WHAT HAS THE AAUP DONE FOR YOU LATELY?

By Sheila Teahan, President MSU Chapter

AAUP INVESTIGATION OF KATRINA-RELATED FACULTY DISMISSALS

At the 2007 Annual Meeting of the AAUP, four New-Orleans area institutions—Tulane University, Loyola University New Orleans, University of New Orleans, and Southern University at New Orleans—were placed on the AAUP censure list. This action followed the release of the report of the Special AAUP Committee on Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans Universities, the result of the longest and most elaborate investigation in AAUP history. After Katrina, dozens of tenured and tenure-track faculty were dismissed from their positions at New Orleans institutions, often without regard for due process and despite extant university regulations that provided for the handling of financial exigency. In fact, the Special Committee found that institutional claims that the dismissals were made necessary by financial exigency were largely hollow. It concluded that the Katrina disaster had become a pretext for the elimination of entire programs and departments.

AAUP President Cary Nelson has referred to the phenomenon of the Katrina dismissals as the “perfect educational storm.” His metaphor is apt. In many cases, faculty returned to New Orleans to find letters of furlough or dismissal waiting for them. Many of them learned that their medical benefits had been cancelled. Some had already been locked out of their offices.

I urge you to peruse the full report of the Special Committee, which is available at www.aaup.org/AAUP/protect/academic freedom/investrep/2007/katrina.htm or in the May-June 2007 issue of Academe. It is disturbing but critical reading; it is clear that something similar could happen again in the wake of a comparable natural disaster or a terrorist attack. The Report outlines a number of preparatory steps that every university should take to ensure that higher education never suffers from another perfect storm. Further, we should reflect that only the AAUP could and would have undertaken an investigation on this scale and produced a report of this import. You need look no further for a reason to support the AAUP!

NEW REPORT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE CLASSROOM

In June 2007, the Association’s Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure approved for publication in Academe a new report on “Freedom in the Classroom.” Formulated in part in response to the so-called “Academic Bill of Rights” movement and to attempts to introduce in state legislatures bills that would condone legislative surveillance of the college and university classroom, the report considers claims about alleged professorial “indoctrination” of students, a problem with lack of “balance” in the presentation of material, the creation of “hostile learning environments,” and the inclusion of allegedly “irrelevant” material in classroom discussion. The report observes that (1) indoctrination can be said to occur only when an instructor insists dogmatically on student acceptance of an intellectually contestable position; (2) calls for “balance” tend to rest on an illusory belief that material can be presented in a value-free manner or one that reflects all relevant points of view; (3) the exposure of students to challenging or unfamiliar views does not create a hostile learning environment as long as respect is accorded to student political and religious beliefs; and (4) the “relevance” of material to a given classroom discussion is a function of the course’s pedagogical goals and cannot be determined on the basis of a course description alone.

This important report is certain to be widely cited and quoted. Read it at www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm or in the September/October issue of Academe.
**FACULTY VOICE: A CHRONOLOGY**

**BY GROVER HUDSON**  
Past President, AAUP MSU Chapter

**September-March 2003-4.** Without faculty consultation, University administration undertook initiatives to restructure MSU liberal arts education and to move the College of Human Medicine to Grand Rapids. A new Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies was named without a national search. A new University president was named without faculty consultation. The University Intellectual Integrity Officer and Assistant Vice President for Research Ethics and Standards resigned charging the central administration with destroying notes of meetings after key decisions to prevent their being released under FOIA. During the year, faculty were also involved in prolonged disputes with the Administration over intellectual property rights, conflict of interest policy, and fringe rates charged to grants for research-assistant salaries.

**April 2004.** In response to the matters of liberal arts ‘restructuring’ and the College of Human Medicine move, Academic Senate, in a standing-room-only meeting, called for establishment of a ‘Faculty Voice Committee,’ to analyze and propose alterations to the academic governance system at Michigan State designed to provide more effective and timely faculty input to university decision-making.

**October 2004-April 2005.** The Faculty Voice Committee was formed upon nominations and election, held open meetings, received input, published a draft report and revised it, presenting its final report to Faculty Council in April.

**September 2005.** As recommended by the Voice Committee, Faculty Council established five ‘Task Forces’ to develop recommendations concerning: (1) structure of academic governance, (2) regular faculty review of administrators, (3) regular program reviews by faculty, (4) communication and transparency of governance, (5) fixed-term faculty.

**December 2005-April 2006.** The five Task Forces held open meetings, received input, published drafts, and revised their reports, with TFS 2-5 presenting their reports in Faculty Council in April. Task Force 1 (Structure of Academic Governance) continued to meet, completing its report in August.

**April 2006.** Concerned that the five reports would need ‘integration’ and cost out, Faculty Council established a Voice Implementation Committee...to integrate and cost out the recommendations of the Faculty Voice Task Force Groups, and charged to ‘accomplish’ this ‘within 3 months following [the] Task Force 1 report.’

**May 2006.** Executive Committee of Academic Council established the ‘Faculty Voice Implementation Committee’ (VIC), to begin work in the summer, with membership to include old and new ECAC members. (VIC membership, agendas, and minutes of meetings are as yet unknown.)

**August 2006.** Task Force 1 submitted its report.

**September 2006.** Faculty Council discussed the Task Force 2 and 3 reports. A motion was passed to ‘accept’ the Task Force 2 report, which was referred to the President and administration ‘for consideration and implementation suggestions.’ The Council ‘accepted’ the report of Task Force 3, with addition of specific mention of the Law School, and referred it also to the President and administration for comment and advice.

**November 2006.** President’s Simon criticized the Task Force 2 Report, on faculty review of administrators, for recommending (1) reviews of administrators every year, (2) ‘retention of data longer than any set of data currently collected; and (3) openness of the outcome to all’--none of which are in the report! (She was apparently responding to the Task Force’s draft report, which had been thoroughly revised in March, after comments from the University community.)

Faculty Council discussed and approved the recommendations of Task Force 5, principally to amend University bylaws to give voting rights to fixed-term faculty, and had preliminary discussion of the Task Force 1 Report on structure of academic governance.

**February 2007.** Council approved new and revised University Bylaws implementing recommendations of Task Force 5 awarding voting rights to fixed-term faculty.

**March 2007.** Faculty Council heard from its chair that “The Institute for Public Policy and Social Research...has been commissioned to work with several faculty to develop a faculty survey related to the Task Force 4 recommendations,’ on how to improve communication with and among faculty about academic governance issues.

Members of Task Force 1 discussed their recommendations in Faculty Council (their report had been submitted to Faculty Council in August 2006).

**April 2007.** Faculty Council referred the report of Task Force 2 to the University Committee on Faculty Affairs, for its comments, and deferred further consideration of the Task Force 1 report (Structure of Academic Governance) to fall 2007.

**October 2007.** Executive Committee of Academic Council recommended to Faculty Council a procedure for 3-part discussion and votes on Task Force 1 recommendations. Further discussion was deferred to the November meeting. Provost Wilcox presents program reviews.

Now, where do we stand? Faculty Voice Committee’s recommendations on voting rights for fixed-term faculty, developed in the report of Task Force 5, have been approved in University bylaws and implemented by changes in University Bylaws. All other recommendations still await action in Faculty Council. Copies of reports and other documents referred to in the minutes may be found at www.msu.edu/unit/acadgov/.
WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AAUP?
By Jeffrey Lee, Executive Director, MIAAUP

Among members and non-members alike questions like this arise, especially in the fall when new faculty are recruited and membership drives are planned. Why should one join the AAUP? What are the dues spent on? Couldn't we just do that job ourselves without a national association? Would we be better served to spend our money on an organization that promises direct member or chapter benefits? Every member should know the answers to these questions.

A BRIEF HISTORY]

In 1915, a group of professors from across the country led by John Dewey and Arthur O. Lovejoy formed an organization that would protect the academic rights of faculty. Hence the AAUP was born with a mission of guaranteeing Academic Freedom, then a relatively new concept. Though codified in the 1925 Conference Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure, these two core tenets did not become the widespread norm in American higher education until the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure was adopted.

Since that time, the AAUP has worked to define the rights and responsibilities of the professoriate and ensure the standards it expounds have been accepted and adhered to by institutions across the nation. The latter task has been the primary mission of the association's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Policy statements impacting both of these principles are generally authored and vetted by this committee. More of its business, however, involves the investigation of violations of Academic Freedom and Tenure.

Today, the AAUP has fifteen standing committees addressing academic issues in addition to ad hoc committees and the work of conferences and individual chapters. Topics range from professional ethics to the economic status of the profession to accreditation to the recent investigation of the violation of academic rights in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. And unlike most national organizations, the AAUP remains driven by work of members, especially at the local level. Most of the output of the AAUP, from policy statements to investigation reports, is a result of a commitment of time and effort by faculty such as you. For the most part, they are not paid. Your dues pay for a professional staff that annually reviews thousands of Academic Freedom concerns; researches economic and academic trends; lobbies government officials; publishes Academe; assists members; and organizes and supports chapters and conferences. In addition, a portion of the collected dues is earmarked to return to members/chapters in need.

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

In an economic and political environment where we expect tangible results for investment, the question of the value of being an AAUP member is especially appropriate. Unfortunately, like most public good non-profit organizations, the benefits of membership are directly felt by the payee only on rare occasions. Certainly, the value of the AAUP is proven when an individual's rights are defended and that person's employment and career are made safe. That is an obvious circumstance, but thankfully, not a situation most faculty will face.

To properly assess the worth of the AAUP and its work on behalf of the professoriate, we must envision the future of higher education without the AAUP. While some argue that the AAUP does not offer a unique service and that in its absence, other groups would fill the void, no other group has the same primary mission but instead the championing of academic rights is an ancillary function.

The first noticeable difference in an AAUP-less future is the absence of faculty in the governance of the university. Elected governance would be eliminated as too slow and ineffective. In its place, a streamlined system of faculty involvement which would be restricted to only those could forward the agenda of the administration.

Second, the current shift towards untenured faculty would greatly accelerate. Remember, without faculty governance, hiring committees would become advisory only and the offer, or even the possibility of tenure would lie in the hands of the provost or dean. Instead, tenure would be reserved for research "stars." These individuals would effectively become mini-administrators, overseeing numerous projects undertaken by a myriad of contingent researchers. Instruction would become the province of untenured lecturers, individuals with heavy teaching loads and no other responsibilities.

While this prediction seems dystopian to many of you, consider the current trends of higher education here in Michigan alone. In February, Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids eliminated the tenure track for its non-seminary programs. All newly hired faculty will hold that position on a contingent basis, i.e. on a single or multiyear contract whose renewal is dependent solely upon the approval of an administrator. For the 2006-07 academic year, 51% of the instructional faculty at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor was not on the tenure track. In fact, less than 37% of instructional faculty had tenure. In comparison, less than 48% of the faculty was not on the tenure track just four years early. Going back ten years, the percentage falls to 42%. Regardless of the size or prominence of the institution, there is a trend to move away from tenured positions.

Continuing on with the prediction, a loss in tenure leads to limits in academic freedom. Those limits need not be formally imposed, but simply implied or perceived as a condition of continued employment. This scenario could not happen overnight. In the end, this prediction comes true not from because it is the desired outcome of either party, but because the momentum of circumstance and past decisions becomes too much for a restricted faculty and a decentralized education system to counteract.

The AAUP exists to provide that unifying force for the professorate. It is the AAUP that discourages colleges and universities to limit the use of contingent faculty and defends the continuation and value of tenure. No organization can stop a determined administration. For the 2006-07 academic year, 51% of the instructional faculty at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor was not on the tenure track. In fact, less than 37% of instructional faculty had tenure. In comparison, less than 48% of the faculty was not on the tenure track just four years early. Going back ten years, the percentage falls to 42%. Regardless of the size or prominence of the institution, there is a trend to move away from tenured positions.

As was mentioned earlier, other organizations exist that advocate on behalf of higher education faculty. Most do a superb job protecting the rights of their members, although they do not expend much energy on those individuals who are not members. While this clearly benefits members in the short term, it does little to effectively manage the environment of higher education. No organization can stop a determined administration from enacting bad policies. One dedicated to the common good can attempt to isolate that policy, condemn its proponents and educate others on more productive approaches.

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ITS A PUBLIC GOOD

The majority of AAUP activity is the protection of the rights of individuals, but the essence of that activity is the defense of the rights of a profession. That is a mission that cannot be accomplished by an individual or a single chapter. Academic rights cannot be secure on one campus while in danger on others. Education is an essential public good; a commodity whose mere existence impacts all people. Your membership dues ensure the value of higher education to all while seeking to secure the rights for you individually.

As always, the future of the AAUP lies in the hands of the faculty. Individuals and chapters can always disassociate themselves from the national organization, believing that the monetary saving is worth the risk of any future actions of the administration. Ironically, this action makes negative consequences more likely since it reduces the AAUP’s ability to react and counter adverse trends. Instead, consider the opposite action, become more active in the AAUP and in the recruitment of new members. A stronger organization is a more effective organization. Your actions will both revitalize your chapter’s resolve and stem any unwanted initiatives from the administration. Remember academic freedom is a public good and the more people who contribute to its defense, the stronger it will become, and the more higher education thrives under its umbrella.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT A CROSSROADS

By Jeffrey Lee, Executive Director, MIAAUP

The American higher education system is at a crossroads. On two fronts, faculty and administrations are at odds. The final resolutions will impact the long term direction of the university system in this country. Under fire are tenure and the system of shared governance. Both are in flux as higher education moves towards a corporate top-down model.

In 1940, the Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, coauthored by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Association of American Colleges (AACU), now the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAUP), codified the modern tenure system and has since been endorsed by more than 200 scholarly and educational groups. As you know, that system required a professor to earn tenure over a period of years (typically six) through an amassed body of work. The granting of tenure implies that the individual was worthy both of the scholarly standards of the institution and to educate its students. Beyond qualifications, tenure allows a faculty member to explore outside of normal lines, to seek unconventional answers and to challenge popular perceptions. Sadly, in the name of flexibility and cost-containment, administrations are eroding this basic principle of American education. Adjunct faculty, once hired on a limited basis to utilize a unique expertise, have become an ever-increasing cost-cutting measure. They are typically paid much less than a tenure-track colleague with less office space, fewer benefits, no responsibilities outside the classroom and with qualifications based on the need of the dean or chair. Other non-tenure-track faculty might be classified in a research or clinical track. The titles may vary, as do the duties, but bottom line remains that these individuals are often hired with little or no faculty input. Their continued employment is based on the opinion of a program director, chair or dean. Academic Freedom becomes a myth; expounded perhaps but rarely enforced.

The weakening of tenure compounds a slow demise in the shared governance system. In the early years of American higher education, the faculty literally ran the university. With most institutions being quite small, decisions could be made by a deliberative faculty body. As the size and complexity of our universities grew, so did the need for full-time administrators and support staff with specialized knowledge and skills. Today, universities are as complicated and varied as corporations. Administrators are hired to run the institution efficiently and to produce positive results. Deliberative bodies have disappeared in favor of snap decisions. Determination is taken out of the hands of faculty who would probably prefer not to have to make university-wide decisions.

Too often, the demise of one’s power is a result of apathy and shared governance is an example of that. How often do you vote to elect faculty senate or executive committee members? How often do you skip what is surely be another boring department meeting? How often do you just assume a decision-maker has your best interests at heart or that decisions will simply “work out” in the long run? It is easy to become complacent with a bevy of responsibilities which could include serving on bodies such as hiring or promotion/tenure committees. It is easy to become complacent, but it is also dangerous.

The term of an administrator is often quite short; three to five years contracts are typical. Compare that to the thirty or more years you are likely to put in at Michigan State. Consider who better understands the pulse of the institution and who will likely bear the burden of any decisions made. In five short years, a bad dean could tarnish the reputation of a college and destroy the morale of its faculty. Who would it bother more, a dean now at another school or you, a faculty member left to deal with the mess? Is this overly melodramatic? Not if you suddenly found your college headquartered in Grand Rapids and your classes schedule an hour away in Grand Rapids or 1½ hours away in Detroit.

Michigan State University is your home and like your physical home, it needs continued attention. Just as you would never let your accountant remodel your home without at least reviewing the plans, each of you should be informed and vocal regarding the direction of the university. The faculty are the lifeblood of an institution and as such, they collectively wield tremendous power in determining the future of that institution. Be informed, be vocal and be involved.

DID YOU KNOW?

The MSU AAUP newsletter is one of three featured as model chapter newsletters on AAUP President Cary Nelson’s website “Resources for AAUP Chapters and Conferences.” The website contains many interesting materials see www.cary-nelson.org.
AAUP MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

Check Membership category (2007 National Dues):

____ Full-time ($155)  ____ Associate ($117)  ____ Entrant ($78)  ____ Joint ($78)

____ Retired ($78)  ____ Part-time ($39)  ____ Graduate ($39)

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Institution: _______________________________________________________

Preferred mailing address: __________________________________________

Daytime Phone: (____) _______ - _______

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Tenured: _____ Yes _____ No

Academic Rank & Field: ________________________________________________

Membership Status:  ____ New Member

____ Renewal  ____ Reinstatement

Note: Membership will extend for twelve months from the month payment is received at the national office.

PAYMENT

National Dues _________ +

Michigan Conference - $38  +

Chapter Dues (GVSU, MSU, U-M Ann Arbor - $10, U-M Flint - $12)  +

= _______ Total Dues Owed

Check: (Payable to AAUPP $__________

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

I hereby authorize the AAUP to charge my credit card $__________

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Lansing, MI 48933

FAX: (517) 913-6447
In the spring of 2004, then president of MSU, M. Peter McPherson, decided that the College of Human Medicine should move from East Lansing to Grand Rapids. He charged the faculty to execute the move by the fall of 2006. Members of the Lansing and East Lansing communities as well as faculty and staff at MSU were concerned both with the move of the medical school away from mid Michigan and by the time line of the move.

Leaders of the AAUP helped faculty members of the College of Human Medicine and many others from across the campus organize themselves to counter the president’s edict. They provided important insight into strategies for addressing the administration of the university as well as the board of trustees. The AAUP provided expertise on how to use parliamentary procedures to put our issues on the agenda of the Faculty Senate meeting. AAUP leaders were tremendously helpful to those of us who spoke before the Senate.

The outcome of the Senate meeting was the establishment of a faculty committee to oversee the plans for an expansion to Grand Rapids. Through the work of thoughtful administrators within the medical school and members of the faculty, the plan to move the medical school to Grand Rapids was transformed into a plan to create a second campus in Grand Rapids and to phase in the new campus over several years.

The AAUP was instrumental in helping us organize ourselves and think strategically. Many of us had had little experience in governance and did not know how to be heard by the administration. I believe the AAUP played a key role in saving the College of Human Medicine in East Lansing.

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE: STEERING COMMITTEE OR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE?

By Phylis Floyd, Assoc. Professor, AAUP MSU Chapter Secretary, and Member of Task Force 1

The Faculty Voice Committee report of 2004 recommended the creation of a steering committee “to coordinate, to refer, and to communicate, i.e. to steer information, discussion, and legislation and only infrequently, to exercise executive powers,” perhaps “the single most important recommendation.” Principles of university governance articulated in the Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities jointly formulated by American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) guided the Faculty Voice Committee and Task Force 1’s recommended changes to MSU’s governance structure. Task Force 1 recommended that steering committee members be elected at large and then serve ex-officio on standing committees. Its members would also serve as liaisons to the board of trustees, and preside over and set the agenda of a recast Faculty Congress.

Currently faculty liaisons to the Board of Trustees include the chair of ECAC, a representative from the Faculty Affairs Committee, a representative from Faculty Tenure Committee, and one tenured and one non-tenured faculty member elected by Faculty Council. The bylaws for academic governance do not specify a reporting or governance structure for the committee, other than attending a meeting “a day or two prior to each Board of Trustees meeting to review and discuss issues with regard to the Board of Trustees meeting agendas” and attending “a breakfast meeting with Board members on the day of the Board meetings to discuss issues and share information.” If Faculty Council adopts the recommended Steering Committee structure, communication between faculty and the Board of Trustees would be enhanced.