

A Few Takeaways from Spring 2024 Texas AAUP Conference Meeting

Held Feb. 23, 2024. [Agenda](#). Brian Evans, Interim President (aaup.texas@gmail.com). [Officers](#).

About AAUP. We champion academic freedom, advance shared governance, and organize all faculty to promote economic security and quality education. All AAUP members automatically become members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). All AAUP members in Texas are part of Texas AAUP. Please follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @TexasAaup and @AAUP.

Action Items

- **Participate in a historic vote** on [Affiliation Agreement Between Texas AFT and the Texas AAUP Conference](#) on Saturday, March 30, 2024, 9-10am, by Zoom. [Zoom link](#).
 - **Autonomy.** Texas AAUP would continue to operate under its by-laws and practices.
 - **Amplified advocacy.** Texas AFT has 66,000 members and dedicated full-time staff.
 - **Members** can be from public or private institutions of higher education.
 - **Member benefits** include occupational liability coverage, legal aid for civil cases, legal defense for employment matters, and advocates for dispute resolution.
- **Protect academic freedom** by working with your faculty senate and administration against overcompliance with SB 17. SB 17 bans DEI programs and practices on public campuses; its exceptions include academic course instruction, research, and student orgs; and its penalties include employment termination. For legal protection, institutions have a tendency to interpret this law as broadly as possible; e.g., the ban on “diversity training” is being interpreted to apply to TA training and hallway conversations. Let’s push back! See our [guidance on anti-DEI SB17 including course syllabus language](#).
- **Strengthen academic freedom** for all tenure-track, tenure, and contingent faculty members by strengthening due process protections [2]. Although SB 18 is a tenure bill, it is being applied to all faculty. In fact, the first summary dismissal under SB 18 was for a non-tenure track faculty member. In SB 18, seven of 10 reasons for regular dismissal are vague and can be weaponized. SB 18 provides weak due process protections that can be improved through campus and system policies. See [TTU’s policy](#) and [our blog](#).
- **Be involved in dept. and university governance.** Faculty have academic freedom in teaching, research, and expression [1], have primary authority over the curriculum as well as faculty hiring, evaluation, and dismissal [1-3], and should elect their dept. chair [3]. Work closely with your Faculty Senate and consider running for the Senate.
- **Invite others to join AAUP.** Here are [several reasons to join](#). Link to [join AAUP](#).
 - Be part of an AAUP chapter. [List of chapters](#). Officer names can be kept private.
 - Form an AAUP chapter. 7 AAUP members needed. [Benefits of a local chapter](#).

Officer Elections - officers are representing themselves as private individuals:

- President: *Brian Evans* (UT Austin)
 - Vice President: *Teresa Klein* (Del Mar College)
 - Secretary: *Brie Day*
 - Treasurer: *Lynn Tatum* (Baylor University)
 - VP for Central Texas: *David Albert* (Austin Community College)
 - VP for East Texas: *Leonard Bright* (Texas A&M University)
 - VP for North Texas: *DiAnna Hynds* (Texas Woman’s University)
 - VP for South Texas: *Tony Villanueva* (Palo Alto College, Alamo Colleges)
 - VP for West Texas: *Kim Walker* (Texas Tech University)
 - At-Large Officer #1: *Miriam Sobré* (UT San Antonio)
 - At-Large Officer #2: *Ann McGlashan* (Baylor University)
- The 12th Officer is the Past President: Jeff Blodgett (University of Houston – Victoria)

AAUP campus chapters – 20 [campus chapters](#) with five more forming

- *New chapters 2024:* Lamar University, Texas Woman’s University, University of Houston
- *Chapters forming:* University of North Texas, Sam Houston State University, Tarleton State University, Texas State University, and University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Recap of Legislative Advocacy at the Texas Legislature - [Visual Summary](#)

- [Texas AFT](#) and [NAACP LDF](#) greatly amplified advocacy by [Texas AAUP](#) and other orgs
- Coalition met Legislators, testified, wrote op-eds, held pressers & Tweeted, and helped defeat [censorship SB 16](#), make anti-DEI SB 17 less bad, and fixed the definition of tenure in SB18 from being one-year employment contracts to continuous employment.

Campus Reports

- **Dual credit courses.** College courses taught on a high school or college campus. Instructors are running into conflicts with high school principals over what policies and procedures to follow. K-12 schools are under different laws than higher education.
- **Faculty being targeted by outside persons or groups.** Texas AAUP can help a faculty member who's being targeted for their teaching, research, and/or expression. We'll work with the campus AAUP chapter if there is one. Texas A&M University has developed a set of administrative policies and procedures to help faculty members who are being targeted as well as their department chairs and Deans.
- **Faculty orientation.** It's really helpful to new faculty when a campus AAUP chapter presents about academic freedom and shared governance at faculty orientation.
- **Faculty facing investigations or discipline** can turn to the AAUP chapter and Texas AAUP Office of Faculty Representation (txconfaaup-facultyrepresentation@proton.me) for assistance. Don't go it alone! Never resign if asked. You must fight it to be eligible for help by legal counsel and other advisors. See “Interactions with Administrators” next.
- **Interactions with Administrators.** Concerns about administrative ambushes and other examples administrators lying to them. Ideas:
 - Document meetings.
 - Record meetings – Texas Law allows recording of any conversation you’re in
 - Bring allies/advocates to meetings with administrators (AAUP can help)
 - Bring the concern to the Faculty Senate President and Faculty Ombuds
 - Ask AAUP to file open records requests using the Texas Public Information Act
- **HB 8 Community Colleges.** New funding for community colleges, but based on outcomes-based education. This is dangerous to academic freedom. If funding is based on outcomes instead of enrollment, pressure will be put on instructors to give students better grades. This will go from community colleges to university in future.

AAUP Principles

- [1] [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom & Tenure](#), jointly formulated by American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) representing college and university administrations and American Association of University Professors (AAUP) representing professors. AAC&U has more than 800 college/university members.
- [2] [Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings](#), jointly formulated by the AAC&U and AAUP.
- [3] [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#), jointly formulated by the AAUP, American Council on Education, and Association of Governing Boards of Universities & Colleges. The AAUP represents faculty members, ACE represents university administrations, and AGB represents University Systems, Boards of Regents and Boards of Trustees. ACE has more than 1500 college and university members and AGB has more than 1300 college, university, and system members.