



June 3, 2022

St. Edward's University (TX)

The 2019 annual meeting added St. Edward's University to the list of censured administrations as the result of the administration's actions in terminating the services of a tenure-track and two tenured faculty members. The investigating committee found that the administration had refused to afford the two tenured faculty members a dismissal procedure that comported with AAUP-supported standards—a pretermination hearing before an elected faculty body in which the burden of demonstrating adequate cause for dismissal rests with the administration. Regarding the tenure-track faculty member, the committee found that the administration had failed to afford the one year of notice to which she was entitled under AAUP-recommended standards as well as an opportunity to challenge the nonrenewal decision with a duly constituted faculty appeal body.

In July 2021 the institution's newly installed president, responding to the AAUP staff's semiannual solicitation of interest in removing censure, wrote that she had made removal a priority that she hoped to achieve through "shared governance." In September she asked the faculty senate president to work directly with staff to address the institutional policies implicated in the actions that had led to censure. The staff recommended several sets of revisions to the faculty manual. One set addressed deficiencies in the institution's standards for notice of nonrenewal; the other added language on dismissal that requires a hearing before an elected faculty body in which the burden of demonstrating adequate cause rests with the administration. The faculty voted overwhelmingly to approve these changes in January 2022, the administration concurred, and the board adopted them on May 6. Because the old dismissal policy did not afford the due-process protections the AAUP regards as defining tenure, the new policy establishes tenure where it had previously existed only nominally.

Last month the two tenured faculty members reached an out-of-court settlement with the university. The case of the tenure-track faculty member is scheduled for jury trial in August, efforts at mediation having failed.

In late May, an AAUP representative, a member of the Texas AAUP conference executive committee, made a virtual visit to campus, on behalf of the AAUP's national office, to confirm that current conditions for academic freedom and tenure at St. Edward's are sound. Her report states that the university had taken "all the actions that the AAUP suggested" and that the faculty leaders with whom she spoke attested to "an improved climate for academic freedom and tenure."

Committee A recommends to the AAUP's governing Council that St. Edward's University be removed from the Association's list of censured administrations.