



The University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign

The AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure presented the following statement to the AAUP Annual Meeting on June 17, 2017.

The 2015 annual meeting imposed censure on the administration of the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign on the basis of a published report which concluded that the UIUC administration and the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, in rejecting the appointment of a tenured professor in the American Indian Studies program without demonstrating cause, and in doing so only after the appointment had been approved and courses had been assigned to him, acted in violation of the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

In fall 2015 the faculty member, who had filed suit in federal district court following his dismissal, reached a financial settlement with the university. AAUP staff then made recommendations to the interim chancellor for removing the censure. The first was that official policies be revised to ensure board approval of faculty appointments prior to their effective date. The second was that the board approve a new rule applying to cases in which issues arise about a tenure-track or tenured faculty appointment that has been tentatively forwarded to the board by an administrative officer. The rule would require the board to send the recommendation back, through that administrator, to the appropriate faculty committee in order to give that body an opportunity to respond or rebut any concerns or problems raised by the board. And the third was that the board satisfactorily reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom. These recommendations were adopted, but so late in the spring that it was not possible for an AAUP representative to visit the campus and evaluate the climate for academic freedom prior to the annual meeting. Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure thus recommended to the 2016 annual meeting that it delegate to Committee A the authority for removing the censure once the committee had received the representative's report.

At the urging of UIUC faculty members in attendance, the annual meeting declined to approve Committee A's recommendation. They argued that a decision regarding removal should wait until the system trustees considered a request of the three University of Illinois System faculty senates that the board delegate appointment authority to the campuses. These faculty members nonetheless made it clear that they did not believe that trustee approval of this proposal should be a condition for censure removal.

This April a representative of the Association visited the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign and held a series of meetings with administrators and nine representatives of faculty groups. These

included the current chair of the university's Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (CAFT); the president and vice president of the university's AAUP chapter; the president of the Non-Tenure Faculty Coalition (an AAUP/AFT-affiliated collective bargaining unit); the president of the Campus Faculty Association; a former member of the American Indian Studies (AIS) program who was interim director of the program when the professor's offer was tendered; and the chair of the Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures. The AAUP representative provided an exhaustive report to Committee A that described the climate for academic freedom at the institution as "robust."

Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure recommends to the 103rd Annual Meeting that the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign be removed from the Association's list of censured administrations.