

Roger and Me

By Roger Bowen and Malcolm A. Kline

*Roger Bowen, the General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors, responds to an article about the AAUP that Accuracy in Academia's executive director, Malcolm A. Kline, wrote for the Capital Research Center. Kline's response to Dr. Bowen follows the AAUP General Secretary's letter.*

Dear Mal,

I expected greater accuracy in your reporting. I refer to your piece in CRC. Here I will identify only several of the most egregious errors:

- 1) You misunderstand our dues structure;
- 2) You neglect to mention our work on behalf of contingent faculty;
- 3) Joan Bertin is a consultant, not a voting member of Committee A;
- 4) I did not "okay" a "sex conference"; I defended the women studies' faculty's right to hold a conference on sexuality and I did not "personally attend some [or any, for that matter] of its workshops...";
- 5) I did not "convince" the New Paltz "board of trustees" [there is no board of trustees] to "sign off" on a campus production of "The Vagina Monologues"; the Theatre Arts department at New Paltz (and over 100 other campuses nationally, including nearby Marist and Vassar) decided to stage the play;
- 6) Rosenberg had taught without incident for 3 semesters before her dismissal and had, like Eliot Abrams and John Poindexter, been granted clemency;
- 7) Even as we were defending Ramadan's right to teach in the US, so too did we offer to assist Thomas Klocek whose right to teach at

DePaul was being challenged (a point that the former FIRE head conveniently neglects to mention as well);

8) I gave you two examples of defending conservative professors; you did not ask for others. I could have provided other examples, such as Klocek, Bradford, and Hoppe (you are simply wrong that we offered no assistance in his case). I'll find out about Deming and Adams and Bergman (all before my tenure). The Miller case is an intriguing one— if he did not submit documentation in support of his case, which is what your article suggests, neither did Bradford and others whom we offered to assist. We can only help people who want help;

9) I did not say that few conservatives have the qualifications to teach in college, but I did say that David Horowitz lacked a Ph.D.;

10) Mike Adams was NOT a panelist at the AEI event;

11) You mention Benedict College, but not Virginia State. Why?;

12) You'll also see on our website or in our files letters protesting the treatment of academics in Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan, to name just two repressive nations where academic freedom is being violated with dreadful consistency. And you're clearly ignorant of our efforts to get academic freedom on the agenda of the Cuban government.

Mal, either you're a muckraker or a very sloppy journalist, but in either case you certainly are not fair-minded.

Regards,

Roger W. Bowen

General Secretary

American Association of University Professors

Dear Roger,

Thank you for writing. In your reaction to the piece that I wrote about the organization that you head—the American Association of University Professors—for the Capital Research Center last April, you list a dozen of what you see as my “most egregious errors” in the piece. To take them down in order:

1. My only reference to the “dues structure” of the AAUP that I “misunderstand” was to the mandatory levies Dr. Jay Bergman and his peers pay at Central Connecticut State University. But I would appreciate a more detailed explanation of how the AAUP dues system works.
2. I took the aggregate caseload of AAUP censured institutions from your web site and literature but, as you can see from my May 2005 column with its lead item on the AAUP, I am always willing to do a follow-up story on any genuine cases of academic freedom denied that your organization has taken up.
3. I took the official list of [AAUP] committee A [on academic freedom] members from your literature but appreciate any clarification that you will offer.
4. I based my reporting about your role in the SUNY-New Paltz sex conferences on AIA’s coverage of the events at the time. However when you e-mailed a response to an earlier article I had written, after the CRC piece appeared, I

quoted your response, in its entirety, in our May 2005 newsletter, which you can download at [www.academia.org](http://www.academia.org). I will note that in your earlier missive you added the sentence, “At the other conference you mention, my role was limited—as this is campus protocol—to welcoming guests.”

5. The reporting that Eric Langborgh did for Accuracy in Academia on your role in the staging of The Vagina Monologues at SUNY-New Paltz made clear that his source on your statements to the College Council was a member of that same body who was present at the meeting described.
6. Convicted felon Susan Rosenberg may have “taught without incident” at John Jay College before her dismissal from that institution but that does not make the original incident(s) (armed robbery, possession of firearms) a scholarly paper trail. That she was granted clemency is almost as much of a story as when she was given a clean bill of criminal health, by President Clinton in January 2001 as part of the midnight pardons he gave friends and cronies.
7. I first learned of your efforts on Thomas Klocek’s behalf on Dec. 20, 2005. The last piece that I posted on the AAUP ran on Dec. 19, 2005.
8. On the question of conservatives defended by the AAUP, my question was not, “Name two,” but “Has the AAUP ever?,” as I indicated in the CRC piece. You do yourself a disservice on this score, by the way, because you have been more open and sympathetic to conservative dissidents on campus than all of your predecessors put together, a trend I have written about on at least three separate occasions. I greatly appreciate your interest in the travails of Drs. Deming, Adams and Bergman, as I know that they do.

9. At the AEI event, you spent some time pointing out that professors get appointed and promoted through merit when pressed on the question of the dearth of conservatives in academia today. What I should have pointed out in my piece was that at the AEI event you were outnumbered on the panel by three-to-one, even before the audience chimed in. Many would not even appear at such an event against those odds. It speaks well of you that you did.
10. Mike Adams was NOT a panelist at the AEI event. In my original copy he was not either but I missed that error when I proofed the galleys.
11. I believe that I did not mention Virginia State University and your admirable efforts on behalf of Jean Cobbs because the AAUP report on that affair had not come out when the CRC story went to press. I have certainly written about your efforts on Dr. Cobbs' behalf on subsequent occasions, and spoken of same at public events.
12. I devoted several paragraphs to your efforts to promote academic freedom in China. I welcome any information that you would care to send my way on your efforts in Cuba.

Merriam-Webster's defines muckrake as "to search out and publicly expose real or apparent misconduct of a prominent individual or business." I'm only interested in the real part. As for the accusation of sloppiness, I dare to say that I have done a more careful reading of your web site than you have done of ours.

Lastly, I find it ironic that I am accused of not being fair-minded when I have given critics of ours the opportunity to vent about us, unedited, on our web site and in

our newsletter. In some cases, I have solicited such feedback from left-wing web sites. Moreover, I have given our critics much more of a chance to attack me in our media outlets than they have ever accorded me in theirs.

For example, your end of this exchange will run, unedited, on our web site and probably in our newsletter. Will the AAUP grant me the same privilege on its homepage or in its magazine—Academe?

All the best,

Mal Kline