

AAUP-UD April 2020 Newsletter

AAUP-UD <admin@aaupud.org>

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To: AAUP-UD <admin@aaupud.org>



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF UNIVERSITY
PROFESSORS

APRIL 2020

UNIVERSITY OF
DELAWARE CHAPTER

“Faculty members at UD are simply stronger together. Being in the AAUP-UD is the manifestation of that togetherness.”

--Prof. Michael O’Neal, Grievance Officer

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*A Message from Deni Galileo,
President of AAUP-UD*



The AAUP-UD’s Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

Since it became apparent that drastic measures would need to be taken by UD in response

to the COVID-19 pandemic, AAUP-UD leaders have been advocating for policies that protect its members both personally and professionally. These policies--now approved by UD administration--include extending deadlines for faculty appraisals and reviews; allowing faculty currently on sabbatical leave to petition for one-semester sabbatical-leave extensions; and giving faculty the option to exclude this semester's student feedback from performance reviews. AAUP-UD leadership is continuing and will continue to advocate for its members and their best interests.

Using Zoom, the AAUP-UD Executive Council and Steering Committee are continuing to meet at their regularly scheduled times and to conduct AAUP-UD business. Mindful that our current contract expires on June 30, 2021, these committees are still planning for the next round of collective bargaining, taking the current crisis into account as they do so. Like so many others, AAUP-UD leaders are also wondering if there are more ways that they can help their friends and colleagues.

That's where you come in. If you have any ideas for how the AAUP-UD can better serve you in particular or the faculty in general at this time, AAUP-UD leaders encourage you to let them know at admin@aaupud.org. The article shortly following--"The CMO and the GO: Protecting the CBA and the Faculty"--details many of the particular issues and concerns handled by our Contract Maintenance Officer (CMO), Martha Buell, and our Grievance Officer (GO), Michael O'Neal.

Financial Tips for Uncertain Times



The recent passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act has resulted in important [updates](#) to faculty members' retirement plans and flexible spending account options. For example, within certain parameters, UD faculty affected by

COVID-19 may now take **increased loans against and withdrawals from** their TIAA accounts without penalty. For more details, you may call 1-800-842-2776 or visit the [TIAA website](#). Also, faculty members may now use their flexible spending dollars to purchase **over-the-counter drugs and many health care products**, including menstrual supplies. For details, please refer to ASIFlex's informational [brochure](#).

The CMO and the GO: Protecting the CBA and the Faculty

The AAUP-UD is frequently at work behind the scenes, working to protect faculty members' rights and to ensure that all the provisions of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) (CBA) are maintained. Two of the AAUP-UD officers who spearhead these efforts are our Contract Maintenance Officer (CMO), Martha Buell, and our Grievance Officer (GO), Michael O'Neal. Because the nature of Martha's and Michael's work is frequently confidential, it often goes unrecognized by the greater membership. Rest assured, though, that Martha and Michael are fielding frequent questions by faculty members about their rights under the CBA, meeting with administrators to alert them to potential violations of the CBA, and helping to resolve disputes between administrators and faculty members through either official or unofficial channels. In other words, Martha and Michael, along with AAUP-UD President Deni Galileo, are constantly advocating for both individual faculty members and for the bargaining unit membership as a whole.



Martha Buell
Contract Maintenance Officer



Michael O'Neal
Grievance Officer

According to AAUP-UD by-laws, the Contract Maintenance Officer “represent[s] the AAUP-UD in matters involving the interpretation or implementation of the [Contract](#).” Our CMO since March 2019, Martha has already undertaken these activities: lobbied administrators for a clearer and more equitable application of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and administered workload policies; advocated for the completion of the CBA-mandated salary equity study and a follow-up report by a joint committee of AAUP-UD members and administrators; encouraged administration to better support faculty members in the transition to a modified TIAA plan structure and to increase the transparency with which it makes HR-related decisions; and worked with our Grievance Officer to ensure that individuals receive the retirement terms to which they are entitled by the CBA. Most recently, Martha has joined with other officers of the AAUP-UD and Faculty Senate leaders to encourage the administration to implement faculty-friendly policies in the face of our current COVID-19 crisis. (For more information on these faculty-friendly policies, see Provost Morgan's email of March 24 and the “The AAUP-UD's Response to the COVID-19 Crisis” above.)



Brian Hanson, Former
Grievance Officer



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SEVEN YEARS OF
DEDICATED SERVICE, BRIAN!



Whereas the AAUP-UD CMO works mainly on the policy level, the GO works mostly at the level of the individual. AAUP-UD by-laws state that the GO “meet[s] with faculty as required and process[es] grievances according to the guidelines established by the [CBA].” Faculty members who believe that they are being treated unfairly may turn to the GO for advice. This advice might be to address the problem unofficially, such as in a meeting including the faculty member, the GO, and a relevant administrator. This advice might be to take the matter to the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Privileges, the Department of Human Resources, or the Title IX office. Or, it might be to file a formal grievance, through which the GO will then guide the faculty member. According to former GO Brian Hanson, the majority of faculty who contact the GO do so about matters involving workload, promotion, and tenure.

If you would like to consult with one of these hard-working AAUP-UD officers, you may contact CMO Martha Buell at mjbuell@udel.edu or our new GO, Michael O’Neal, at oneal@udel.edu.

Brian Hanson Passes the GO Baton to Michael O'Neal

Brian Hanson, a professor in the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences, has stepped down as the AAUP-UD’s Grievance Officer (GO) after seven years of tireless advocacy on behalf of his fellow bargaining unit members. In a unanimous vote on March 6, the AAUP-UD Executive Council appointed Michael O’Neal, a professor in the Department of Earth Sciences, as his replacement. In the interviews below, both Brian and Michael describe why the role of GO is so important, why they both decided to serve in it, and why this transition in leadership has gone so smoothly (spoiler alert: Brian and Michael have been friends and colleagues for fifteen years). *These interviews have been edited slightly for brevity and clarity.*

[Interview with Brian Hanson:](#)

1) How long have you been a faculty member at UD? What is your official title?
I have been at UD since 1987. This was my first job after my post-doc, so I have stayed here my entire

career. I am currently a professor in the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences, but most of my career has been associated with the climatology or environmental science programs run by that department. I have been associate chair and chair of the department, and associate director and director of the environmental science program.

2) How long have you been a member of the AAUP-UD?

There was no real recruiting for the AAUP-UD when I arrived — I'm not sure we even had a department rep. But in the early 1990s, I started to realize that the CBA was significantly improving my condition, and I owed something back. So, I joined the AAUP-UD. I was removed from the AAUP, as is required, when I became chair of my department. Shortly after leaving that position in 2010, I rejoined the AAUP and was recruited later that year for an AAUP at-large Executive Council position. The recruiter was David Smith, my predecessor as Grievance Officer, who had worked with me on a couple of non-confrontational issues (we were cleaning up some language in workload and merit metric documents, not handling a grievance). There was some reshuffling of the Executive Council that year, so I was nominated for secretary of the chapter in my first Executive Council meeting and was eventually elected to that role by the membership. I served as secretary until David Smith retired (both as Grievance Officer and faculty) in 2013. When they started talking about who would replace David as GO, I mentioned that I might be interested. Next thing I knew, I was the GO. In 2016, I was included on the bargaining team that negotiated our current CBA. Because bargaining lasted three semesters instead of one, I actually had a sabbatical during the negotiations. I was out of the country for one bargaining session, but I think that's the only one I missed.

3) How long were you Grievance Officer? Why is this role important?

I am coming up to the end of seven years as Grievance Officer. Part of the job is to direct traffic. It is not clear to many of the faculty where they should go with issues. There are things I tell people to take up with their chair, Faculty Welfare and Privileges, HR, or the Title IX office, and sometimes I have to let people down nicely. Two areas that cover most of the things I actually help with are workload issues and promotion and tenure issues. Often, even those faculty members I can't help are grateful that they had someone from the AAUP-UD to consult.

4) Why are you confident that Michael O'Neal will be a strong GO? How will you assist him in this transition?

I was on the search committee that hired Michael O'Neal about fifteen years ago, so I have known him his entire UD career. We have co-taught courses, served on many of each other's graduate student committees, and collaborated on a number of projects. In other words, I know him quite well. We've also served together on AAUP-UD and Faculty Senate committees, where I've seen Michael's strong commitment to the rights of the faculty, particularly with respect to academic freedom and fairness. One thing necessary to do the Grievance Officer job is to maintain a respectful, even cordial,

relationship with members of the administration while also not being intimidated by them, and I think Michael will be good at that. To support Michael as he takes on this new role, I have shared the status of all active cases with him and shown him the procedural ropes involved in doing the job. I will also continue to assist him by serving as a Deputy Grievance Officer until he has become completely comfortable in his new role.

5) Will you continue to be a member of the AAUP-UD? Why?

I will continue to be in the AAUP-UD as long as I remain on the faculty. Having a majority of the faculty in the bargaining unit, preferably a great majority, be members of the AAUP-UD helps our credibility with the administration in all things, not just negotiating the CBA. Besides salaries, over the decades we have improved benefits, held the line as much as possible on retirement conditions, and maintained a system by which even senior, chaired professors or former administrators can resolve issues with the administration. Every member of the bargaining unit benefits from what a very small number of volunteers do for the AAUP-UD.

Interview with Michael O'Neal:

1) How long have you been a faculty member at UD? What is your official title, discipline, and specialty?

I have been a faculty member at UD for 15 years. I am a professor in the Department of Earth Sciences, specializing in climate/landscape interactions.

2) How long have you been a member of the AAUP-UD? In what capacities have you served?

I have been in the AAUP-UD for approximately ten years. Initially, a colleague discouraged me from joining the organization, and I followed this rather bad piece of advice for a while. But once I realized that I needed the AAUP-UD's help, I joined.

3) What motivated you to volunteer to be the grievance officer (GO)?

I've seen the critical importance of the GO in ensuring that policies and procedures at UD are applied with fairness to all those involved. Knowing how important a job it is, I took months to mull over whether I could make the time commitment and emotional investment that it requires.

4) What do you hope to accomplish in the role of GO and how? What will your approach to conflict resolution be?

Having seen Brian Hanson, our previous GO, in action, I've learned that there is definitely a balance to listening vs. taking action in doing the GO job well. Ensuring the fair application of the policies in the CBA and Faculty Handbook doesn't mean that the faculty member will always come out on top. However, I would like to end my time in the job knowing that the faculty felt completely supported by those of us handling grievances. More importantly, I don't want any faculty to think that we gave

anything less than our best effort in handling any of the issues brought to us.

5) Why do you think that it's important to be a member of the AAUP-UD?

Faculty members at UD are simply stronger together. Being in the AAUP-UD is the manifestation of that togetherness. It seems obvious that everyone would want to be a part of the single faculty advocacy organization that we have that supports all of us, in all ways, under all circumstances, throughout our careers.

Awards for Graduate Study Leading to Higher Ed Careers

Each year, the AAUP-UD presents two Undergraduate Student Awards to outstanding seniors who plan to attend graduate school in preparation for an academic career in university or college teaching or research. Each award is \$2,000 and is to be used to defer expenses related to graduate school. If you know of students who may be eligible, please forward them the [application](#) and [recommendation forms](#).



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