

FEATURE STORY**ON THE DARK SIDE: COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS**

by John Hopper,
Executive Secretary, Missouri AAUP

In thirty years' higher education experience, I've never seen anything like it, and hope never to again. The College of the Ozarks - whose entry sign used to describe itself as a "four year liberal arts college" and now describes itself as "Hard Work U." - is a very bleak experience. Believe me, I was there . . .

Actually, my visit in early March was my second in three years. What a change! In 1991 I met with a couple dozen AAUP'ERS and friends at the home of Professor of History Calvin Allen, one of several faculty who've fled the college to better jobs recently. While there was some concern over the new president, Jerry Davis (then just finishing his second year), the mood of the two-day visit was light, the atmosphere inviting, and the intellectual atmosphere more reminiscent of Hyde Park in Chicago than a campus within walking distance of Branson's bustling "strip."

COZ revisited was something else: no social meetings, no levity, no free-flowing discussions. Faculty members were reluctant to talk to me, to each other, or to their students, on any except the most guarded terms. Even my conversations with faculty in the campus restaurant were muffled lest some student worker hear and repeat the gist of the conversation.

Local townsfolk were more candid about it all. One motel operative remarked, "Things were really great down here until Jerry Davis went off the deep end." Another opined, referring to Davis' "holy war" with local entertainer and unsuccessful donor Wayne Newton (whose "unwholesome money" was returned), "The guy's got a screw loose. Now the press is down here all over the place and the publicity's all bad." The attendant at the gas station told me on the way out of town, "It was hunkey-dorey until he [Davis] came. I don't know if it'll ever be OK again."

The faculty lounge in the Jones Learning Center was deserted the three times I was in it during my stay. Nobody speaks to strangers in the halls, either. In the classroom, faculty told me of reading lectures *verbatim* rather than running the risk of being misquoted, and of lecturing to the end of the hour to avoid having to answer off-the-cuff questions. The classrooms I observed from the hallway were uniformly devoid of discussion. Mailboxes are stuffed with the likes

"...Now that you've been completely blessed, truly cleansed, and fully dressed, God insists that you live it out within community.

Psalm 133:1-3: Behold how good for us to dwell in unity.

I Cor. 1:10 That believers be of one mind.

I Pet. 3:8-9 Be of one mind.

No room for Lone Rangers in that imagery, unless Tonto and the Cavelry [*sic*] come with 'em!"

-from flyer distributed to faculty mailboxes-

of *Presbyterian News* reprints by somebody named Marjorie Blank denigrating the importance of tenure and semi-official flyers of epigrams and bible verses (thirty-two on one page, no less!) exhorting faculty to "confess your faults" (James 5:16) and "Love the brotherhood." (I Pet.2:17)

Sadly, faculty fears, though self-defeating, seem well-founded. Davis' administration has thrown out the faculty-approved handbook, ended

faculty governance, ended tenure for those on tenure-track, ended free discussion of much of anything by a "gag rule" in the administratively dictated handbook, and begun "reviews" for those with tenure. The President's scorn for AAUP'ERS "wearing alligator shoes" is as complete and wrathful as his moves against long hair and earrings on the male students.

The new campus street names notwithstanding - Opportunity Avenue, Spiritual Way, Patriotic Place - it's not a nice place to work these days, and a bizarre place to visit.

The ultimate results of this "cleansing" remain to be seen. Neighboring faculty governing bodies at Southwest Missouri State University and Drury College have protested the actions. The state conference has condemned the situation in the strongest terms, and the national office is investigating the situation, with action possible from censure-recommending Committee A (Academic Freedom and Tenure) and sanctions-recommending Committee T (Governance.)

The immediate results are more obvious. The vitality and openness that marked this little island of learning in the '80's is no more; the campus atmosphere is a strange blend of Orwell and Jonestown. Comparable faculty positions that drew over 100 applications a few years ago draw less than 20 applicants today. The ultimate losers are the students, regardless of the fattened ledger books by the donations of the "cleansed." For now, academic freedom is dead at COZ.

**Resolution *re* College of the Ozarks
unanimously passed at Annual Meeting
Missouri Conference, AAUP
April 9, 1994**

Whereas, the College of the Ozarks, through the actions of its governing board and the President of the college, has violated the letter and spirit of the Association's 1940 "Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure" and the Association's 1966 "Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities," and

- 1) has unethically and unjustly eliminated tenure as an option for those hired with the promise of accessibility to tenure,
- 2) has arbitrarily implemented and administered post-tenure review,
- 3) has instituted measures whose effect has been the dampening and elimination of free expression and open discussion of ideas central to a meaningful educational experience,
- 4) has willfully imposed a restrictive handbook, portions of which are in conflict with long established AAUP principles of academic freedom and tenure, and
- 5) has failed to seek meaningful consultation with or approval by the faculty, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Missouri Conference of the American Association of University Professors strongly condemns the Governing Board and Administration of the College of the Ozarks for actions which

- 1) violate the principles of academic freedom and tenure as enumerated in the Association's 1940 "Statement on Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure,"
- 2) vitiate the provisions of faculty involvement in college and university governance enumerated in the Association's 1966 "Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities,"
- 3) contravene the basic tenants and goals of higher education,
- 4) harm faculty, students, and institution alike, and
- 5) threaten to undermine and destroy the standards and ideals of the profession.

The Missouri Conference further urges the appropriate officers and components of the national association to investigate fully the situation at the College of the Ozarks, and act on their findings in this matter with all due speed.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

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(202) 737-5900

President:

JAMES E. PERLEY
College of Wooster

General Secretary:

MARY BURGAN

March 10, 1995

Dr. Jerry C. Davis
President
College of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, Missouri 65726

Dear President Davis:

In the absence thus far of a resolution of the issues raised in my letters to you of February 24, 1994, August 9, 1994, January 26, 1995, and February 23, 1995, the Association's General Secretary has reviewed the information available to us relating to the cases of Professors Fred Pfister, Eduard Quiko, and Delores Stanford and other matters of concern at the College of the Ozarks. After conferring with members of the Association's staff, she has reached the conclusion that these cases raise significant issues of academic freedom, tenure, and due process. In situations of this kind, which present developments of basic concern to the academic community, our experience has indicated that it is desirable, in fairness to the institutional administration, to the faculty, and to the institution as a whole, to establish an *ad hoc* committee composed of persons who have had no previous involvement with the particular matters of concern, to conduct its own full inquiry without prejudgment of any kind. The General Secretary has authorized the appointment of such a committee to investigate these matters at the College of the Ozarks.

In accordance with our customary procedures, the *ad hoc* committee is being selected by the Association from among members of the academic profession of recognized standing. It will visit the College of the Ozarks at the mutual convenience of the committee and the college. It will be specifically charged with consulting in full measure with you, and with such members of the faculty, the administration, and the board of trustees as may be designated, in order to ensure that the college will have a complete opportunity to present its position. The *ad hoc* committee will prepare a report for the consideration of the Association's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which may authorize its publication in *Academe: Bulletin of the AAUP*. The *ad hoc* committee will be instructed not to release on its own account any substantive information to the press. Under Association procedures, prior to any publication, a draft text is submitted on a confidential basis to the institution's chief administrative officer and to others concerned in the report, with an invitation to them to offer corrections of any factual errors and to offer whatever other comments they deem suitable on the draft text.

President Jerry C. Davis
March 10, 1995
Page Two

At an early date we shall write again to inform you of the names of the members of the *ad hoc* committee and to propose dates for the committee's visit. We should like at this time, however, to emphasize the Association's receptivity to a resolution that would preclude the necessity for the investigation now authorized.

Sincerely,



B. Robert Kreiser
Associate Secretary

BRK:mcd

cc: Mr. Joseph M. Basore, Chair, Board of Trustees
Dean of the College Kenton C. Olson
Professor Fred R. Pfister
Professor Eduard Quiko
Professor Delores H. Stanford
Professor John E. Hopper, Executive Secretary, Missouri Conference AAUP



College of the Ozarks

... Hard Work U.

Point Lookout, Missouri 65726

(417) 334-6411

March 22, 1995

Office of the President

Mr. B. Robert Kreiser
Associate Secretary
American Association of
University Professors
1012 Fourteenth Street, N.W.,
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20005-3465

Dear Mr. Kreiser:

Your recent letter is offensive and to me represents nothing more than a feeble cover-up for your organization's irresponsibility.

After your organization and its agents have been involved with a smear campaign against the College of the Ozarks and me personally, you now seek to legitimize your efforts by appointing your own committee, which you claim will "conduct its own full inquiry without prejudice of any kind." Further, you claim your committee "will be instructed not to release on its own account any substantive information to the press." Incredulously, you assert that, "prior to any publication, a draft text is submitted on a confidential basis to the institution's chief administrative officer..." for comments.

Your organization and its agents haven't bothered to honor such noble, fair-sounding practices up until now. Why should we believe what you say?

We don't. You have below-zero credibility. Perhaps the following will give you some glimpse of reality.

Your organization, through its agents and Missouri affiliate, has already violated every principle you have so eloquently espoused. The article published by Mr. Hopper is an unwarranted, vicious attack--so personal, malicious and full of misrepresentations and outright falsehoods, that it shouldn't be dignified with an answer.

The AAUP not only published Mr. Hopper's article, but the article has been used as a mailing to hundreds of alumni and individuals to discredit the institution. It has been reported in the press, as recently as this week! Neither Mr. Hopper nor anyone else with the AAUP in Missouri or Washington ever contacted the Dean of the College or me concerning this article prior to publication and massive distribution. Does this fall under your definition of "prejudgment" and "fairness to the institutional administration"?

Your organization has repeatedly sought to undermine the College of the Ozarks. Your "customary procedures" have sought to harass, threaten, and intimidate. The actions by your affiliate to condemn the College were taken with the same total lack of information or fairness exhibited by your Mr. Hopper. Neither Mr. Young or Mr. Hopper or any officer of the SMSU AAUP ever bothered to inquire before running to the press with judgment and condemnation.

The AAUP has on more than one occasion tried to involve itself in personnel matters of which you know very little about. Recently, you have asked me to rescind disciplinary actions taken. Each time you try to cover your presumptuous, irresponsible meddling by stating, "we realize that you may have additional information that will contribute to our understanding of what has occurred."

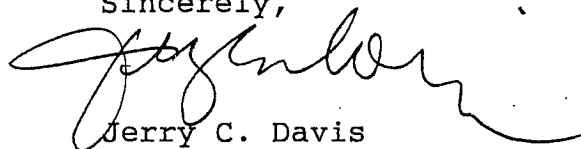
In my opinion, the AAUP should change its name to the American Association of Unaccountable Professors. In my view, it's special interest groups such as the AAUP that pose the greatest threats to accountability in education by using self-serving, big union tactics.

Your after-the-fact ad hoc "committee" will not be welcome here. We will not be a part of a "trial" after the College has already been prejudged and maligned for months.

Go ahead and add us to your list. I will consider it a badge of honor to be on your list alongside of Hillsdale College and Grove City College.

It is the AAUP that needs to be exposed.

Sincerely,



Jerry C. Davis

JCD/tjs

cc: Trustees
The Chronicle of
Higher Education
The Wall Street Journal

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President:
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General Secretary:
MARY BURGAN

March 29, 1995

Dr. Jerry C. Davis
President
College of the Ozarks
Point Lookout, Missouri 65726

Dear President Davis:

Thank you for your letter of March 22, responding to mine of March 10, concerning our decision to undertake an investigation of the issues of academic freedom and tenure raised by the cases of concern at the College of the Ozarks. We appreciate your objections to what was published about the college in the newsletter of the Missouri Conference of AAUP. Those responsible were not acting as representatives of the national AAUP, which was unaware of anything being published until after it appeared, and I am afraid that your complaint will have to be addressed to them.

With respect to our investigation, it is important that you understand its basic aims. The Association, since its founding in 1915, has sought to secure an understanding of sound academic standards in all accredited institutions of higher learning throughout the United States. It has, for example, issued statements of policy, frequently in cooperation with other leading organizations in the academic community, embodying these standards. The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, upon which our interest in the issues of academic freedom, tenure, and due process posed by the instant cases are based, was adopted jointly with the Association of American Colleges and Universities and has been endorsed by over 150 leading professional societies and educational organizations.

AAUP has from its earliest days deemed it to be its responsibility to investigate significant **unresolved** issues posed by specific institutional actions, without prejudice by its investigating committees, and to inform the academic profession of any resulting departures from standards expected by the profession. The Association has never maintained that the administration of a college or university is under any official obligation to cooperate with the Association's investigative efforts. On a number of occasions we have completed an investigation without that cooperation. In most instances, however, it has been and continues to be our experience that administrations do cooperate.

President Jerry C. Davis

March 29, 1995

Page Two

We would hope that you will reconsider your position with regard to our investigation, and that you will meet with our *ad hoc* committee during its visit in early May.

Sincerely,



B. Robert Kreiser
Associate Secretary

BRK:mcd

cc: Mr. Joseph M. Basore, Chair, Board of Trustees

Professor John Hopper, Executive Secretary, Missouri Conference AAUP

Members of the *ad hoc* committee



Office of the President

College of the Ozarks

... Hard Work U.

Point Lookout, Missouri 65726
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April 27, 1995

Mr. B. Robert Kreiser
Associate Secretary
American Association of
University Professors
1012 Fourteenth Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D. C. 20005-3465

Dear Mr. Kreiser:

I'm enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by our Board of Trustees. It is self-explanatory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerry C. Davis".

Jerry C. Davis

JCD/tjs

Whereas, in the opinion of this Board, the:

AAUP has repeatedly intervened in the internal affairs of the College of the Ozarks by inappropriately involving itself with an effort to circumvent and undermine faculty personnel policies and procedures.

AAUP Missouri Conference has violated the AAUP published standards by its "disregard of other principles, policies, or procedures of the Association."

AAUP's decision to "investigate" the College of the Ozarks has been compromised by its own misconduct.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees of College of the Ozarks does hereby censure the AAUP's unprofessional treatment of this institution.

Further, this Board demands a written and public apology from the AAUP for the malicious article published by one of its high officials, the Executive Secretary, Missouri AAUP. Aside from its mischaracterization of this College and its employees, the publication of such an attack clearly violates the AAUP's own policy regarding prejudgment, publicity and prior publication review.

Specifically, the Trustees of this institution, deplore the implication in the aforementioned article that this college's efforts to insure accountability somehow merit being compared with "cleansing," let alone any resemblance to Jonestown.

Additionally, this Board believes its decision to replace a policy of lifetime contracts (tenure) with multi-year contracts and a periodic six-year review of all faculty serves the best interest of all concerned, especially the students.

This Resolution adopted by the entire Board of Trustees of College of the Ozarks, April 25, 1995.