Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search of truth and its free expression.

1921–1955

Early Triumphs and Failures

The period was marked by great accomplishment and great failure, as well as numerous smaller milestones—the establishment of a national office with a professional staff, the development of council procedures, and the inauguration of the faculty senate surveys.

The AAUP's own commitment to these principles, however, would soon be severely tested by the growing anticommunist fervor in the United States. At the height of the McCarthy era—a time when repeated violations of academic freedom desperately called for a response—the AAUP was quiet, failing to issue a single investigative report for seven years.

The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure was marked by great accomplishment and great failure, as well as numerous smaller milestones—the establishment of a national office with a professional staff, the development of council procedures, and the inauguration of the faculty senate surveys.

The landmark achievement of the period was the drafting of the Association’s central policy document, the 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure— the first jointly formulated statement to enumerate principles of academic freedom and tenure that hold force to this day.

In the spring of 1925, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) began publishing censure lists in the AAUP Bulletin, a practice that would continue for nearly 30 years. The Association also established a special committee of the AAUP that addresses the consequences of the Great Depression for faculty salaries.

The President’s Commission on Higher Education for a New Deal for America. A year later, the resulting Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly referred to as the GI Bill, was enacted, providing $2 billion in funds for education and training for approximately 20 million veterans. The legislation included a year probationary period for tenure.

The year 1921 marks the beginning of the decade-long Great Depression. The US stock market crashes, bringing the “roaring twenties” to a sudden end and marking the beginning of the decade-long Great Depression.

After releasing an investigation of Evansville College (and the AAUP’s use of segregated hotels for meetings. Du Bois resigned his membership in protest of the Association’s inaction during the McCarthy era.

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The AAUP's Committee on the Economic Status of the Profession publishes the results of its first survey of associates, professors, and full professors— a significant report in a time of economic recession. The survey reveals widespread unemployment and underemployment. The results are published in the Bulletin of the AAUP, with the hope that the results will serve as a stimulus to faculty action.