



For Immediate Release

Contact:
Jay M. Smith
North Carolina AAUP
jaysmith@email.unc.edu
919-619-6523

***Faculty in Red States Express Concerns over Political Interference.
Many Consider Leaving, Survey Finds***

An extensive survey conducted by faculty organizations in Texas, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina has revealed that an overwhelming majority of faculty members in these states are deeply dissatisfied with the current state of higher education. The survey, which was conducted in August and received responses from more than 4,250 individuals, highlights the impact on faculty morale and retention of political interference in university affairs.

Key findings from the survey indicate that **more than 65 percent [66.7] percent of respondents would not recommend their state** as a desirable place to work for colleagues, while about a third [31 percent] are actively considering interviewing elsewhere in the coming year. In North Carolina, 20 percent of faculty respondents—50 out of 248 in total—have interviewed for other teaching jobs just since 2021. Every state in the nation was listed as a desirable destination multiple times in the four-state survey, though the North Carolina numbers particularly underline the appeal of states outside the four considered in the survey (86.5% applied for jobs outside the south/southeast) and institutions beyond the south more generally (78% applied for jobs in the Midwest, the mid-Atlantic, New England, and the east and west coasts).

The survey also sheds light on the primary factors driving faculty members to seek employment elsewhere. Perennial salary issues appeared among roughly half the respondents, though threats to academic freedom were also identified by over 50 percent of those responding. Issues related to tenure and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies were mentioned by more than 40 percent. In North Carolina, nearly three-quarters of those who had applied for other jobs (74%) cited the state's "broad political climate" as one of the chief factors inspiring their employment searches at other institutions.

Faculty members expressed their concerns about the impact of changes to tenure and academic freedom on their own work. One respondent highlighted the increased difficulty of teaching sensitive topics, stating, "There are certain issues that I will never touch in the classroom. But I want to emphasize that I fear the left and the right equally." Another noted "An overall climate of fear of retaliation and mistrust is the worst I've seen in over 20 years in academia."

Furthermore, the survey revealed the detrimental effects of political attacks and policy changes on hiring within higher education. About 50 percent of respondents noted a decrease in the number of applicants and hesitancy among some candidates to proceed with the interview process at their institutions. More than 45 percent noted a decline in the quality of applicants. Additionally, more than 40 percent of respondents were aware of offer refusals, leading to the loss of top-notch talent within their departments.

The survey also highlighted the dissatisfaction with the political atmosphere on their own campuses and around issues of higher education more generally, with about 80 percent of respondents rating the current environment as poor or very poor. About 60 percent expressed disappointment in their school's administration for not adequately defending academic freedom and tenure.

About a third said they do not plan to stay in academia in the long term.

The survey, conducted from August 14 to September 1, utilized social media and email to distribute the questionnaire. Respondents consisted of a diverse group, with about 25 percent identifying as non-white and 49.3 percent as female. The respondents encompassed a range of experience levels, with about two-thirds holding tenured positions as associate or full professors.

These findings should serve as a **wake-up call for policymakers and administrators**, emphasizing the urgent need to address the concerns raised by faculty members. Failure to do so may result in a significant brain drain and a decline in the quality of higher education in these states.

###

Note: This press release is based on information provided and does not include any paraphrasing or additional quotes.

State-specific results can be obtained by contacting the faculty leaders below:

Matthew Boedy
AAUP Georgia conference president
matthew.boedy@ung.edu
706-830-8010

Jay Smith
AAUP North Carolina conference president
jaysmith@email.unc.edu
919-619-6523

Andrew Gothard
United Faculty of Florida president
andrew.gothard@floridaea.org
850-224-8220

Brian Evans
AAUP Texas conference president
bevans@ece.utexas.edu
512-516-5991

Pat Heintzelman
tfa.president@texasfacultyassociation.org
409-454-3701



