

## AAUP Faculty Meeting Statement for May 5, 2021

Tierra y Libertad! On this day marking Mexico's victory over the French empire, the AAUP would like to start by reminding our colleagues that while the moment when things begin to break after a long process of struggle cannot be predicted, the days that follow inaugurate a new era of cooperation and comity. In the spirit of that struggle, we wish to speak about three ongoing issues that run deeper than our challenging academic year on zoom:

1. AAUP has shared an open letter, dated April 26, 2021 and now signed by 126 MHC faculty, criticizing the use of coercive language to compel our PE colleagues to sign an MOU that resulted in the loss of their faculty status in exchange for their current employment at the College. We note that the number of signatories on the Open Letter is greater than the number of votes on any piece of Faculty Legislation passed this semester. We call on President Stephens and Dean Mosby to right this wrong by allowing our colleagues in PE who were hired as faculty to choose whether they wish to retain or relinquish that status going forward.

The administration's response, shared in President Stephens' email this morning, contends that the decisions have already been made, and that she, Dean Mosby, and Dean Runell-Hall are unwilling to reverse any of them. It leans on Faculty Legislation to define faculty status, when the MOUs coaches were asked to sign in October explicitly overrode Faculty Legislation. We do not support Administration's fickle use of Faculty Legislation on faculty status, citing it only when it supports their argument.

We had drafted a point-by-point rebuttal of the flawed logic in many other individual points in this letter. But ultimately, it all boils down to a simple truth: Our colleagues were hired as faculty, therefore they should be able to retain that status. We respectfully reiterate that request. We also ask that the Open Letter be entered into the Faculty Meeting materials for archival purposes.

2. A second issue we are tracking is the crisis in on-campus childcare. The lack of an explicit commitment from President Stephens to permanent on-campus childcare, even as the current director of Gorse is set to resign on Friday of this week, sets off a potential (and predicted) collapse as both Gorse staff and families flee to safer harbors given the uncertainty of continued childcare at MHC and the shortage of open positions at other providers. If we did just hear a multi-year commitment from President Stephens for childcare on campus, we would like to see it in writing.

3. Our third and final topic for today's remarks concerns the Dean of Faculty search. At Monday's chapter meeting, we discussed a proposal to reorganize the office of the Dean of Faculty to clarify and make the responsibilities of that role and that of the Associate Deans more manageable. Additionally, we affirmed our preference for a faculty-led search (with a majority-faculty search committee) for the Dean of Faculty, per the recommendations of the COACHE report, in order to address the lack of trust in the College's shared governance process. Given that President Stephens and Dean Mosby have insisted that it is not their role,

but that of the faculty to come up with a vision for the college, in light of today's topic of the day "Visioning", it only makes sense for faculty to lead the search for the next Dean of Faculty who will be charged with implementing that vision.

In closing, we wish to thank all of you who attended and participated in AAUP actions and meetings this year. The pandemic and the leadership crisis it has intensified have been demoralizing, but we would echo what many of you have said in our chapter meetings over the past twelve months: building solidarity and acting in common with all faculty has been fortifying in this undoubtedly challenging time.