-2025, development of a new plan will start soon.

"We emphasized that strategic priorities and budget priorities must be aligned. Faculty involvement in Strategic Planning can help ensure that crucial needs for the future are fully considered," Greg said.

President Posey said faculty members will be part of a team that will attend a Strategic

Planning conference in June, hosted by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Faculty members said the next meeting with the Trustees hasn't been scheduled yet, but they expect meetings to continue in the future.

"Mr. Howe and Ms. Booth said they want to fully understand the work that faculty members do, so that will be a topic for future meetings," Abbey said.

"We may be inviting a program chair to a future meeting, since chairs have so many crucial responsibilities that lead to success for students in their programs," Abbey added.

"We anticipate more discussion of strategic planning also," Greg said. "We believe the Board members are interested in long-term planning that goes beyond immediate problems and addresses Cincinnati State's 'brand identity' for the future."

"As faculty, we greatly appreciate the time and energy that Board members are investing in hearing faculty perspectives through extended conversations," Abbey said.

"It's encouraging to know that our Trustees want to work directly with us to improve Cincinnati State's ability to serve our students and the entire community."



***AAUP wishes everyone  
a great Summer Break,  
and a great Summer Semester  
(where applicable)***

# FACT discussion of chair responsibilities will include data on faculty roles collected with help from OACC

The current AAUP contract includes language (in Appendix B) stating that AAUP and the administration will meet to “evaluate the current method for describing program chair responsibilities and determining program chair release units.”

The language in Appendix B also says discussion will include “examining data that describes program chair responsibilities and associated release units at peer institutions.”

As a first step in carrying out this contract provision, the AAUP and College administrators have agreed to use research support from the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) to collect information about expectations for program chairs at other community colleges in Ohio.

AAUP Chapter President Abbey Yee said, “Every time we have AAUP contract negotiations, the language that describes program chair work is a topic of discussion.”

“During bargaining last summer, we achieved some significant improvements in the contract language that describes program chair work” Abbey said.

“For instance, the current contract provides additional workload units for program chairs whose responsibilities for marketing their program and recruiting adjuncts goes beyond just ‘assisting’ administrators.”

“However, we know that program chairs are still concerned about the numbers of tasks they are responsible for, and the limited amount of help provided to carry out those responsibilities,” Abbey continued.

“During bargaining, we agreed that more investigation and discussion is needed,” Abbey said. “The OACC has resources to support conducting statewide research.”

Abbey said she attended two virtual meetings in February along with Provost Robbin Hoopes and OACC representatives, including Anne Foster, the OACC Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and former Director of Institutional Research at Cincinnati State.

“We outlined a process for identifying the other Ohio community colleges where program chair work is similar to Cincinnati State, and then conducting focus groups with faculty from those institutions,” Abbey said.

“I think that by the end of Fall Semester 2024, we should have research results that will provide a sound basis for continuing the conversation here at Cincinnati State,” Abbey continued.

Discussions about possible modifications to contract language that affects program chairs will take place in meetings of the Faculty/ Administration Communication Team (FACT).

“FACT was created as part of the first AAUP contract in 1990,” Abbey said. “We have used FACT many times throughout the years to resolve complicated problems and address concerns in between formal negotiations.”

“Of course, several program chairs will be part of the FACT group when AAUP and the administration start to talk about possible changes,” Abbey said.

“AAUP’s goal is to make it possible for faculty program chairs to provide effective leadership for their programs that results in better experiences for their students,” Abbey said.

“We hope that during the next academic year we’ll be able to make progress toward achieving our goal.”

## AAUP “stress relief kits” helped students

Members of Cincinnati State AAUP distributed nearly 300 “stress relief kits” to give students a boost in the weeks after Spring Break.

Faculty members assembled the kits at an AAUP Chapter Meeting on February 26, forming “assembly lines” to fill small bags with items such as granola bars, candy, small notebooks and colorful pencils, and a stress relief toy.

Each bag also contained a hand-written motivational message from a faculty member.

The gift bags were distributed on March 19 and 20, 2024, from

a table set up on the ATLC First Floor.

AAUP Chapter President Abbey Yee said, “We appreciate the many faculty members who took time to support the project by donating items and helping us put together and hand out the kits.”

Several faculty members reported that students appreciated the recognition and small gifts provided by AAUP.

“A lot of students said they were grateful to receive the messages of support as well as the ‘fun’ items from the faculty,” Abbey added.

# AAUP awards Battistone & Stoll scholarships for 2024

The 2024 recipients of scholarships awarded annually by AAUP are Michael Arnett (Aviation Maintenance Technology) and Alovode Sangnidjo (Pre-Business Administration).

Michael is the recipient of the AAUP John M. Battistone Scholarship and Alovode was awarded the AAUP Kenneth V. Stoll Scholarship.

Each AAUP scholarship provides \$1,000 to a student who has demonstrated excellence while pursuing their degree at Cincinnati State.

The AAUP scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees, or books to assist the student in completing their studies.

A committee of AAUP members reviews scholarship applications and makes recommendations to the AAUP officers, who vote on the award of the scholarships.

Application criteria include a minimum GPA of 3.0 as well as an essay and letters of recommendation.

For the Battistone scholarship, preference is given to a qualified student who also has a labor union affiliation (self or family member), but union affiliation is not required to receive either scholarship.

Mike, who is a member of UPS Teamsters union, said in his essay that his career goal is to work at a leading aviation company, specializing in commercial aviation, and “to be at the forefront of technological advancements.”

Mike also is involved in community service by assisting his church in distributing food to families in need, and helping with fundraising for the United Way and Habitat for Humanity. He said these experiences have “motivated me to give back to society.”

Alovode, a member of the American Postal Workers Union, plans to eventually earn a bachelor’s degree in accounting and become a professional accountant or auditor.

In the future, she would

like to establish a non-profit organization that would provide internships for accounting students in the U.S. and “allow them to travel to isolated communities around the world to provide free financial advice and services.”

The John Battistone Scholarship honors a founding member of the Cincinnati State AAUP Chapter who served as the Chapter’s Contract Compliance Officer and Chief Negotiator for many years.

The Kenneth V. Stoll Scholarship recognizes a member of the College’s first graduating class who became a faculty member and academic administrator in Engineering Technologies, and served as an AAUP officer and bargaining team member.

To donate online to the AAUP Scholarship funds, go to the [Give](#) section of the College website.



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