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## **Indiana AAUP Chapter Building Faculty Power For Immediate Release**

WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA -- Representatives from multiple American Association of University Professor chapters across Indiana universities converged on West Lafayette for a day-long strategy session focused on organizing for faculty rights in Indiana. The AAUP both nationally and locally is a leading force in organizing for faculty rights in higher education, and achieved several milestones this past year.

Faculty from Purdue West Lafayette, Purdue Northwest, IU-PU Fort Wayne, and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis held a day-long strategy session February 2 to set a path for chapters in Indiana over the coming year.

Common themes at the strategy meeting were the erosion of tenure and faculty governance in Indiana; the increasing use of adjuncts and contingent labor by Indiana universities; increased privatization of essential education services; threats to faculty intellectual property rights spurred by on-line education and privatization.

Faculty were motivated to build campaigns linking these issues in part by recent successes in protecting faculty rights, like the passage and implementation of a new Intellectual Property Rights policy at IUPUI.

Indiana Conference President David Nalbene, Professor of Psychology at Purdue Northwest, described the statewide meeting as an important next step forward for AAUP chapters across the state.

“There are still plenty of faculty very concerned about the nature of higher education and threats to quality of education in Indiana,” said Nalbene. “We’re thinking big. That’s a good thing. Long term, that’s where we need to be: confronting long-term threats to everyone in higher education.”

The strategy session built on victories won by Indiana AAUP in the previous year. Working in coordination, six AAUP chapters passed resolutions criticizing abusive labor practices at Purdue University Global, the new online education system purchased by Purdue University. Formerly Kaplan University, a pro-profit and legally embattled private entity, Purdue Global was launched in 2017 with no Purdue faculty oversight and scant protections for faculty hired at-will to teach at wages well below the standards of the Purdue University system.

In Fall, 2018, the American Association of University Professors chapter at Purdue in West Lafayette, the largest AAUP chapter in Indiana, unanimously passed a resolution condemning Purdue Global’s use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in faculty contracts. The NDAs effectively gave ownership of faculty members’ teaching and instructional material to the Purdue Global entity ( <https://www.aaup.org/media-release/purdue-global-nondisclosure-agreement-runs-roughshod-over-faculty-rights#.XFcF0WXvHow> ). The NDAs also placed a gag order on faculty, forbidding them from discussing their work at Purdue Global “to anyone who is not specifically authorized to receive it.”

After the NDAs were brought to light by the AAUP, Purdue rescinded their use, a major victory for faculty at Purdue Global and in higher education generally, who have been embattled to preserve intellectual property rights over teaching materials because of the rampant encroachment of privatized, online education.

Subsequent to Purdue West Lafayette's passage of the resolution criticizing the use of NDAs, AAUP chapters at Purdue Fort Wayne, IU Kokomo, Purdue Northwest, Hanover College, Indiana University-South Bend, Indiana State University, and Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis, all passed similar resolutions.

Adding their support, faculty senates at Purdue Fort Wayne, Purdue Northwest and Kokomo also passed resolutions protesting the use of Nondisclosure Agreements by Purdue Global.

Indiana AAUP chapters have also been successful in challenging Purdue Global's use of forced arbitration. This stipulation, a standard part of Kaplan University contracts with faculty before Kaplan's purchase by Purdue, forced students to sign contracts giving up their legal right to sue the University in case of malfeasance. Kaplan University had a long history of lawsuits brought by students charging Kaplan with failing to deliver promised education.

AAUP chapters in Indiana have been motivated by their concern with providing students the best possible education, and teachers the best possible working conditions; these punitive, inequitable, and illegitimate policies applied through Purdue Global threatens the high quality education offered by the other Purdue campuses, both branch and flagship.

"We think Purdue Global students and faculty, like students at brick and mortar schools, deserve the same levels of academic freedom, research support, and training," said Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, President of the AAUP Purdue (West Lafayette) chapter and Associate Professor of Political Science. "These students, after all, will become employees in Indiana's economy. Employers should be concerned, as we are, that proper oversight over Purdue Global is achieved in order to guarantee the success of students and those with whom they work."

The Indiana Conference of AAUP chapters will hold a statewide meeting later this spring.

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