

AAUP President Gene Rice

Remarks for 2024 Fall Colloquia.

### 1) Introduction & Reasons to Celebrate

- a. Professor of Philosophy, 23<sup>rd</sup> year teaching & 13 years chair
- b. Convocation is good time to celebrate the many virtues of FHSU:
  - i. **Affordability**, esp for 1<sup>st</sup> Gen and underrepresented
  - ii. **Innovation**: across modalities
  - iii. **Pride in doing more with less**: overcoming challenges, e.g. pandemic
- c. **However, virtue taken extreme= vice**: I fear have reached pivotal moment

### 2) Challenges Yesterday

- a. AAUP formed 30 years ago to fight against an administration tempted to represent FHSU primarily as a business
- b. This is a category mistake: FHSU is not a business and its value to our students, our scholarly disciplines and our community go far beyond dollars and cents.

### 3) Challenges Today: Unfortunately, statewide challenges have multiplied and *continue to threaten the very idea of university as a public good*. To wit:

- i. Relentless defunding of state schools
- ii. Flattening of Gen Ed programs
- iii. Politically driven program review process
- iv. Attacks on disciplinary expertise and vulnerable students
- v. For example: Emporia State's firing of tenured faculty
- vi. **AAUP Summer Institute Take Away**: these aren't local, or fleeting issues; but rather, well-funded, national political initiatives targeting Higher Education...

- 4) **How to Push Back?** We need to explain and defend the value of a university education to our neighbors, families, and friends. *That is most effective when done collectively:*
- a. If you do not have a seat at the bargaining table, you're on the menu!
  - b. Good news
    - i. National: AAUP-AFT Partnership
    - ii. Regional: 3 state chapters: bargaining @ KU
    - iii. Locally: AY 2023-24 we hosted listening sessions and faculty survey
      - 1. We need to do a better job of educating colleagues on role of the union and the nature of the MOA
      - 2. Stay tuned: Prioritizing faculty goals for Spring 25 bargaining year.
- 5) **Join Colleagues!** Fighting for a full-fledged university in western Kansas as a public good.
- a. Find more information at [FHSU-AAUP.org](https://www.fhsu-aaup.org).
  - b. Story: "This class cracked my brain!"
  - c. I know all FHSU Faculty providing teaching and learning experiences for those kind of *breakthrough moments* in their own classrooms, labs and studios... Right here in Hays America and around the world!
  - d. So, on behalf of the executive committee and all our union members, we thank you and wish you best of luck for a great semester.