



Approved by the Committee on College and University Governance, May 25, 2016

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: UNION COUNTY COLLEGE (NEW JERSEY)

The investigative report details actions taken by the administration and governing bodies of Union County College to eliminate the practices and structures that allowed for faculty participation in institutional governance.

Governance structures consistent with the recommendations of the AAUP's *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* had existed at this medium-sized community college for many years and had been enshrined not only in the faculty handbook and bylaws but also in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiated between the administration and the college's AAUP chapter. A new president, shortly after assuming office in 2010, began making changes in the governance of the college that severely diminished the role of the faculty. In 2012 she initiated, through the college's attorney, a scope of bargaining petition with the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission. The petition sought to eliminate from the CBA all provisions related to faculty participation in governance. Under New Jersey law (unlike that of most other states), such provisions are "nonmandatory subjects of bargaining" about which negotiation is expressly prohibited, though most New Jersey higher education institutions nevertheless incorporate shared governance provisions into their faculty handbooks and collective bargaining agreements.

The report found that the administration of Union County College, with the acquiescence of its two governing boards, abolished key structures of faculty representation in governance; arrogated to itself the faculty role in formulating appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies; and forbade any discussion of governance practices and policies, even outside of collective bargaining negotiations. By doing so, the report concluded, it violated basic principles and standards of academic governance, as set forth in the *Statement on Government* and derivative documents such as the *Statement on Academic Government for Institutions Engaged in Collective Bargaining*.

Following the report's publication, faculty members have informed the AAUP's Washington office of subsequent unilateral actions by the UCC administration that they say have caused conditions for shared governance and academic freedom to deteriorate even further. These include abolishing faculty meetings and replacing them with meetings (at which no votes are taken) of a "College Assembly" consisting of administrative staff and faculty members; eliminating any independent faculty review and vote on curricular issues; and supplanting what was left of the faculty handbook with a new "Employee Handbook" that promulgates such

administrative prerogatives as the right to monitor faculty and staff electronic communications for any reason, as well as the right to make any changes to the handbook at any time.

The Committee on College and University Governance recommends to the 102nd Annual Meeting that Union County College be added to the Association's list of institutions sanctioned for substantial non-compliance with standards of academic government.