Texas Administrators Violated Academic Standards

Administrators at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston violated commonly accepted standards of academic due process when they declared financial exigency and fired more than one hundred faculty members (many of whom were tenured) in 2008, according to a new report issued by the American Association of University Professors. Specifically, the report found:

- Procedures followed were severely deficient, placing an unreasonable burden on the affected faculty members to prove that the financial exigency was not bona fide or that their selection for job termination was arbitrary or unreasonable.
- The medical branch faculty was given essentially no role in determining the existence of a state of financial exigency or in assessing its impact on academic programs or faculty appointments.
- Administrators provided insufficient notice or severance salary and did not make adequate efforts to place professors in other suitable positions within the medical branch or elsewhere in the University of Texas system before firing them.
- Administrators failed to demonstrate that the fired professors could not have been recalled to service in spring 2009, at a time when new recruitment for faculty positions was underway.

The report was produced by a committee of AAUP members with no previous involvement in the situation who reviewed extensive documentation and interviewed current and former faculty and administrators. The full report is available. The Association’s Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure authorized the publication of the report. Committee A, when reporting in June to the AAUP’s 2010 Annual Meeting, will present a statement on the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston that may include a recommendation for imposing censure. Learn more about how Committee A works.