

AAUP Core Principles

The AAUP's core principles support excellence in the creation and dissemination of knowledge, thereby strengthening colleges and universities. Policies, procedures, and bargaining positions may change from year to year, depending on place, time, and situation, but these two fundamental principles are unchanging and form the underlying basis of AAUP stances on particular situations or issues: **Academic Freedom** and **Shared Governance**.

Academic Freedom. This core principle dates back to the founding of the AAUP in 1915, and was articulated in the AAUP's landmark 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

This concept was further elaborated in the 1994 statement, *On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom*:

The academic freedom of faculty members includes the freedom to express their views (1) on academic matters in the classroom and in the conduct of research, (2) on matters having to do with their institution and its policies, and (3) on issues of public interest generally, and to do so even if their views are in conflict with one or another received wisdom.

In short, faculty must be free to teach, engage in research, and participate in institutional governance without fear of punishment or repercussions because their *legitimate* academic activities are politically controversial or unpopular.

Tenure. The concept of tenure was created to protect academic freedom. In today's environment, with the large number of full-time faculty off the tenure track, the idea of "job security" must also extend to them if academic freedom and the benefits it brings to the institution are to be realized. (See *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*, available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/wp-content/conting-stmt.htm>).

Adequate Compensation & Full-Time Employment. Academic freedom and freedom from fear of retaliation are protected not only by tenure, but also by financial

security.

Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society. (See *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.)

Adequate compensation is therefore a requisite for the health of the faculty as a whole.

There are certain situations in which the employment of part-time, adjunct faculty is necessary or even desirable (e.g., in programs which need the expertise of practicing professionals). Academic freedom is undermined, however, when the majority of faculty are employed part-time and/or are poorly compensated. In such cases, faculty may be forced to engage in outside employment or hold multiple teaching positions in order to make a living. In addition, faculty often feel they must avoid teaching controversial subject matter, or avoid engaging in research which is perceived as controversial or “political,” lest they lose their jobs. Both of these situations discourage—or make impossible—excellent teaching and research. (See *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*.)

Faculty Responsibility. The concept of academic freedom does *not* mean that faculty have no responsibility to students, peers, or their employer. Students should never have legitimate reason to believe that political beliefs—theirs or their professors’—will influence their grades. Faculty should respect the political viewpoints of their students and their peers. This does *not* preclude rigorous classroom discussions of issues of a political nature. It means, rather, that care should be taken to assure students that they are not required to adopt a particular viewpoint, but they *are* responsible for knowing the facts and issues and for being able to articulate them clearly. (See *Freedom in the Classroom* (2007), available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/class.htm>. See also AAUP-UC contract, Article 3: “Academic Safeguards and Responsibilities.”)

In addition, academic freedom does not mean that faculty are completely free to teach whatever they like in any manner they like. The existence and authority of department curriculum committees are consistent with academic freedom. The key is that faculty who are experts in the field have the primary authority, as a group, to set academic standards and curricular plans. (See AAUP-UC contract, Article 27.2)

It is not inconsistent with academic freedom for college or university administrations, in cooperation with the faculty, to set standards for faculty performance. What the AAUP has opposed is the use of “post-tenure review” as a substitute for periodic evaluations whose purpose is faculty development and feedback on performance. “Post-tenure review” should not be used to reevaluate a faculty member’s tenured status (see *Post-Tenure Review: An AAUP Response*, available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/wp-content/PTR.htm>), and it is not a

substitute for due process in cases where discipline or dismissal may be warranted.

Due Process. Finally, academic freedom does not mean that faculty are not accountable for failure to perform their duties to a reasonable standard. It is a myth that tenured faculty cannot be fired. The principle of academic freedom does require, however, that faculty accused of being unable or unwilling to perform their duties (or of other serious charges) be given due process in order to prevent unfair, baseless, or politically motivated accusations from resulting in discipline or dismissal. Article 9 of the AAUP-UC contract embodies this principle.

Shared Governance. The AAUP's long-standing position has been that the public good is best served by viewing the academic institution as a cooperative effort among all components of the institutions, including the trustees, the administration, the students, the faculty.

The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort. (1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/wp-content/governancestatement.htm>.)

Article 27 of the AAUP-UC contract summarizes this vision of shared governance. It notes that faculty have "the power to make their own regulations" regarding issues of student admissions, academic standards and other fundamental issues of curriculum. Faculty also have the right to "share significantly in the responsibilities for" program, department, and college development and review, or reorganization; and the framing and execution of long-range plans, including but not limited to budget planning. Shared governance principles are enacted at every level (academic unit, college, university) through various means, the most visible being the University Faculty Senate.

The Difference between Policy and Principle

It is important to distinguish between core principles and Chapter policies. Decisions on issues such as merit pay, compensation models, and various employee benefits are *policies*, not core principles. Bargaining issues must be reviewed and reformulated every three years through Chapter decision-making processes. No particular position is set in stone. Discussion of particular bargaining positions or policies are guided by the core principles elaborated above, but positions and policies can and do change over time.

Defending versus Enacting Shared Governance

The Chapter as a body is not involved in the *exercise* of shared governance rights (e.g., RPT decisions, decisions on curriculum or academic standards, appointment or election to bodies such as the Faculty Senate or joint faculty-administration committees). The AAUP standards and the contract ensure that these rights exist, but *faculty* execute

them. Only if faculty report that their right to participate in shared governance is violated does the Chapter become involved, and only then by helping faculty assert and exercise that right.