

AAUP

American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

March 16, 2012

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Benjamin J. Allen
President
University of Northern Iowa
1227 West 27th Street
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0001

Dear President Allen:

We have received no response to our March 2 letter conveying our concerns that your administration was taking action to discontinue numerous academic programs at the University of Northern Iowa and to terminate a large number of tenured faculty appointments in core academic areas and was doing so without any meaningful faculty involvement.

Our Association's ongoing interest in the UNI administration's actions stems from its longstanding commitment to academic freedom and tenure, the basic tenets of which are set forth in the enclosed 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. That document was coauthored by the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges and Universities and has received the endorsement of more than 200 educational and scholarly associations. Derivative principles and procedural standards are found in the Association's enclosed *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

Under these standards, faculty members whose appointments are being terminated are entitled to an on-the-record adjudicative hearing before a body of elected faculty peers. In such a hearing, it is incumbent upon the administration to demonstrate that the stated grounds for the action are bona fide and that every effort is being made to relocate displaced tenured faculty members in suitable positions elsewhere within the

Dr. Benjamin J. Allen

March 16, 2012

Page 2

institution. UNI's policies are silent on these matters, and thus affected faculty members presumably are not being afforded the academic due process to which they are entitled under Association-supported standards.

Our concerns have been heightened by press reports that twenty-nine tenured professors whose appointments are threatened with termination have been offered "buy-out" packages consisting of one year's salary and eighteen months of health-insurance coverage if they accept the offers by April 13 and agree to leave the university by June 29. The 1940 *Statement* assures the tenured professor faced with termination of appointment a year of notice or severance salary unless moral turpitude is involved. A large preponderance of our accredited four-year colleges and universities provide the notice or severance salary as an entitlement. We fear that UNI may not be offering the year unconditionally but rather as the large part of a settlement under which the faculty member would release the university from any further claims. If so, we find this troublesome indeed.

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After conferring with members of the Association's staff and reviewing the information available to us, our Association's general secretary has reached the conclusion that the actions being taken by the university raise important issues relating to academic freedom, tenure, and due process as well as to the faculty's role in academic governance. In situations of this kind, which present developments of basic concern to the academic community, our experience has indicated that it is desirable—in fairness to the institutional administration, to the affected faculty members, and to the institution as a whole—to establish an ad hoc committee composed of persons who have had no previous involvement with the particular matter, to conduct its own full inquiry without prejudgment.

The ad hoc committee is being selected by the Association from among members of the academic profession of recognized standing. It will be provided with relevant available information for its examination and will arrange for a prompt visit to UNI in order to consult in full measure with you and with such members of the faculty and the administration as may be designated, in order to ensure that the university will have a complete opportunity to present its position. The ad hoc committee will prepare a report for the consideration of the Association's standing Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which may authorize its publication. Under Association procedures, prior to any publication a draft text is submitted on a confidential basis to

Dr. Benjamin J. Allen

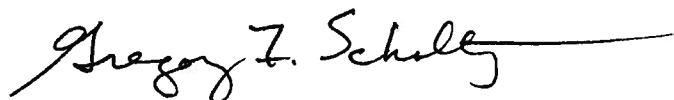
March 16, 2012

Page 3

the institution's chief administrative officer and to others principally concerned in the report, with an invitation to them to offer corrections of any factual errors and whatever other comments they deem suitable.

We shall be writing again soon to inform you of the names of the members of the ad hoc committee and to provide potential dates for the committee's visit. We should like at this time to emphasize the Association's receptivity in this case, as in all others, to resolutions of our concerns that would preclude the necessity for the investigation now authorized.

Sincerely,



Gregory F. Scholtz

Associate Secretary and Director

Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance

Enclosures (via e-mail attachment)

cc: Mr. Bob Donley, Executive Director, Board of Regents, State of Iowa
Dr. Gloria J. Gibson, Executive Vice President and Provost
Professor James Jurgenson, Faculty Chair
Professor Jeffrey Funderburk, Chair, Faculty Senate
Professor Catherine DeSoto, President, University of Northern Iowa United
Faculty-AAUP
Professor Nancy Reincke, President, Iowa Conference AAUP