David Gruber receives Tacey Award

Calls it “The highest honor I could have” in presentation ceremony at Truman State

In a special presentation at Truman State University, on May 9, Philosophy Professor David F. Gruber received the Tacey Award from the Assembly of State Conferences. Tom Guild, Chair of the ASC, made the presentation and also read a resolution of appreciation from the AAUP Executive Council and the letter of nomination from the Missouri State Conference. The ASC is the umbrella group within the American Association of University Professors, currently representing 41 state conferences nationally. Truman State University President Barbara Dixon extended the congratulations of Gruber’s home institution.

The ASC Tacey Award is presented to an individual for outstanding service to a conference over a number of years. State conferences nominate individuals, and the ASC executive committee decides whether any of the nominees is qualified to receive the award. Except in rare circumstances, only one award is given, nationwide, in any year.

Gruber said he considered the Tacey award to be very important. “It is at the level of the state conferences where the really critical work of ASC is being done, in my experience. The most committed people gravitate to that level. They respond to concerned campus individuals who contact AAUP to form a chapter; they have to find out who the best people might be to carry out the important work of beginning or reviving an AAUP chapter and assist in getting those folks the support and training they need to sustain professional and academic values. To be given the Tacey Award is the highest honor I could have.”

Gruber’s work has also been honored this year by Truman State University’s Faculty Senate, the Truman AAUP chapter, and the Missouri Conference of AAUP, which, with the assistance of the Assembly of State Conferences, has established the David F. Gruber Leadership Development Award to support the training of AAUP activists.
Capitol Report
by John Harms

The last two annual meetings of the Conference have addressed state funding for higher education, which has been cut dramatically. For example, in FY 2003 and FY 2004, state appropriations for higher education were cut $140 million, and only $23 million had been restored by FY 2005. Missouri now ranks 46th among all states in per capita state tax appropriations. The state's falling appropriations are the result of a structural imbalance between revenues and appropriations. In order to balance the budget, state legislators have taken to cutting appropriations – much of it from higher education.

This situation is finally being addressed across the state. In July, the University of Missouri-Columbia sponsored a Symposium on Higher Education Funding, which was attended by Representatives Bearden and Kingery, who are key educational policy makers. A key part of the Symposium was Senator Ronald Teck from Colorado who explained the devastating educational results of that state's Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR). Then in early November, Missouri State University held a similar conference on, “Higher Education and the Public Good,” sponsored by the Office of the President and our AAUP Conference. Representatives Bearden and Kingery were also present at this conference. I provided the closing presentation and documented the precarious position of the state's higher education system.

The good news is that our legislators are aware of the problem and trying to do something about it. Rep. Bearden is working on a formula for funding higher education, which we need to follow closely. The bad news is that the state's public colleges and universities have been instructed to factor in possible cuts of 10-12% to existing budgets for the next year. The structural problem remains and the revenue side of the imbalance is not being looked at by the legislature. In fact, there is speculation that Rep. Bearden will introduce a TABOR appropriations limit this coming session. The outlook from the Capitol is not bright for Missouri's universities and colleges. The AAUP will have to be vigilant and active during these difficult financial times.

Spring Meeting Feb. 4

The annual Spring Meeting of the MOAAUP will focus on Missouri's continuing crisis in funding for higher education and on issues important to contingent faculty. Members are encouraged to attend, as are contingent faculty.

State officials involved in the debate over higher education funding will attend. Also, a panel of administrators and contingent faculty will discuss issues relevant to contingent faculty. The cost of attending will be $15 for members and $5 for contingent faculty. It will be held at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

AAUP Truman Town Hall Meeting:
Budget and FTE Ratios
by David Robinson

About 35 people gathered from nearly all divisions of Truman State's campus. The event began with a dedication to David Gruber. Truman Chapter Treasurer James Harmon presented a check for $770.00 to Chapter President, David Robinson. This is our memorial contribution to the David F. Gruber Leadership Award fund of MOAAUP.

Candy Young, chair of the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, presented the current budget situation and warned of looming crises. She explained how it has become inevitable that the student:faculty ratio, presently about 15:1, will soon be raised to 16:1. Participants' questions and comments reflected the need for more details, as well as their fears about what such pressures might do to the quality of our courses. There was some lively give and take with two administrators in attendance: Vice President Garry Gordon and Budget Director David Rector.

Many participants commented on President Linda Dixon's recent proposals for administrative restructuring. Some voiced concerns about costs and changes to our culture; others wondered if such changes might actually help us face the budget challenges and might also increase levels of peer review and faculty self-governance.
St. Louis Conference for Contingent Faculty to be held April 8

by Earl Henry

In April, part-time faculty in the St. Louis area will have an opportunity to meet one another, discuss issues of mutual concern, and plot strategies for the improvement of pay and working conditions. The St. Louis Conference for Contingent Faculty will be held on Saturday, April 8, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Clayton. In addition to a number of workshops on topics ranging from health insurance to professional rights and responsibilities, the conference will include several invited speakers.

The purpose of the meeting is to increase a sense of empowerment among the hundreds of adjunct faculty in the St. Louis area. Nationally nearly 50 percent of faculty in four-year colleges and universities today are part-time employees. While some of these adjuncts have full-time jobs outside higher education, Henry said, many do not. They often work simultaneously at two or more institutions, usually without offices, with little or no job security, and with neither health insurance nor retirement benefits.

The idea for a conference focusing on positive approaches to a difficult issue came from talking to adjunct faculty members at three different institutions over the summer. While they each lamented their situation, none of them seemed to have any hope for improvement. From this beginning point, a number of state AAUP members have since joined the conference steering committee. These include Michael Friedlander (Washington University), Jack Stretch (St. Louis University), and Linda Pitelka (Maryville University). To this point, interest and support for the conference have been beyond my wildest expectations.

Speakers To Present Divergent Views

Two principal speakers will highlight the contingent faculty conference. Professor Joe Berry, who is a part-time instructor at both Illinois and Roosevelt Universities, will focus on the advantages of organization. Berry has taught labor and organization at several institutions and is the author of a new book on the contingent faculty issue: *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower*. At lunch time, Dr. Edward Macias, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences at Washington University, will present an administrator’s perspective on current and future trends in higher education.

Cost and Registration

The April conference is open to all interested parties. Registration will begin about January 1, and the cost is low due to grants from the AAUP (both the Assembly of State Conferences and the Missouri Conference) as well as financial help from the American Federation of Teachers. An early registration fee of $25 for the entire conference is available until March 1; this price includes lunch at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. After March 1, general registration is $30. An optional breakfast meeting with Professor Berry, specifically on labor organization, is an additional $10 (again, with a light meal included).

stladjuncts.org

A dedicated website, stladjuncts.org, will be in place by January 1 and those interested may complete registration and payment online. For other questions or to join the conference steering committee, contact Earl Henry at henryea@charter.net.

Obituary: David Gruber

by David Robinson

David’s battle with cancer ended on Aug. 3, and on the evening of Aug. 6, under a brilliant but dimming northern Missouri sky, Laura Gruber gathered David’s people in her back yard for a wonderful celebration of his life and work. It was just a party, really—the kind that David always liked, only bigger. We interrupted the comity for just a few moments, for a short AAUP memorial. I announced that our chapter was pledging $500 to the Gruber Leadership Development Fund. Keith Hardeman, VP of the MO Conference, explained how David had mentored the officers of that organization. Mary Burgan, past Executive Secretary of national AAUP, explained some of his work at the national level (especially on policy for contingent faculty), and she also regaled us with warm and witty remembrances by lots of people that we did not know (but David obviously did). It was over; I was exhausted but on the next day our work continued for the new academic year.
MSU Chapter sponsors budget analyst appearance
by William Burling

On Oct. 3 the MSU chapter sponsored a visit to Springfield and the MSU campus by Amy Blouin, executive director of the Missouri Budget Project, a non-partisan organization that analyzes and informs the public about Missouri budgetary and fiscal policy options. (http://www.mobudget.org).

Blouin spoke twice on the MSU campus. In the morning she was invited by new MSU President Michael Nietzel to speak to the university’s Administrative Council. She presented information to the vice presidents and other various high-ranking administrators on developing legislative initiatives, particularly the gathering inertia for a “Taxpayer Bill of Rights” (TABOR) bill.

Later in the morning Blouin met with Mr. Robert Leger, the Editor of the Springfield News-Leader, the community’s daily newspaper.

An open session was held in the afternoon, at which faculty, students, and reporters heard Blouin present a program similar to the morning session’s.

The upshot of Blouin’s message is quite clear. The Missouri legislature has enacted massive budget cuts negatively affecting higher education. Not only is no relief on the horizon, if the TABOR legislation becomes law, funding will be even more severely reduced. Blouin emphasized that since the state of Colorado enacted TABOR in 1992, the state’s “public sphere” infrastructure has been decimated by budget cuts. Since her visit in early October, Colorado has since voted to suspend TABOR for five years in order to repair some of the massive damage of the past decade. This stunning reversal of policy was championed by the Republican governor and strongly endorsed by the business community and the Republican-controlled legislature.

Service Program

The Missouri AAUP service program is available to assist with local chapter issues and in forming new chapters. Keith Hardeman is the service director. Please contact him for assistance in calling an organizational meeting, informing your administration, drafting bylaws, inducting officers, holding meetings, and membership development. His e-mail address is on page 2.

MOAAUP can also assist in a variety of chapter activities. Contact Hardeman for information.