



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Annual Meeting Resolution

Proposed Actions by Wisconsin State Legislature to Weaken
Academic Freedom and Shared Governance in
University of Wisconsin System

By this resolution, the 101st Annual Meeting of the American Association of University Professors adds its grave concerns to those currently being voiced throughout the world of higher learning regarding the proposals for action by the Wisconsin legislature later this month. The University of Wisconsin's special reputation for independence in seeking the truth dates back to 1894, when its governing board, resisting pressures to dismiss a famous dissenting professor, expressed its belief that the university "should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which the truth can be found."

The current proposals threaten to discourage what the nineteenth-century board so eloquently encouraged. They require the legislature to "delete current law specifying that the faculty of each institution be vested with responsibility for the immediate governance of such institution." They allow the governing board to terminate tenured faculty appointments in the event of "a program or budget decision regarding program discontinuance, curtailment, modification, or redirection, instead of when a financial exigency exists as under current law." Provision after provision is at odds with

*Resolution Adopted by the One Hundred and First Annual Meeting
of the American Association of University Professors
June 13, 2015
Page 1 of 2*

the AAUP's *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure* and its *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*.

As AAUP president Rudy Fichtenbaum stated in a letter to the chair of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents and the president of the University of Wisconsin System, "These changes in tenure and due process and the \$250 million proposed cut to the UW System amount to a direct attack on higher education as a public good."

The Annual Meeting calls on faculty members in the University of Wisconsin System and their faculty colleagues throughout Wisconsin to work with students, alumni, and community leaders to organize resistance to these proposals and to demand that they be rejected. We also call on the regents and administration of the University of Wisconsin System publicly to state their opposition to these proposals and to resist their implementation if they are approved.

Beyond Wisconsin, the Annual Meeting calls on faculty members throughout the United States to support our Wisconsin colleagues to ensure that similar proposals do not gain traction elsewhere.

Should these proposals become law, the Annual Meeting also calls on the leadership of the AAUP to consider appropriate responses to this attack, including the organization of faculty resistance.