July 24, 2013

The Role of the Faculty in Conditions of Financial Exigency

Recent years have witnessed massive closings of academic programs that are basic to a college or university’s curriculum, with a resulting erosion in the number and the authority of the tenured faculty. The AAUP responded last month when its Council adopted as official policy the final text of a major report, *The Role of the Faculty in Conditions of Financial Exigency*. The report, two years in the making, is the product of a subcommittee, chaired by Professor Michael Bérubé, of Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

The subcommittee report makes recommendations designed to strengthen shared governance and faculty consultation when program closures are threatened, and it provides a more detailed and specific definition of “financial exigency.” As to governance and consultation, it insists that faculty be involved in every stage of the process, beginning with the determination of whether the institution is indeed financially exigent. As to defining financial exigency, the report extends the definition to situations not previously covered but only to those which jeopardize an institution’s academic integrity and core educational mission.

AAUP officers and staff will assist as best they can in explaining and implementing the report’s provisions.