Exploiting or Protecting Human Capital: A Question for Higher Education in Georgia
by Hugh Hudson

Faculty and staff within the University System of Georgia must remain vigilant about discussions by the Board of Regents regarding possible changes in post-retirement health-care benefits for (at present) new hires. Unfortunately, these conversations fit a troubling pattern.

A number of the proposals under consideration reflect a failure to understand the nature of universities. They further reveal perturbing confusion of "a business" with "a university." In brief, the underlying assumption appears to be that faculty are cheap labor, easily replaceable. And if faculty do not like the cuts to their benefits and wages, get rid of them and replace them with more manageable sorts. The university's primary goal, in this model, is to maximize profit through an attack on its "labor costs." Thus arises the desire to "solve" the financial problems confronting higher education in Georgia on the backs of faculty and staff. It also accounts for beliefs about the reasonableness of wage cuts (furloughs), reductions in the state's share of health care costs, increased instructional demands without corresponding increases in salaries, and a refusal to address the crisis in the Optional Retirement Plan through permitting faculty and staff buy-back into TRS, that are shared from the

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Donna Potts on Higher Education's "Holy" Trinity:

Academic Freedom, Shared Governance, and Tenure by Anne C. Richards

Dr. Donna Potts served as keynote speaker for the Spring GA Conference AAUP meeting. A recent candidate for President of the national AAUP, she is also a leader at her own institution (Kansas State University) and a past president of the Kansas Conference of the AAUP.

Upon learning at the outset of this meeting that 48 chapters of the AAUP had formed in Georgia, only a small percentage of which was represented at the meeting, Dr. Potts said she wanted "to talk about ways to come up with the commitment that led to the formation of these chapters in the first place." She noted that the obituary of a colleague indicated he had been a "lifelong member of AAUP." As she reflected on how much AAUP had meant to him, she wondered, "What can we do to create similar commitment?"

In addition, having read Dr. Hudson's article in Inside Higher Education about the "Assault on Tenure in Georgia" and having learned about the 55 faculty (including 20 tenured faculty) who had been terminated at Clark Atlanta University, she

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SAVE THE DATE! MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

GEORGIA CONFERENCE OF THE AAUP

FALL MEETING: Saturday, October 9, 2010
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
Kennesaw, GA
10 am – 3 pm

Details to be announced in follow-up mailing.

Spring 2011 meeting to be held at Georgia Southern University
Legislative Matters
Steve Anthony

The 2010 legislative Session has come and gone – although there was a time where we were not sure if it would go! The budget dominated the proceedings. Finally, a 17.8 billion dollar budget was passed that relies on 4 things: a 3% rate of growth next year, a fee increase bill, a hospital tax increase bill, and 1.7 billion dollars in federal stimulus money. This federal money will not be available next year, so look for more cuts.

The Regents’ budget took a $155,000,000 cut System-wide. Each campus will be responsible for allocating its pro rata cuts, which themselves are decided by the Board.

SB 308 – the gun bill – passed but in a less onerous fashion. Now, and I say this tongue in cheek, legally permitted guns are only allowed on campus in the parking lots. This can be seen as a victory for grass roots efforts. It could have been a lot worse. For details of the bill go to http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009_10/fulltext/sb308.htm

Next year promises to be even more “exciting.” Remember, this is a very important election year with all our statewide offices up as well as the entire General Assembly.

Have a good summer.
Steve Anthony.

Augusta State University hosted the April, 2010 meeting of the GA Conference AAUP. President William Bloodworth (center) welcomed the group and answered questions from attendees about the state of higher education in Georgia. Faculty at Augusta State, including Mike Bishku (left), Bill Reese (right) and Michelle Benedict and Shelly Ford (not pictured) were among those handling arrangements for this meeting.

Human Capital

Top of State government on down. Faculty in Georgia understand that higher education is not a business. If persons do not comprehend this fact, then they cannot but fail to do their duty to protect vital resources, for a better educated Georgia. The university’s primary function is not to maximize profit. Faculty are not “costs” to be “controlled.” Faculty and the supporting staff are the very heart of the educational enterprise. They and the students they teach are the “products” of the university, products that are threatened by the current drive for the managerialization, the Enronization, of the university. The university is the place where ideas are contested, where “truths” are challenged, and above all else citizens, not subjects, are created (for citizenship is a learned social responsibility whereas subjection is a condition of servitude). Yet too many seek to transform the university into a handmaiden for business and industry and a temporary dominant political elite, whose primary interest is to increase profits and power.

The present assault on wages and benefits is, at its heart, an attack on the democratic purpose of the university – the recreation every generation, through the efforts of faculty, of essential citizens empowered by the force of the mind to protect and expand the gains of democracy. No competent business persons would fail to take appropriate care of their capital – whether it be to maintain buildings, properly repair vital machinery, or protect their IT system from compromise. How can we in higher education be less responsible for the human capital that educates our children, increases our economic competitiveness, enhances our knowledge, and preserves our democratic values?

AAUP’s principles regarding faculty rights and obligations apply to this issue. AAUP holds that “Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society.” Without the promise of modest economic security, including continued health care coverage post-employment, we will lose the best and brightest to Wall Street, or the drug companies, or even to government service. We have far too much yet to do in Georgia to allow such valuable human capital to dwindle away.

Looking at the past several years in Georgia, we can readily see forces that threaten the gains of higher education in our state: the efforts to introduce in the legislature the so-called “Academic Bill of Rights,” the creation of a “tenure-free” new unit in the University System; the unrestrained growth in the employment of faculty off tenure; the use of post-tenure review by some administrators as a means to punish “uncooperative” faculty; the cancellation of campus talks by “radicals” to keep the powerful happy; the establishment of policies, including the imposition of furloughs, without appropriate faculty involvement.

AAUP’s principles, to work for the creation of a free society, built on reason not obedience, are under attack – whether it be the attempt to remove the study of Thomas Jefferson from the teaching of U.S. history, the effort to restrict cell research, the hostility toward research in human sexuality, the deintellectualization of political discourse, the removal of ethics from business operations, or the managerialization of the university. We as faculty have the duty to uphold the principles of reasoned debate based on evidence and social responsibility. Every discipline has controversy – it is the discourse surrounding controversy that moves society forward.

Can higher education in Georgia be saved from this myopia? I do not know. But I do know that unless we are willing to do battle together, we are far less likely to bring about changes needed. At this stage, the only group capable of stopping the continued attack on wages and benefits are our university presidents. Some are aware; others need your help to do their duty. And while the presidents resist efforts to destroy the economic security of the professoriate in Georgia, we as faculty must do our part to resist those who, lacking faith in reason, rely solely on force. We must also do more to support the principle of reasoned debate based on evidence in our efforts to preserve and sustain the common good.

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said she wanted even more to say something that mattered. “If there’s anything to be gained from reading such dire reports,” she said, “it’s an understanding of how precarious the whole structure of academia is when any one of the components of the ‘holy’ trinity is allowed to erode.”

She explained that in the title of her talk, “Higher Education’s ‘Holy’ Trinity,” the meaning of “holy” derives from the words whole, hale, and healthy. There’s an inherent stability in a triangle, or a three-legged stool, Potts explained. “Change the position of any one component and the stability of the whole is affected.” Tenure is jeopardized if there is no shared governance. If faculty are chastised for challenging administrators, tenure is eventually in jeopardy. When tenure is in jeopardy, academic freedom is threatened. And when this erosion take place in a context in which only 29% of faculty tenure-track begin with, all those associated with higher education suffer.

“I know I’m preaching to the choir,” Potts noted. “It’s the people outside these walls who need to be convinced.” How do we convey to the public that academic freedom, shared governance, and tenure are important? The percentage of tax dollars devoted to education is dwindling in every state. Presidents are trying to find alternative revenue streams. Faculty need to do more to educate people, Potts maintained. She noted that Georgians were “lucky enough to have an AAUP lobbyist,” but faculty must support their efforts. In Kansas, she and her colleagues meet one on one with legislators, although they find it difficult to compete for their attention as other groups do by “handing out treats.” When those associated with the Kansas Conference of AAUP met with legislators one Valentine’s Day, they brought them home-baked cookies that read: “Our Hearts are in Higher Education.” They relied on their rhetorical skills in sharing concerns, but found that others gave legislators such items as heart-shaped boxes of flowers.

While encouraging faculty to take a more active role in support of AAUP principles, Potts acknowledged the difficulties faced by those who do so within their own ranks. In her experience, faculty are “all too apt to attack fellow faculty who are a little too forthcoming for their taste.” Some faculty find the work of shared governance “too time-consuming” and, as a result, would rather leave various tasks to administrators. Faculty may even spread the kind of gossip that can lead to tenure denial. In one instance cited, a colleague said of a young woman going up for tenure, “Once she gets tenure, she’ll never publish again. She will only spend time with her children.” Often, upon learning about colleagues being denied tenure in other states, faculty don’t do anything in response. Faculty usually resent administrators who adopt the corporate model for the operation of academic institutions. Yet they often adopt the corporate model themselves in efforts to meet their own research needs. Administrators sometimes pit departments against each other, leaving untenured faculty with the impression that they have no choice but to fight for the scraps thrown their way. For more progress to be made, faculty have to be willing to set aside daily their personal animosities and petty jealousies, Potts explained. They also have to be able to explain the significance of shared governance, academic freedom, and tenure.

Fortunately, Potts noted, there is “widespread acceptance” that there are principles by which academic institutions should be governed and that these are best articulated by the AAUP. Accordingly, Faculty Handbooks should be based on AAUP principles and faculty should understand that they are relinquishing their prerogatives for shared governance of their institutions when they don’t participate more actively in campus governance. Potts cited a case brought to Committee A. A faculty member, who was a productive researcher, was dismissed after three years for “low performance.” Although this was an unwarranted conclusion, the national office of the AAUP was not informed when the first negative evaluation was received by the faculty member. If AAUP had been informed at that time, Potts stated, it would have been enough to arouse concern. The institution where this individual worked had only 9 members in its AAUP chapter. As a result, it was hard for the word to spread far enough on campus about what was happening. If one individual could have alerted the chapter, the faculty member’s fate might have been different.

Potts described from first-hand experience the dismal state of academic life that can result when an administrator has no regard for shared governance. Like-minded administrators are brought into positions of power and influence on campus. Faculty who air complaints receive threatening phone calls. Morale drops. Faculty show symptoms of “learned helplessness.” Senate meetings become a joke. Nothing of importance or substance is given faculty to decide or they spend years quibbling over minor policy matters.

Confronted in the past with such circumstances on her own campus, she and her colleagues sought the assistance of the national AAUP through its Committee A. They were advised to introduce new business of a substantive nature in the Faculty Senate, to consider a vote of no confidence in the President, and to keep working to recruit AAUP members. Eventually, much to the relief of faculty, the president was replaced. An audit conducted as he left showed many shady financial arrangements that led to lawsuits. Despite this, to the chagrin of faculty, the former president was given an “obscenely large severance package.”

Following the installation of a new president, most faculty remained hesitant about asserting themselves in governance matters. Furious about the audit findings and the severance package, Professor Potts took it upon herself to share with the new president her frustrations about these matters. His response was refreshing and gratifying: “Where and when can we meet to insure this wouldn’t happen again?” He also made a serious effort to avoid even the appearance of intimidation from assistant administrators to the former president who were still on the job by arranging to hold the meeting in a local coffee house.

The institution has definitely turned around under its new leadership so far as shared governance is concerned. Shared governance has dramatically increased. The new president met with faculty-led groups to ask for suggestions. He also attended the Kansas State Conference meeting of the AAUP. He answers questions from the faculty. Over the course of 4 days, he invited all faculty and staff to his presidential home. [One person inquired: “May I go up and down the front staircase?” — something apparently unthinkable when the previous administrator was in power.]

Due to the economic downturn, the institution had to make drastic budget cuts. Instead of deciding unilaterally to furlough or cut positions,
the new president sought feedback from campus faculty, staff, and students. On the campus website, a link was provided to give suggestions. He also formed a committee to represent various groups on campus. So many suggestions were received that they had to be categorized. A committee then arrived at a list of recommended cuts. Underfunded departments were supported and not a single faculty member was harmed in the process. The current president is now working to make financial processes more transparent. He formed a committee to prevent the same level of corruption that characterized the previous administration. It included faculty, community members, and students. He found ways to get rid of the threatening administrators who assisted the former president— as they decided to step down.

We were told at one point, Potts said, that some legislators thought faculty had to work 10% harder. It puzzled her how persons could arrive at such a statement. How did they define faculty work? The average faculty member works 53 hours per week. This led Potts to write out a description of what faculty do. She hoped the Arts & Sciences Caucus on her campus would adopt her summary. Unfortunately, some felt her letter would offend their new president. Subsequently, however, the local newspaper somehow came up with the notion that faculty were getting a 7% raise in pay. This was simply in error. At that time, Potts shared her letter describing what faculty do with the new president and explained to him that she had not made it public sooner because faculty thought it would be offensive to him. He welcomed it, though. Faculty, he said, are “too passive” at times. He further said it would actually make his job “easier” if faculty would more often express their support for what their colleagues are doing.

Potts challenged faculty to do more to address AAUP principles every day— even in seemingly small ways. Suggestions for how to go about this included the following:

- **Nominate a president who honors AAUP principles for a national AAUP award.** The Ralph S. Brown award, for example, goes to an administrator who cares about AAUP principles. Persons who win such awards are invited to the national meeting for a presentation.

- **Present a paper at the national meeting of the AAUP.** The national AAUP has recently opened opportunities for faculty to make presentations of substantive papers at the annual meeting. If faculty can get funding to make such a presentation, more might be able to attend the national meeting. This initiative also stimulates some interesting discussions.

- **Support the new dues structure for the AAUP.** Once approved, this should make dues more reasonable, helping faculty who are caught in hiring freezes, or those receiving no increase in salary, etc.

- **Respond in some supportive fashion when colleagues in other states are denied tenure.** Often, Potts explained, faculty don’t do anything in response to such news except become discouraged. Speaking up when AAUP principles are ignored, however, underscores the importance of these principles all the more.

- **Convey to our students the importance of shared governance, academic freedom, and tenure.** It’s important to remember that our students are the public. If they are not already taxpayers, they will be some day. Many students are confused about the meaning of academic freedom and tenure. One asked: “Doesn’t tenure just mean you can’t get fired?” Faculty should be in a position to explain what academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance are and why they need to be protected, and how students can play a significant role protecting it. At one institution a faculty member with an outstanding record was turned down for tenure by a dean. Students wanted faculty to do more to keep the faculty member at the institution. If enough of them voice their concerns, these kinds of decisions can be reversed. We’re educating students who will be able to function intelligently in a democracy. If we don’t address these issues with students, they’re likely to confuse academic freedom with only what David Horowitz says about it.

**Use opportunities that arise in casual conversations to explain the relationship between research and teaching and the realities of faculty work.** When family, friends, and complete strangers express the belief that faculty “have the summer off,” for example, it’s a good idea to use this opportunity to explain what faculty actually do in the summer. Whereas a lot of those who punch a time clock have weekends off, “we don’t have that luxury.” A campus website can also be used to emphasize the relationship between teaching and research. Some citizens feel that research “merely distracts” faculty from their responsibilities in teaching. Efforts must be undertaken to better clarify for them how research actually enhances teaching.

**Seek out the perspectives of AAUP members about administrators who apply for new positions.** Administrators seeking promotions or lateral transfers often have people write “glowing letters” on their behalf. These can present a distorted picture of their capabilities and impact on a campus. If you can get off a candidate’s list of recommenders and talk to AAUP members on their campuses, Potts asserted, you can typically count on the AAUP representatives to be selfless enough to be honest about an administrator’s potential for good or ill. AAUP members understand the long-term benefits of other methods of finding out about candidates.

**Write letters to newspapers and websites.** These days, Potts explained, faculty can’t make a case to the public about how they’re getting “pathetic pay” and losing jobs. The public is in this boat—and worse. Faculty have the capacity to articulate other concerns meaningfully and well, however. And when they don’t do this at times, citizens may see all those associated with a given institution as in cahoots with one another. Potts cited the case of a program in Kansas that had the highest paid Athletic Director in the country. He had a salary of $4.4 million dollars. Yet not a single faculty member complained about this. In such circumstances, the general public can erroneously assume that faculty all earn six-figure salaries and work 12 hours/week.

Perhaps if faculty did more along these lines, Potts concluded, the next generation of faculty members will be better off.

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**HAVING TROUBLE WITH ADP? YOU’RE NOT ALONE.**

In response to concerns, the Georgia State University Senate completed a substantive report on the impact of ADP. See: [http://www.gsu.edu/~hishdl/aaup.htm](http://www.gsu.edu/~hishdl/aaup.htm) for this report—and more.
Dear Colleagues:

We've reached the end of another academic year and I believe that we have been quite an active Conference. As I review this past year, numerous tasks and initiatives were completed by many people and I'd like to thank them publicly here:

- Thanks to Executive Committee members for their diligent work on multiple issues, from filling committee vacancies to editing documents. I am happy to say that we will begin a new academic year with an Executive Committee that can build upon a system of shared governance.
- Thanks to Hugh Hudson, our Executive Secretary, for his work on issues of concern to all members of the Conference, from "health care audits" to "votes of no confidence." I remain amazed at the number of hours Hugh works on matters of concern to us all, as well as on issues of concern to only a few.
- Thanks go to Steve Anthony, our lobbyist, for making our voices heard and for keeping us informed of all that transpires during the legislative sessions.
- And, a special thanks to our colleagues at Augusta State University for hosting our Spring meeting. The most common comment, "Wow - what a great job!"

While much has been accomplished, there remains much to do. Perhaps the clearest evidence of the work that lies ahead for us came to light during the Roll Call of State Chapters that I conducted during our Spring meeting. While we heard the names of 48 chapters, we heard a response from only a few of the chapters called. Indeed, the time is now to reorganize and reinvigorate the majority of chapters in our state. In the same vein, we have a conference of 576 members and yet continue to have difficulty finding persons to lead our Committees. It is therefore incumbent upon us that we do a better job of getting our membership involved. For these reasons, we are already planning our Fall meeting to be held at Kennesaw State University. As part of these plans we will, for the first time in many years, offer workshops the day before the general meeting.

These will be focused on the following issues: Why Do We Need AAUP? What Does State “Committee A” Do? What are Government Relations? How Does One Organize a Chapter and Recruit Members? What Does a Chapter President Really Do? And What are the Roles of State Conference Leaders?

There is still much work to be done and I encourage each of you to help us define the work and the direction of this Conference. If you are not already receiving posts from our Listserv, please drop me a note and I will make sure that you are added. And, if you have a comment or concern, please send that along as well.

Always, we welcome your comments and concerns and look forward to another productive year as a Conference.

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**GA Conference of AAUP Adopts Resolution in Support of Colleagues at Columbus State University**

Whereas Columbus State University is a valued member of the USG and deserves competent leadership to carry out its mission; and

Whereas the faculty of Columbus State University has voted no confidence in the President of Columbus State University (Tim Mescon) and in the Provost and VPAA (Inessa Levi); and

Whereas the Georgia Conference of the AAUP shares concerns expressed by Columbus State University faculty about violations of the principles of shared governance and due process with regard to promotion and tenure evaluation processes, the position and status of the library within CSU's university structure, administrative searches (at levels of Provost and Deans), reorganization of the academic colleges and departments, creation and composition of university-level committees and task forces, handling of personnel matters, and blatant disregard of the faculty role in institutional governance; and

Whereas the Georgia Conference of the AAUP believes the President of Columbus State University and the Provost and VPAA have violated BOR policies (e.g., using unpublished criteria for promotion and tenure, instituting fees for core classes) as well as ethical standards (hiring a former business partner as consultant, hiring an interim Dean whose wife is a member of that college, and employing the Provost's husband); and

Whereas the Georgia Conference of the AAUP believes that the above-mentioned actions on the part of President Tim Mescon and Provost and VPAA Inessa Levi have endangered academic freedom and shared governance in this state;

The Georgia Conference of the AAUP hereby urges Chancellor Davis and the BOR to respect the voice of the Columbus State University faculty and further demonstrate their commitment to best practices in academic and policies and procedures previously adopted by the BOR of the USG that designate the vital and substantial role faculty should exercise in the governance of USG institutions.

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Steve Anthony and Hugh Hudson discussing matters of consequence at the GA Conference of AAUP meeting held in Augusta, GA in April, 2010.
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FYI

Check out these websites for information about what's happening in other AAUP chapters in the state.
Augusta State University chapter of AAUP:
http://www.aug.edu/asuaaup/

Georgia College and State University chapter of AAUP:
http://aaupgcsu.edu/

Georgia Highlands College chapter of AAUP:
http://www.highlands.edu/facultystaff/aaup/index.htm

Kennesaw State University chapter of AAUP:
http://www.kennesaw.edu/aaup/

University of West Georgia chapter of AAUP:
http://www.westga.edu/~mcormica/aaupuwghome.htm

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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