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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## AFT and AAUP pursue historic affiliation

At a time of momentous challenges to higher education and to democracy, the governing councils of the [American Association of University Professors](#) and the [American Federation of Teachers](#) are pursuing an affiliation to join forces. The national AAUP Council voted unanimously Sunday to recommend ratification of the affiliation. Joining these distinct organizational strengths will better equip faculty to take on the challenges facing higher education. Through the affiliation, the 44,000 member AAUP and the 1.7 million-member AFT will work hand in hand to protect academic freedom and to unify the faculty voice at the state and federal levels. The partnership will serve as the basis for an enhanced faculty voice with nationwide reach and enormous potential for future organizing growth and success.

The partnership comes against the backdrop of increased legislative attacks on teaching and on academic freedom, and the persistent public underfunding that has led to an explosion in student debt, to adjunct faculty precarity and their poverty, to anti-intellectual attacks on the teaching of U.S. history, to legislative intrusion into the academy, to disinvestment in public higher education, and to the resulting casualization of academic workers.

“The AFT and the AAUP go together like peanut butter and jelly,” said Prof. Jonathan Rees, president of the AAUP chapter at Colorado State University Pueblo, where he teaches history. “They have countless common interests and complimentary resources, so this affiliation will help teachers of all kinds throughout the United States fight for the fair treatment they deserve.”

“This AAUP/AFT affiliation will be a game-changer here in Colorado,” said Prof. Stephen Mumme, co-president of the AAUP Colorado Conference, who teaches political science at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins.

“The AAUP and the AFT have been working together for many years in Colorado to improve working conditions, defend faculty rights, and to resolve pay equity between part- and full-time faculty,” said Caprice Lawless, co-president of AAUP’s Colorado Conference, who teaches English at Front Range Community College. “We are collaborating closely in this Colorado legislative session, for example, on the 2022 Public Employee Collective Bargaining act sponsored by Rep. Daneya Esgar (D-46) and Sen. Stephen Fenberg (D-18),” she added.

At the federal level, the two faculty organization have been working on the New Deal for Higher Education, an ambitious legislative agenda that seeks to transform the higher education landscape by:

- Ending the practice of employing low-cost contingent faculty who lack regular contract protections and due process rights, thus undercutting academic freedom and the tenure system,
- Increasing pay for part-time and adjunct professors, who now live in virtual poverty,
- Pushing for reinvestment in higher education at the state and federal levels,
- Increasing affordable access for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds,
- Challenging the movement to strip faculty of their right to research and teach subjects addressing inequities in American society, and
- Cancelling student debt and relieving the pressure on those who were forced to pay for their own educations.

### **How will the affiliation affect the hundreds of current AAUP Colorado Conference members?**

The move to affiliate builds on more than a decade of partnership and strengthens both organizations, while ensuring that the AAUP will maintain its independence and autonomy. The proposed changes, if adopted by AAUP delegates in June, will go into effect August 2022. As a “regional council” of the AFT, the national AAUP and its chapters will be fully autonomous organizations. AAUP members will continue as full members of the AAUP with all the rights and privileges that go with membership. The AAUP will continue to have its own national governing Council, officers, constitution, and biennial meeting and AAUP chapters will continue to be governed by chapter constitutions. The AAUP maintains sole authority over its budget, programs, and staff. The national AAUP will continue to be a 501 c(6) professional organization and will continue to advocate for the profession as a whole and for higher education in service of the common good.

All current AAUP members will, by virtue of being [dues-paying AAUP members](#), also become AFT members with all the rights, privileges, responsibilities, and benefits that go with being AFT members. AAUP members will have access to the AFT [member benefits programs](#), including professional liability insurance, and access to all AFT programs and services. AAUP members will also

continue as full members of the AAUP, with all the rights and privileges that go with being an AAUP member.

Members of advocacy chapters will continue to pay AAUP dues at their current dues rate to the AAUP. From this, the AAUP will forward to AFT each AFT per capita and so AAUP members will also be AFT members without paying an increase in dues to either organization. AAUP advocacy chapters will continue as usual and will continue to have access to all the programs and services of the AAUP. For purposes of participating in the AFT convention, AAUP advocacy members will be part of an at-large AAUP National AFT. National AAUP dues will continue to be governed by the AAUP's policies on dues and will be unaffected by this affiliation.

The AAUP and the AFT have been successfully organizing partnerships for more than a decade. This partnership has been good for the AAUP and the AFT, but, more importantly, it has been good for the profession. It has resulted in increased unionization at flagship institutions and at R-1 universities (those that meet benchmarks in research activity and expenditures as measured by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education). More than 20,000 faculty are jointly represented by AAUP/AFT unionized chapters at [Rutgers University](#), [Wayne State](#), the [University of Vermont](#), the [University of Illinois-Chicago](#), the [University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign](#), [Northern Illinois University](#), [Southwestern Illinois College](#), the [University of New Mexico](#), the [University of Oregon](#), [Oregon State University](#), [Portland State University](#), and the [University of Alaska](#).

The AAUP has been setting the standards for academic freedom and shared governance in the academy since 1915. Across the academy, AAUP is often the resource faculty turn to when faced with a challenge to academic freedom on campus. Its work defines the fundamental professional values and standards for higher education. The AAUP works through collective bargaining and nonunionized advocacy chapters to enshrine these values and standards in collective bargaining agreements and institutional policies.

The AFT has been instrumental in organizing locals in a wide variety of colleges and universities. The union pioneered collective bargaining in higher education and is committed to organizing faculty across the U.S. The union represents faculty in community colleges, major research universities, liberal arts schools, and historically Black colleges and universities. Through a strong local and state affiliate structure and a relationship with the [AFL-CIO](#), the AFT impacts legislation at both the state and federal levels. The AAUP is proud to join in these efforts.

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