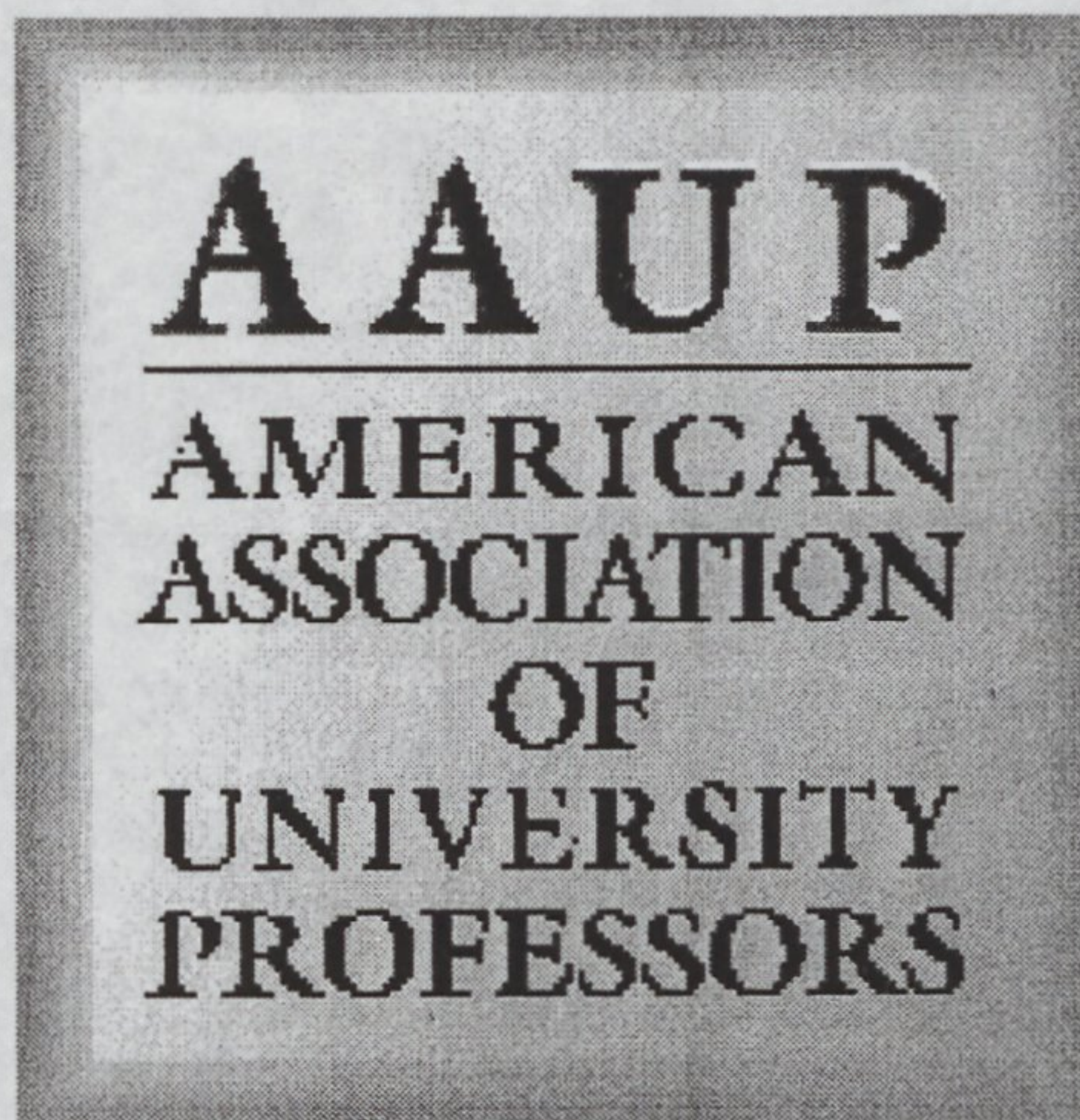


9-3-02



ECU AAUP NEWS

FALL 2002

Quotable

"Academic freedom entails that academic and curricular decisions in a university must be made by the faculty. When the faculty's considered professional judgements are limited or overturned by others, academic freedom ceases to exist, and the university ceases to function as a university." — Richard Veit, Chair of the UNC Faculty Assembly before a University of North Carolina Board of Governors Committee (News and Observer 8/25/02)

Greetings from the President

Colleagues:

On behalf of the ECU chapter of the AAUP, welcome to another East Carolina academic year! 2002-2003 promises be an important year in deciding the future of our institution. As most of you know, the administration recently decided to move the faculty of the mathematic, history and English education programs from the College of Arts and Sciences to the School of Education, against the overwhelming vote of those units and the Faculty Senate—an unprecedented decision that raises many questions concerning fundamental principles of shared governance. This is but one of a number of issues that should cause concern among the faculty; for this reason, the Editors of the newsletter have chosen to dedicate this issue exclusively to the topic of shared governance.

We hope that the questions raised will stimulate thoughtful discussion among faculty members, and perhaps convince some of you to join the AAUP in its efforts to defend academic freedom, shared governance, and the ideals upon which our profession is founded.

Our sincere wishes for a successful academic year!

Shared Governance is Ours to Lose

Recent events and decisions by administrators at ECU regarding Teacher Education programs and faculty pose serious questions about the nature of governance at our institution. In one corporate model of governance that grew to prominence through the 90s and beyond, management routinely makes decisions and takes actions that do not accord with the interests of stockholders, consumers or employees. The Enron scandal shows that such a model may not be appropriate even for the corporate world, let alone for academia. Why then is ECU's new management team promoting the Enron model of governance? Shared governance is something that the faculty, apparently, cannot take for granted at ECU. Rest assured, whether or not your department was directly affected by this situation, you will certainly feel the impact if shared governance is allowed to be compromised.

Q: ECU subscribes to the concept of shared governance. A serious question was put before the university regarding its Teacher Education programs. The faculty participated in this discussion over a full academic year, bringing to bear its considerable professional experience on the issues involved. Faculty requests for an outside panel of experts to contribute their opinions to the discussion were rejected by the administration. In April, the Faculty Senate, following upon the recommendations and findings published by the Educational Policies and Planning Committee, voted by the overwhelming margin of 47-to-8 against Vice Chancellor Thompson's proposal to remove three Teacher Education programs from the College of Arts and Sciences. After two months of silence by the administration on the matter, Chancellor Muse announced in a tersely worded June memorandum that he would contravene the faculty decision. He did not participate in the discussions, nor did he allow an opportunity for the faculty to respond before he finalized his decision. What does this mean for the future of shared governance at ECU under Chancellor Muse?

Q: Since 1999, the American Council on Education, the main organization of university administrators in the US, has promoted an "Action Agenda for Presidents." The first action cited in that document is "College and University Presidents Must Take the Lead in Moving the Education of Teachers to the Center of the Institutional Agenda." In response to the administration's proposal to remove three Teacher Education programs from the College of Arts and Sciences, the faculty hosted a year-long discussion on these programs. That discussion culminated in the faculty's overwhelming decision in favor of retaining those programs in Arts and Sciences. Why did Chancellor Muse refrain from taking part in the discussion until the time he announced that he would contravene the faculty's decision? In what way does that constitute "taking the lead?"

Q: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), our accreditation association, publishes policies, procedures and guidelines for accreditation. Their most important standards are termed 'principles of accreditation.' Principle 12, listed under the heading *Standards for all Educational Programs*, states unequivocally, "The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty." The Educational Policies and Planning Committee delivered a Report on the "Proposal to move Three Secondary Education BS Degree programs from the College of Arts and Sciences to the School of Education." This report focused on the content, quality and effectiveness of the three Teacher Education programs in question, and found that there was no basis for moving these programs. Despite that finding, in a mid-summer memorandum, Chancellor Muse ordered these programs moved. How does that accord with SACS Accreditation Principle 12, giving faculty "primary responsibility for the content, quality and effectiveness of its curriculum?"

Q: The 1966 "Statement on Governance of Colleges and Universities" was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the American Council on Education and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. It states,

"The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication,

have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board. Budgets, personnel limitations, the time element, and the policies of other groups, bodies, and agencies having jurisdiction over the institution may set limits to realization of faculty advice."

How does the administration plan to give the faculty the recommended opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board? When does Chancellor Muse plan to communicate his reasons to the faculty, beyond the terse statement of administrative authority that he has given? Will there be a report that gives the future outlook on graduate and undergraduate student enrollment, faculty recruitment, grants and external funding and other issues of content, quality and effectiveness of the curriculum that stem from this move?

Q: The removal of Teacher Education programs from the College of Arts and Sciences was accompanied by moving a number of faculty members from their home departments to the School of Education. Some of the affected faculty members have employment contracts with the university. Provisions of certain contracts, as well as addenda to those contracts state explicitly that the faculty member is to be employed, for example, in the Mathematics Department. Does the university plan to recognize its contractual obligations under North Carolina law? Might administrative violation of employment contracts have a negative impact on faculty and staff recruitment?

Durham-based Education Research Foundation Cancels Grants with ECU Ed School

In the wake of ECU Chancellor Muse's announcement this past summer that he would transfer teacher education faculty and programs out of the College of Arts and Sciences in opposition to a faculty vote, the Shodor Education Foundation, a Durham-based education research foundation, decided to cancel over \$100,000 of cooperative grants with ECU. During the academic year 2001-2002 debate on teacher education at ECU, the faculty's repeated calls for review by an outside panel of experts were denied. Shodor's action was the first response to the move from the academic community outside ECU since Muse's announcement. Regarding Muse's decision, Dr. Robert Panoff, Shodor executive director, stated, "Actions have consequences."

Ignoring Faculty is Bad Engineering

It is no secret that the ECU administration has been secretively discussing the prospects for an engineering school over the last couple of years. Typical of the administration's style of institutional planning, these discussions have been held without seeking faculty input through the channels (e.g., the Faculty Senate Educational Policies and Planning Committee) that have been established for that purpose. Instead, the planning takes place behind closed doors. Some have conjectured that an engineering planning document already has been drafted. With such a document safely free of faculty input, Dean of Arts and Sciences Keats Sparrow announced last week that Provost Swart is moving rapidly to make preliminary plans, and that faculty brainstorming (though not, apparently, organized participation) would now be in order. To give direction and encouragement to his faculty, especially the scientists and mathematicians, Dean Sparrow wrote a message eschewing "traditional, run-of-the-mill engineering programs such as electrical and mechanical," saying that "there's no need" for more of these, and promoting what he termed "innovative and newfangled academic programs." Dean Sparrow should be made aware that the prospects for "newfangled" engineering ideas such as perpetual motion, time machines and anti-gravity pills are known to be rather dim, and that systematically involving faculty with expertise in areas "traditionally" related to engineering would save the university the cost of having to backtrack to repair costly administrative boondoggles. Indeed, the School of Communication and Computer Science was recently cobbled together out of computer science faculty who were split away from the Math Department and two groups of communications faculty, who were happily rejoined after Dean Sparrow sent a group of them away to the School of Education. Administrators have already made furtive contact with faculty in the new school,

suggesting that planning for this wonderful, "newfangled academic program," will be complete as soon as administrators can figure out a way to discretely get rid of it.

Thompson's Speech Leaves Faculty Voiceless

In his provost interview presentation of June 19, 2002, Interim VCAA Robert Thompson gave the faculty a rare glimpse of the administration's perspective on ECU. To help us recall his views, he passed out a printed copy of his remarks, on which this article is based. The nature of one's observations reveals the nature of the lens one uses. Vice Chancellor Thompson spoke in broad terms about ECU's future, addressing "issues related to our finances, enrolment and program plans, and faculty that were woven throughout the [SACS] enhancement reports and the consultants' responses." Yet regardless of the subject to which he turned, Thompson's lens focused only on the aspects of money, command and control, leaving the other aspects that characterize a university such as diversity, educational objectives, academic freedom and shared governance either in a haze or simply out of view. Though he was not selected as provost, he continues to serve in a key planning role in the administration and his views reflect extensive discussion at the administrative level.

In regard to student enrolment, he stated, "this is our primary source of new dollars and program opportunities." In fact, he focused the whole discussion of students on the financial bottom line, and failed to address matters such as affirmative action and the state of education in the region's high schools. These are major topics of discussion in US universities generally and for eastern NC, these issues are particularly germane.

Thompson used the state budget shortfall as an excuse to roll out a whole new agenda for ECU, stating, "(1) that we must shift as much as possible to alternative sources of revenue and each of these carries their own consequences and costs – tuition, external funding from grants and contracts, and private fundraising; and (2) that we must seriously look at scaling back the less productive aspects of our operations and making strategic investments in other areas. These include our academic programs." This perspective, especially his latter statement on scaling back academic programs, plainly reveals the administration's view of faculty as marginal to the university. Given this view, in which student and faculty needs and contributions are reduced to financial terms, his use of the word "productivity" is especially troubling. The university is not the administrators' or anyone else's private business. It is not for the administration to decide that the graduate program in anthropology, say, is "less productive" than the juice bar in the Rec Center. One may recall the Chick-Fil-A cow floating over Croatan one year ago. We hope the selection of Dr. Swart, formerly of Burger King, as ECU provost does not foreshadow the appearance of an inflatable floating crown over Spilman.

Dr. Thompson, toward the end of his presentation, turned to address the administration's proposal for what they term the Institute for Advanced Studies that was contained in the SACS Enhancement Report. Speaking about those faculty members whose research does not strike his fancy, Dr. Thompson said, "I think we should prune those back as part of our move forward." Faculty research efforts at ECU are thus unselfconsciously compared to the privet hedge in front of his office. This absurdly mechanistic view, which is held uniformly by our top administrators, of the growth and development of the culture of scholarship in a university only indicates how long it has been since they have themselves participated in scholarly activity.

Though widely shared by other administrators, Thompson's attitudes are clearly not those that led to the successful development of UNC, Chapel Hill. In the course of a 1925 battle against the state legislature's efforts to suppress the teaching of evolution, former UNC president Harry W. Chase stated, "If the university doesn't stand for anything but appropriations, I, for one, don't care to be connected with it."

PostScript

We will soon come to the one year anniversary of 9/11/01. In the weeks and months following 9/11 the United States saw the leadership on a scale not seen since World War Two. What we currently need at ECU is leadership along these lines. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, while controversial, largely led the average person out of the depths of the Great Depression into the bright new world of the Four Freedoms. Great leaders have followers as well as critics. Will the faculty at ECU be led into the twenty-first century or be plunged into a depression without academic freedom and real shared governance? As 9/11 passes us we need to critically not only at our national leadership, but at how we are being led on campus. As another American said on 9/11, "Let's Roll."

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