

AAUP

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

IT IS TIME TO ACT
JOIN WITH US IN DEFENDING HIGHER EDUCATION

***Tenure is under attack. Faculty participation in governance is under attack.
Even faculty use of electronic mail is under attack.***

Dear Colleague:

By the 1980s most faculty members at research universities thought themselves safe from assaults on tenure and academic freedom. For many faculty, the AAUP seemed irrelevant to their careers; what mattered was building a place in a discipline, making contributions to a field. Strikingly, AAUP membership declined most precipitously at research universities, where faculty were relatively insulated from assaults on academic freedom and faculty autonomy.

In the 1990s however, even research universities like Minnesota are finding that they are not exempt from financial downsizing, political attacks, and general public skepticism about their enterprise. Under these new conditions, a renewed commitment to the goals of the AAUP – goals which *all* faculty can endorse – seems imperative at major research universities.

The nature of higher education is changing; all the signs point to more part-time faculty; a reduced faculty role in governance; and multiple, sustained assaults on tenure. Many schools want to shift the burden of proof from the institution to the faculty member in disciplinary cases, thereby effectively replacing tenure with the at-will employment doctrine that has given us massive layoffs in every major U.S. industry. And as American workers are laid off and downsized nationwide, public support for the concept of tenure has badly eroded. Pressures to institute post-tenure review are mounting in every state from Texas and California to Maine and Massachusetts. Often trustees and state legislators do not distinguish between post-tenure reviews that seek to improve faculty quality and post-tenure reviews that facilitate arbitrary dismissals. In 1997, the AAUP issued national guidelines to assure that these reviews do not become witch hunts. But the post-tenure review battle goes on.

There is yet another reason to join AAUP and join now. Even if Illinois is not currently facing a crisis like the showdown at Minnesota or an attempt to restrict e-mail use to business-related purposes, many of our graduate students must take jobs at institutions where the commitment to due process and academic freedom has never been strong and is growing weaker. This concern no longer applies only to small, little-known colleges with a handful of faculty; it includes universities like the City University of New York, whose faculty has been eroded by draconian budget cuts (falling from 15,000 to 5,500 full-time faculty in 30 years), and Brigham Young University, one of the nation's largest private universities, where a faculty member was recently fired on grounds that she prays not only to God the Father but also to God the Mother.

In all areas of academic life, the autonomy of faculty is being eroded. Faculty cannot possibly resist or prevent these developments on their own, department by department, or campus by campus. We need a national organization devoted to the preservation of academic freedom in all its forms, from the right to design our own curricula and conduct research to the right to comment on

public issues and disagree with university administrations – in our published work, on the street, on the Internet.

Electronic Communications and Intellectual Property

In the upcoming May-June issue of *Academe*, AAUP's journal, Robert Gorman (law, University of Pennsylvania) writes on "Intellectual Property: The Rights of Faculty as Creators and Users." On a November report, AAUP's subcommittee on Distance Learning examined the scholarly and political implications of distance learning and provided recommendations for academic and legislative policy.

In June, 1997 the Association's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure published for comment in *Academe*, a report, "Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications." At a strikingly large, and still growing number of schools from the University of Washington to Ball State, administrators are pushing to restrict faculty communications by e-mail, arguing that faculty e-mail should be used only for legitimate business purposes. Such restrictions could prevent faculty from using electronic mail to distribute information (across campus or across the country) opposing institutional policies or, as in one case, in order to organize faculty resistance to a disastrous change in the tenure code.

Join the only national organization devoted to preserving due process and free speech both in the classroom and outside it.

Funding for Research

AAUP continues to support funding for university-based research in the federal budget and appropriations bills. AAUP is working to promote passage of President Clinton's 4.1 percent proposed increase in such funding, which makes up about a third of all non-defense research and development monies in the federal budget. The AAUP's 1965 statement "On Preventing Conflicts of Interest in Government-Sponsored Research at Universities," remains a model for formulating basic standards and guidelines in this difficult area.

University of Minnesota

In 1996, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents proposed new rules for tenured faculty. Under the new regulations, individual faculty members could be terminated at will if the administration defined an area of study narrowly enough to cover only one person; the university would fire the faculty member simply by eliminating that area of study and giving *sixty days notice* of the elimination, which could be undertaken without due process. Additionally, the administration could cut a faculty member's salary by 10 percent if the faculty member were deemed unproductive and could then make additional cuts yearly, up to a maximum of 50 percent of the original salary. The University of Minnesota administration could fire faculty for a wide range of "infractions," including, incredibly, a faculty member's failure to maintain "a proper attitude of industry and cooperation." The local AAUP chapter in Minnesota, with the support and assistance of the national AAUP, organized a successful campaign to prevent the implementation of the Regents' new regulations, and to strike from the agreement all language about at-will salary cuts, individual terminations by area of study, and "proper attitudes of industry and cooperation."

Northwestern University

Closer to home, in 1997, we learned from newspaper accounts that Northwestern University granted tenure to a clinical psychologist but informed him that he would no longer be receiving a salary. There is a difference, Northwestern claimed, between appointment and employment, so that tenure need not entail a paycheck, but the faculty member is welcome to continue teaching for free. The case is now in the state court; if Northwestern wins, tenure in Illinois will be seriously damaged.

Join us in the fight to preserve a strong faculty voice in university governance.

Join the national AAUP – as a professional insurance policy for this generation

of scholars and for those to come. We owe our support to our graduate students – wherever they wind up teaching.

We the undersigned urge you to fill out the enclosed form and join us in supporting the AAUP.

Kenneth Anderson
Speech Communication

Michael Berube
English

Geneve Belford
Computer Science

Linn Belford
Chemistry

Linde Brocato
Spanish, Italian & Portugese

R. B. Clarkson
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