

Akron-AAUP

The Akron Chapter of the American Association of University Professors

**OCTOBER 23,
2009**

TO: PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

We the faculty in the University of Akron Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (Akron-AAUP) genuinely hope you'll join us at The University of Akron. We are committed to offering you a first-rate education and a degree backed by the solid reputation of our university's faculty. We urge you to join us in making sure that this commitment to your quality education is not compromised in the future. While you are evaluating our campus, please take the opportunity to ask questions of those showing you around. All of us were students at one time, and many of us are parents as well. These are some of the questions we'd be asking if we were considering UA.

Certainly new buildings are great, but at the heart of any strong university is its people.

All these people make a difference. Fundamental to the quality of instruction, the accreditation of our academic programs, our research reputation, and ultimately the lasting value of the degree you earn is the university's faculty. Your tuition dollars provide about 60% of the university's revenues, replacing shrinking support from the state. You are paying more and deserve more for your tuition dollars.

- **Ask why Administration is growing faster than Instruction.**

The University upper administration has grown from 16 to 34 Vice Presidents over the last 9 years. Administrative expenses have grown over 50%. In the same time period, expenses related to instruction, which impacts the quality of your degree, has grown only 25%.

- **Ask where your tuition dollars are going?**

The University of Akron has turned a "profit" every year since 2002, as reported in the Akron Beacon Journal (based on UA audited financial reports). This is due to enrollment increases and tuition increases. Yet academic departments are losing full time faculty, while the university has hired more part-time faculty at substandard pay. There are 700 full-time faculty, but around 900 part-time faculty. Does this seem in balance?

- **Ask how the university plans to attract and retain the best faculty.**

On issues that cost the University nothing, the Board of Trustees is attempting to rollback features that make UA an inviting place to teach students and do research.

- An excellent faculty needs academic freedom to explore their teaching and research.
- An excellent faculty needs to be rewarded with tenure (which guarantees academic freedom) after years of advanced study and probationary reviews.
- An excellent faculty must have confidence that their unique contributions to learning, rooted in years of study, belong to them and cannot be taken by the university.
- If top faculty cannot count on such non-economic features of their work, as is common at other universities, why would they come here, and why would they stay?
- And what impact does this have on your family member's education?

Be sure and ask our university President, Luis Proenza, any questions you may have. He can be reached at Proenza@uakron.edu.