

From: Tammy Greer  
Sent: Friday, October 22, 2010 2:07 PM  
Subject: Message from AAUP-USM Chapter

Colleagues,

The budget reduction strategies of 2009 and, most recently, 2010 that were developed by the administration WITH LITTLE OR NO CONSULTATION WITH THE FACULTY have led to termination notices, two years in a row, for many of our tenured and tenure-track colleagues. As you know, the university has not declared financial exigency and, therefore, according to AAUP guidelines (see below), termination of programs and associated tenured and tenure-track faculty should occur only for educational reasons, not monetary reasons or variations in enrollment. The budgetary process that we have witnessed for two years now, has been a process where these determinations have been based, primarily it seems, on monetary considerations.

These budgetary strategies that have so devastated our colleagues impact all of us. It is obvious to many of us that this disregard of tenure status in administrative efforts to balance budgets year to year, even when that balancing act is difficult, puts all of us at risk for termination and, therefore, puts at risk, as well, all that is protected by tenure. This lack of regard for tenure status has the potential to become a very real threat to academic freedom. Without any real guiding principles to the budgetary situation from year to year and without the consideration of tenure status in our efforts to downsize and respond appropriately to budget fluctuations, we are all vulnerable to the political and the transient political and other non-academic pressures of the day. Because of this recurring lack of regard for the principles of tenure that protect academic freedom, and because we believe that this erosion of tenure will ultimately and inevitably affect academic freedom, we are in the process of circulating the following petition:

Given that in the absence of a declaration of financial exigency the faculty should have primary responsibility for decisions about academic programs and faculty terminations, we, the undersigned, oppose the administration's recently proposed elimination of academic programs and the pending termination of tenured and tenure-track faculty appointments. We believe that these cuts will irreparably damage the University's ability to fulfill its educational mission.

AAUP colleagues and other concerned faculty may approach you with this petition. Please consider joining with us in this effort to notify the administration of our concern for the lack of regard for AAUP principles that protect tenure and academic freedom in this difficult time.

We are now requesting and have always requested that the administration follow AAUP guidelines. I'm including those guidelines so that you are aware of the discrepancy between our Southern Miss processes and the AAUP recommended processes for terminating programs.

[Discontinuance of Program or Department Not Mandated by Financial Exigency 7](#)

- d. Termination of an appointment with continuous tenure, or of a probationary or special appointment before the end of the specified term, may occur as a result of

bona fide formal discontinuance of a program or department of instruction. The following standards and procedures will apply.

- (1) The decision to discontinue formally a program or department of instruction will be based essentially upon educational considerations, as determined primarily by the faculty as a whole or an appropriate committee thereof. [Note: "Educational considerations" do not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment. They must reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuance.]
- (2) Before the administration issues notice to a faculty member of its intention to terminate an appointment because of formal discontinuance of a program or department of instruction, the institution will make every effort to place the faculty member concerned in another suitable position. If placement in another position would be facilitated by a reasonable period of training, financial and other support for such training will be proffered. If no position is available within the institution, with or without retraining, the faculty member's appointment then may be terminated, but only with provision for severance salary equitably adjusted to the faculty member's length of past and potential service.

[Note: When an institution proposes to discontinue a program or department of instruction, it should plan to bear the costs of relocating, training, or otherwise compensating faculty members adversely affected.]

- (3) A faculty member may appeal a proposed relocation or termination resulting from a discontinuance and has a right to a full hearing before a faculty committee. The hearing need not conform in all respects with a proceeding conducted pursuant to Regulation 5, but the essentials of an on-the-record adjudicative hearing will be observed. The issues in such a hearing may include the institution's failure to satisfy any of the conditions specified in Regulation 4d. In such a hearing a faculty determination that a program or department is to be discontinued will be considered presumptively valid, but the burden of proof on other issues will rest on the administration.

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