



UCO *Priority Press*

From the President

John Wood, Ph.D., Chapter President

We have gone through some trying times between the nexus of crazy weather, a devastating pandemic and a tough economic reality.

Our AAUP executives have talked to our president about these topics and will do so again with an unprecedented third executive meeting with her this academic year. We

are also in conversation with her on Title IX issues, especially since President Biden has won and we expect changes to come down the pike.



We have also become aware of the fiscal challenges, including not filling 90% of faculty lines this coming year. AAUP needs to be at the table for these discussions and we'll do the best we can to be there. Our faculty senators will keep up on what is going on there.

We are also concerned with some of the issues stemming from legislative activity, such as HB 1888, which jeopardizes our academic freedom prohibiting certain entities from conducting gender or sexual diversity training or counseling. These trainings are vital in fostering a tolerant and understanding work environment.

Organizations have a responsibility to their employees to prevent workplace discrimination. This is very important as well as we deal with discrimination issues on our campus.

Continued on page 2

Teaching portfolios provide more comprehensive, effective teaching evaluations

*By Elizabeth S. Overman, Ph.D.
Sergeant-at-Arms*

UCO is fast approaching the end of the spring 2021 semester, which means students are receiving emails asking them to evaluate the courses they are taking.

These evaluations are all important for faculty who are on tenure track, as well as for instructors, wanting to continue teaching at UCO.

The American Sociological Association and twenty other learned societies question the validity of student evaluations of teaching and the fact that it has been proven over and over that they are biased against protected classes of people. This makes them unsuitable as well as unfair instruments for evaluation of professors up for promotion, tenure and post-tenure review.

A trend now among universities instead is encouraging faculty to develop teaching portfolios that are capable of demonstrating the scope and quality of a professor's teaching abilities. Teaching portfolios, made up of factual descriptions of teaching strengths and accomplishments, are composed of documents and materials which collectively

reveal the breadth of a professor's teaching performance.

Putting together a portfolio requires a great deal of thought and consideration as to what proves the teaching is excellent. Such preparation is conducive to self-reflective examinations of teaching and learning leading to personal and professional development.



The process of crafting a descriptive narrative of teaching practice, supported with a few selective evidentiary materials, are times when faculty dig deep and

address the "why" of teaching more than the "what."

Comprehensive teaching portfolios will clearly show how the practice of one's teaching is consistent or aligned with one's teaching effectiveness. Importantly, institutions concerned about measuring actual teaching effectiveness will find in the well-developed portfolio evidence from a variety of sources that are delineated contextually in an accompanying narrative.

Thus, each selected document and other materials in the portfolio must be supported by firm empirical evidence. Material is generated by the professor,

Continued on page 2

Remote learning during Pandemic has its own lessons

By Jim Bidlack
Emeritus President

Conversion to remote Learning during the COVID-2019 Pandemic has made a difference.

Not long ago, there were correspondence courses and self-learning modules that did the same thing, but not as efficiently as what we have today with Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex, Google Meet and even Skype.

What I can say is that video conferencing, and all the technology that goes with these communication alternatives, has made teaching more fun and accessible to students who otherwise may not be learning due to distance issues.

Perhaps as many or most of us return to face-to-face teaching, we should consider continuance of these platforms, particularly for those who enjoy teach-

ing remotely and those students who prefer remote Learning.

While face-to-face learning should, and always will be, the most effective way of teaching in all of education, there are many of us who have shown that remote learning can and will be done when certain situations arise.

Time will tell if this type of learning adequately prepares students for the future.



Teaching portfolios provide more comprehensive, effective teaching evaluations

Continued from page 1

peers, and students, and in some cases, other stakeholders.

The contents of a portfolio would include a statement of teaching philosophy, a description of teaching responsibilities and brief samples of learning objectives, teaching strategies and assessment methods.

It would also include course materials such as course handbooks, examinations, handouts, assignments, learning resources, statements about involvement in curriculum design and the development of teaching innovations,

discussion of student feedback and a sample of student feedback questionnaires, descriptions of professional development and growth as a teacher.

The current harvesting of student evaluations at UCO serves no realistic practical purpose. The faculty are denied the opportunity to add depth and meaning to their work.

Opportunities to showcase their pedagogy or comment directly upon their experiences are obviated. Institutions that truly prize teaching see portfolios as a means that ensure continuous development of their professoriate.

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From the President

Continued from page 1

In addition, our Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System (OTRS) will be impacted by HB 2293. While we have had healthy funding levels, this bill will take \$28 million a year from our pensions annually, jeopardizing our retirement.

If you are worried about either of these, please connect with your legislator and connect with us.

To find your representative: Oklahoma State House <https://www.okhouse.gov/Members/Default.aspx>.

To find your senator: Oklahoma State Senate <https://oksenate.gov/contacts>.

The UCO AAUP chapter is a busy group. We meet monthly, and our latest virtual meeting was April 9 at 1 p.m.

We also hold an occasional social hour, and our next virtual drinks (social hour) is April 23 at 5:30 p.m. If you are interested in attending, please, email me jwood41@uco.edu and I'll send you the link.

We are focused on academic freedom and shared governance, as well as other issues. If you have concerns or issues, please don't hesitate to contact me jwood41@uco.edu.

The good news is that the UCO AAUP chapter is growing. We have moved from 23 members to more than 50 today during this academic year.

We need more faculty to raise their voice, too. Here is our website: <https://blogs.uco.edu/aaup/>, and our page to join: <https://blogs.uco.edu/aaup/join/>. Also join our Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/ucoaaup.

Join Title IX Committee

The Title IX Accountability Committee was created last semester in response to several inquiries from faculty, students and staff about the role of Title IX on campus, transparency, faculty representation and trauma informed responses.

If you are interested in joining this committee please email Dr. Lindsey Churchill at lchurchill@uco.edu.