

Antiochians News

Tuesday August 14, 2007

Today members of the Antioch College Faculty filed for a permanent injunction against the Antioch University Board of Trustees in the Greene County Common Pleas Court. On June 9, 2007, the University Board decided to suspend Antioch College operations, terminating all faculty and staff as of June 30, 2008. The legal request for injunctive relief asks the court to enjoin Antioch University from suspending College operations, from terminating the College Faculty, and from disposing of any College assets.

The lawsuit alleges that the Board failed to govern the institution properly. First and foremost, the Board breached their contractual responsibilities by declaring a state of financial exigency and suspending College operations when less drastic measures were available. The Faculty complaint also alleges that the University Board of Trustees violated contractual obligations set forth in the Faculty Personnel Policies and Procedures that require consultation with College Faculty, and that require minimal external publicity about internal College financial matters. The Faculty asserts that decisions made by the Board

of Trustees in 2004 and 2005 seriously damaged College enrollment prospects, which led to a rapid decline in revenue, and that the June 12, 2007 public suspension announcement further damaged the College.

Last week the College Faculty received support from the American Association of University Professors, the leading advocacy organization for higher education faculty and the defense of academic freedom. The AAUP issued a "statement of concern" to the University Board of Trustees, the University Chancellor, and the College President, citing problems with Antioch University governance policies and "a pattern of disregard for faculty's legitimate role in institutional decision-making."

Today's injunction request asks that the University be prevented from liquidating or dispersing any College assets, including College buildings (three of which are historic landmarks), the College Endowment, its land holdings, Antioch Education Abroad, the recently-opened Coretta Scott King Center, and the Glen Helen Nature Preserve. Legal action by members of the Antioch

College Faculty is one effort in a broad-based campaign by the College Alumni Board, twenty former members of the University Board of Trustees, and the many citizens of Yellow Springs who are working to keep the College open as a viable liberal arts institution. Given the University's public refusal to reconsider their decision to suspend operations, members of the faculty found it necessary to initiate legal action to immediately prevent further damage to the nationally renowned College and the surrounding community.

Antioch faculty, alums and current students are determined to save their school. "Antioch College has offered a very distinctive, high-quality liberal arts education for the past one-hundred and fifty years, and we, the faculty, are committed to keeping it going," says Anne Bohlen, Professor of Media Arts. "The College buildings and grounds, including Glen Helen, are justly famous Ohio landmarks and the College is a major employer in Yellow Springs-there are numerous jobs at stake here. "