

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: CANISIUS COLLEGE (NEW YORK)

The report of the investigating committee concerns actions taken in July 2020 by the Canisius College governing board and administration to discontinue nine academic programs and terminate the services of twenty-two faculty members, most of whom held tenured appointments, in a stated attempt to address preexisting financial challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report describes the process preceding this action as departing from the provisions of the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* and Regulation 4 of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*: no declaration of financial exigency preceded the program closures and appointment terminations; instead of employing existing faculty governance bodies and processes to address the financial issues, the administration created an ad hoc committee dominated by administrators and pledged to confidentiality; the collective faculty was not provided the information or the opportunity to “render an assessment in writing” of the college’s financial condition; no faculty body identified which faculty appointments to terminate; the administration did not provide faculty members whose programs were slated for discontinuance with thirty days to respond to the closure proposal; the administration made no effort, much less “every effort,” to find other suitable positions within the institution for affected faculty members; and the administration declined to afford any of the faculty members whose appointments were terminated the opportunity for a faculty hearing in which to contest the terminations.

The investigating committee accordingly found that, in so acting, the administration and governing board had “disregarded normative standards of academic governance.” It further found that, in taking these actions, the administration and governing board had “degraded conditions for shared governance, weakened tenure, and damaged the climate for academic freedom.”

The Committee on College and University Governance recommends to the AAUP’s governing Council that Canisius College be added to the Association’s list of institutions sanctioned for substantial non-compliance with standards of academic government.