

Vice President's Minute

In 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy gave a speech in Detroit, Michigan that spoke of a need for improved medical care, the importance of a strong minimum wage law, and a call for action to reduce unemployment and poverty. As part of this speech, then Senator Kennedy spoke of the labor movement and the significance of unions. Almost 50 years later, I believe this speech continues to inspire and speaks of striving towards a better economy, society, and nation, and the importance of labor unions.

I support the work of APSCUF towards equitable treatment and fair working conditions. I am dedicated to the faculty role and the PASSHE and WCU commitment for accessible, affordable and high quality education. I recently recommitted to APSCUF, and frankly I feel privileged to do so.

Unions have worked tirelessly to improve working conditions, negotiate fair wages, and
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Member of the Month

Name:

Bessie Lawton
Communication and Media

Time at WCU: Since 2004

Favorite thing about WCU:

I love how our campus community deeply values inclusion.

Why APSCUF is important

to me: APSCUF makes sure I can do my work in helping students succeed, while maintaining a good quality of life. APSCUF gives me peace of mind that there is someone looking out for my rights, as well as the rights of other faculty members. APSCUF takes away the burden of worrying about job security and working conditions, and I am very grateful.

Interesting fact about you people should know:

I love hiking and am aiming for Everest Base Camp next year.



PA Promise - Helping to Meet Unmet Needs

Forty-four million people in the US collectively owe \$1.48 trillion in student loans, which is \$620 billion more than what is owed in credit card debt. As this student-loan debt has been increasing nearly every year¹; as labor-saving technologies continue to replace college-educated workers²; and as the rate of poverty climbs higher and higher; the default rate of student-loan borrowers is also escalating. As of 2016 the percentage of former students in default or deferment was 34.4%, which undoubtedly represents a crisis³.

Additionally, funding for basic social services like education continues to be cut and more and more American workers therefore have basic needs that are consistently being unmet. The wave of teacher strikes that started last fall with a wildcat strike⁴ by West Virginia teachers reflects this trend. Teachers across the US consistently report that it is now common place for educators to have to work

multiple jobs just to make ends meet.

The recent Janus vs. AFSCME⁵ Supreme Court ruling, which has made all US public-sector unions Right-to-Work (for less), will undoubtedly weaken such unions. Consequently, it is more likely now that many PASSHE students studying to be teachers, social workers, nurses, etc., upon graduation, will be unable to meet their basic needs with just one job.

PA Promise legislation is asking the state to cover two years of tuition and fees for all recent Pennsylvania high school students and four years for all high school graduates with a family income of no more than \$110,000. This initiative would ease the burden of student debt allowing future graduates to use their declining incomes to meet more of their basic needs.

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Vice President's Minute continued...

advocate on behalf of members. I am a proud APSCUF member. I am proud to stand with today's labor movement. I am proud of the historical narrative of our nation, a narrative that labor unions have and continue to play an integral part in.

"Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor. But their work goes beyond their own jobs, and even beyond our borders.

"I recently recommitted to APSCUF, and frankly, I feel privileged to do so."

For the labor movement is people. Our unions have brought millions of men and women together, made them members one of another, and given them common tools for common goals.

Their goals are goals for all America - and their enemies are the enemies of all progress."

*Senator John F. Kennedy
September 5, 1960*

In solidarity,
Kristen Crossney
WCU APSCUF Vice President

PA Promise continued

Current PASSHE students who support PA Promise have consistently pointed out that this initiative would also help them as students, reporting, "it would allow me to focus on my studies" because they would not have to "worry about tuition and fees."

Every Wednesday morning until 2 PM the WCU-APSCUF Mobilization Committee will be tabling in Sykes lobby talking with the university community about PA Promise, current struggles in our students' future unions, and other social justice and needs-related issues affecting us all. Come by to learn, share, and mingle.

Curry Malott
APSCUF-WCU Mobilization co-chair

1 <https://studentloanhero.com/student-loan-debt-statistics/>

2 <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/515926/how-technology-is-destroying-jobs/>

3 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/25/opinion/sunday/student-debt-loan-default-college.html>

4 A wildcat strike is a strike carried out by unionized workers without union leadership's authorization, support, or approval.

5 - <https://www.aft.org/news/after-janus-were-it-win-it>

Membership Update

As you (hopefully!) read in last month's newsletter, in a post-Janus world we have to step up our game and keep our member rolls current and full of active members. We strive for 100% membership rates across all departments. If your department or unit is not on this list then that means you have some colleagues who are not APSCUF members. Find out who they are and talk to them. Work with your colleagues to get your department numbers up!

The 100% membership club:

Athletics (Faculty) - 100%

Counseling/Psychological Services - 100%

Educational Development - 100%

History - 100%

Honors College - 100%

Pre-Major Advising - 100%

Sports Medicine - 100%

Women & Gender Studies - 100%

The "pretty close to 100%" club:

Biology - 96%

Chemistry - 96%

Literacy - 96%

Mathematics - 95%

Anthropology/Sociology - 93%

Physics - 93%

Languages & Cultures - 93%

Social Work Graduate - 93%