REPORT OF COMMITTEE A ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE,

2010-11

Introduction

The 2010–11 report of Committee A includes an important mix of judicial and legislative business. In this introduction, I want to highlight two achievements, one judicial and the other legislative. Acting on the recommendations of Committee A with the concurrence of the Council, the 2011 annual meeting voted to remove the University of New Orleans and Loyola University New Orleans from the list of censured administrations. Following the removals of Southern University at New Orleans by the 2008 annual meeting and of Tulane University by the 2009 annual meeting, these two additional removals mean that all of the New Orleans universities censured in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina have provided appropriate redress to affected faculty members and their regulations are now in compliance with standards supported by the AAUP. The AAUP's prompt investigations and reports following Hurricane Katrina and the ultimate removals of censure completed this year constitute one of the most significant accomplishments in the history of the AAUP. To mark this achievement, Committee A issued the following statement on the post-Katrina New Orleans investigations, which the annual meeting endorsed:

With the two censures removed by the 2011 annual meeting, Committee A is pleased to close the files of its Special Committee on Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans Universities.

The chair of Committee A authorized the establishment of the special committee in March 2006, when it became evident that several of the city's universities, upon reopening after the hurricane, were considering a variety of actions that had adverse ramifications for academic freedom and tenure. The special committee, consisting initially of nine members and assisted by a grant from the AAUP's Academic Freedom Fund, first convened in Washington in May of that year to decide on assignments and a schedule for its work. In July the general secretary authorized investigations,

with special committee members as investigators, at five of the universities. August witnessed site visits in New Orleans by committee members. Over the course of two weeks, they were there a few at a time interviewing faculty members, and the full special committee was in the city at the end of the month meeting with administrative officers and attorneys from the three public universities and planning its report. By that time a massive amount of accumulated documentation had been supplemented by the results of nearly a hundred interviews that occurred.

The special committee's sixty-seven-page report was published in the May—June 2007 issue of *Academe*, in time for Committee A to bring the five cases before the AAUP's 2007 annual meeting. In the case of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, progress toward resolving deficiencies had been sufficient for Committee A not to make a recommendation to the annual meeting but to state that it would continue to monitor developments and report back to the annual meeting in 2008. At Committee A's recommendation, the 2007 annual meeting did impose censure in the four other

Status of Committee A Cases and Complaints as of May 31, 2011	
All current open complaints, not opened	
as cases	445
All current open cases	171
Total complaints and cases currently	
open	616
All complaints closed since June 1, 2010	173
All cases closed since June 1, 2010	34
Total complaints and cases closed since	
June 1, 2010	207
Total complaints and cases handled	823

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cases. By 2008, all remaining AAUP concerns regarding furloughed LSU Health Sciences Center professors had been resolved, and adequate revised policies on financial exigency had been adopted. Censure thus was not recommended. Also by 2008, outstanding cases of furloughed professors at Southern University at New Orleans had been resolved by offers of reinstatement, and adequate financial-exigency policies had been restored, enabling the 2008 annual meeting to remove the censure that had been imposed the year before. Next, in 2009, the adoption at Tulane University of two previously lacking procedural safeguards in its policy on financial exigency and the administration's acceptance of AAUP recommendations in two pending cases led to the removal of the institution from the AAUP's censure list.

The 2011 University of New Orleans and Loyola University New Orleans censure removals thus bring the cases investigated by the special committee to closure, four years after the committee submitted its report and within a half dozen years since Hurricane Katrina struck.

Committee A believes the speed, comprehensiveness, and outcome of this total engagement to be unprecedented in the Association's history. It stands as testimony to the importance of the Association's role—including the constructive role of censure—in securing institutional recognition of academic freedom, tenure, and sound principles of shared governance.

As I reported last year, a new subcommittee of Committee A began work on a major report, Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions. The subcommittee met in spring 2010 and produced a lengthy draft that Committee A discussed at its June 2010 meeting. Based on that discussion, the subcommittee revised the report, which Committee A discussed in detail and further revised at its November 2010 meeting. Committee A approved publication online of the revised report with solicitation for comment. Many faculty members from a wide variety of institutions throughout the country commented on the report, as did representatives of the National Association of Scholars and the Institute for Jewish and Community Research. Following some additional revisions, Committee A approved this report at its June 2011 meeting. The significant responses generated by its online publication underline the report's importance and influence. The full report merits reading, but Committee A also recognized the

value of an abbreviated version, which it asked the subcommittee to prepare.

Committee A has established additional subcommittees dealing with program closings and terminations on grounds of physical or mental disability. It also approved the creation of an ad hoc committee, in collaboration with the Canadian Association of University Teachers and possibly other interested organizations, to prepare a statement of principles on issues of academic freedom posed by corporately funded scientific research. I expect to provide updates on the work of these committees in my next annual report.

Judicial Business

IMPOSITION OF CENSURE

At its June meeting, Committee A considered the case of Bethune-Cookman University, the subject of an ad hoc investigating committee report published since the 2010 annual meeting. The committee adopted the following statement, in which the Council concurred. Censure was voted by the 2011 annual meeting.

Bethune-Cookman University. The report of the investigating committee concerns the actions taken by the Bethune-Cookman University administration to suspend and then dismiss four professors, two with tenure, without having demonstrated cause for its actions in hearings before faculty peers. The report also deals with the administration's actions to terminate the appointments of three other professors without advance notice, without affording academic due process, and in two cases without the protections of due process that under the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure should have been provided because of the length of their service.

Prior to their dismissal, the four suspended professors were required to attend separate meetings with an outside investigator, the owner of a human-resources consulting firm, where they were informed orally of anonymous students' allegations of sexual harassment. At the meeting, and on subsequent occasions, the four professors denied all such allegations. Shortly thereafter, each professor was notified by letter from a Bethune-Cookman outside attorney that he had been the subject of an "independent investigation," which concluded that each had been "involved in sexual misconduct with female students at the University. As such, the reason for the termination is moral turpitude." At post-termination hearings before three faculty members appointed by the president, the administration presented allegations and documents attesting to hearsay reports of

improper behavior, but it offered no firsthand testimony or signed statements from any students alleging they had been victims of sexual harassment. The accused professors were given no opportunity to cross-examine witnesses, and no record of the hearings was kept.

In the cases of the three other professors, the administration attributed its actions in two of the cases to a board of trustees mandate to reduce expenses, yet no declaration of financial exigency ensued. One of those professors had filed sexual-harassment complaints against the dean of the School of Arts and Humanities but had received no response. The third professor was released after eleven years of service on the grounds that his graduate credentials dating back many years did not meet accrediting-agency standards, even though Bethune-Cookman University had been reaccredited during his term of service.

The investigating committee concluded that in dismissing the four professors on grounds of sexual harassment the administration acted in disregard of the 1940 Statement of Principles, the 1958 Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings, and the Association's Sexual Harassment: Suggested Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints. The committee found with respect to the faculty members whose appointments had been terminated on financial grounds that the administration violated the financial-exigency provisions of the 1940 Statement and Regulation 4c of the Association's Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure. In the case of the senior professor whose sexual-harassment complaints were not pursued and that of the senior professor whose services were terminated on grounds of inadequate graduate credentials, the committee found that the administration's actions were tantamount to summary dismissals in violation of Association-supported standards of academic due process. Moreover, the committee found that the university had no published procedures for dealing with many situations critical to academic freedom and tenure, and where it did have procedures, the administration often failed to follow them, producing a chilling effect on academic freedom.

Committee A recommends to the Ninety-seventh Annual Meeting that Bethune-Cookman University be placed on the Association's list of censured administrations.

REMOVAL OF CENSURE

Committee A adopted the following two statements recommending action to remove the University of New Orleans and Loyola University New Orleans from the list of censured administrations. The Council concurred, and the annual meeting voted to remove censure.

University of New Orleans. Severe flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina prevented the Louisiana State University System's University of New Orleans, like other universities in the city, from functioning during fall 2005. It reopened in January 2006, with a sharp drop in enrollment and a poor prognosis for future funding, leading the administration to devise a restructuring plan for reducing programs, faculty, and staff. The governing board, in approving the plan, also adopted a declaration of financial exigency and a set of procedures that allowed widespread disregard for the protections of tenure in selecting professors for layoff. An initial estimate set the number of faculty to be released at eighty, but unexpectedly numerous resignations and retirements reduced the number finally notified to eighteen. The Association's investigating committee concluded that the administration had not demonstrated a need to release any of them.

The imposition of censure by the Association's 2007 annual meeting led immediately to offers of reinstatement in several cases. The AAUP staff entered into discussion with administrative officers about reinstatement or an alternative resolution in additional cases, and within a few months all of the contested cases known to the Association were resolved.

Remaining unresolved were deficiencies in the university's regulations on financial exigency. A November 2007 letter to the chancellor and to the provost then in office proposed specific revisions. The provost stated in reply simply that the proposals had been considered carefully. Subsequent letters from the staff did not elicit a response, and a telephone call to the provost a year ago resulted in his saying that the administration had settled the cases as the AAUP had urged and believed it had done enough.

The University of New Orleans chancellor was removed from office last summer, and the provost also left. The AAUP staff wrote to the LSU system president (who temporarily was also the acting New Orleans chancellor) and to the system's general counsel recounting the unresolved problem with the regulations and suggesting prompt actions so that a new chancellor would not have to inherit the censure. The general counsel replied that the current New Orleans administration was preparing a response to the AAUP's 2007 proposals. The current provost (now also the acting chancellor) submitted the response in December, and it accepted all the major AAUP-recommended revisions with one exception. Correspondence and discussion with

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the provost about the exception led to its acceptance as well, and by February the final document had been approved by all responsible parties.

The AAUP members at the University of New Orleans have been informed of these developments and have voiced no concerns. The executive committee of the AAUP's Louisiana conference has conveyed its support for removing the censure.

Committee A recommends to the Ninety-seventh Annual Meeting that the University of New Orleans be removed from the Association's list of censured administrations.

Loyola University New Orleans. Loyola University New Orleans escaped the severe flooding after Hurricane Katrina that the city's other universities experienced. When operations were resumed, the administration circulated a plan that it called "Pathways," stating that its purpose was to bring about more effective academic programs for the post-hurricane city. The plan included discontinuing several programs, not on grounds of financial exigency but primarily on the basis of educational considerations. Eliminating the programs was to be accompanied by terminating the appointments of eleven tenured professors and six probationary professors who previously had been notified of reappointment.

The stated policies at Loyola New Orleans for program discontinuance—and indeed for all matters relating to tenure and academic due process—comport fully with applicable AAUP-supported standards. Terminating an academic program requires evaluation of the proposed action by an elected faculty body under criteria formulated by the university senate. The administration proceeded with its Pathways plan without the participation of these bodies, both of which sharply faulted the substance of the plan as well as the process used in moving it forward. Despite successive votes of no confidence in the administration by the senate and by the faculty of Loyola's largest college, the board of trustees officially adopted the plan in May 2006.

Notifications of termination, sent a month later to the seventeen professors, informed them that they would receive a year of severance salary but would have no further teaching or other responsibilities, that they were to vacate their offices within a fortnight, and that they could no longer appear on campus. New instructors needed to be engaged to teach courses that had already been assigned to some of the professors for the next term.

Eleven of the dismissed professors filed for a hearing under the institutional regulations, and proceedings in each case took place before the elected faculty hearing body in the fall and spring of the 2006–07 academic year. In all of the cases, the hearing body found unanimously that the administration failed to follow required procedures, failed to relocate the professor in an available suitable position, and, regarding the eight hearings involving tenured professors, failed to provide adequate severance salary. In each of the eight cases, the hearing body called for the professor's reinstatement.

The reply from the university president to the hearing body came late in June 2007, shortly after the AAUP had imposed censure on the administration for having acted "in gross disregard of its own applicable policies and of the Association-recommended standards with which those policies comport." In a single brief letter that served as his response to the eleven cases, he rejected all of the hearing body's findings and recommendations. Seven of the dismissed professors initiated litigation, and the next three years brought depositions, rejected university motions for summary judgment, pretrial briefs, and numerous negotiation sessions. Substantial out-of-court settlements were reached in one case after another, with the final one among them, that of the professor who had been the AAUP chapter president when the dismissals occurred, concluded this past fall.

Committee A, in deciding whether to recommend the removal of a censure, customarily considers not only the soundness of official polices and affordance of redress to injured faculty members but also the current climate at the institution for academic freedom and tenure. Last December, with all the cases having been settled, the AAUP staff wrote to the Loyola New Orleans president recounting the successive votes of no confidence in 2006 and 2007, coupled with calls from the senate and the AAUP chapter for corrective actions. The staff invited the president and a new provost to comment on their perception of changes in the climate for academic freedom over the ensuing four years.

The president met in Washington with AAUP staff members in February, and shortly thereafter he followed with a written response on behalf of the current provost and himself. He attributed the Pathways plan and the dismissal of selected professors to several administrators whom his predecessor had appointed to office and who are no longer at Loyola New Orleans. He acknowledged that faculty dissatisfaction had become so intense that the need to restore collegial faculty governance was manifest. He pointed to the work of two key 2008 appointees, the current provost and a new chief financial officer, who have improved the campus climate by meeting regularly with faculty groups and ensuring transparency in making decisions. He concluded by

emphasizing his "commitment to the spirit and the letter of the provisions in the *Faculty Handbook*" and affirming the university's commitment to academic freedom and tenure.

On the agenda of the university senate's April meeting, at which the president spoke, was a detailed statement regarding the censure and an accompanying resolution that the senate adopted. The resolution supported censure removal conditioned on two additional steps: (1) reaffirmation that the university's stated provisions regarding its faculty are contractually binding, and (2) official adoption of newly formulated provisions regarding faculty governance. The president provided assurance of his approval in his oral remarks and in a confirming letter. In a report to the board of trustees dated May 1, he reaffirmed Loyola's position that the handbook provisions on faculty carry contractual force, and at its meeting on May 20, the board adopted the new provisions relating to faculty governance.

The AAUP Louisiana conference's executive committee has endorsed removal of the censure. As a final step in gauging current conditions for academic freedom, a former AAUP general counsel went to Loyola New Orleans and held successive meetings with the executive committee of the senate, with a committee of the AAUP chapter, and with the president and the provost. He has reported positively on each meeting, saying he encountered nothing at them that would argue against the censure's removal.

Committee A recommends to the Ninety-seventh Annual Meeting that Loyola University New Orleans be removed from the Association's list of censured administrations.

Legislative Business

As I noted in my introduction, the committee at its June meeting approved *Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions* as a report of Committee A. The committee also asked the subcommittee that produced the report to prepare an abbreviated version for potential approval of the Council and potential inclusion in the next edition of the AAUP's *Policy Documents and Reports*.

At the June meeting, Committee A discussed the work of two subcommittees that it had established at its November meeting. After receiving a progress report from the subcommittee charged with considering revisions to Regulation 4e ("Termination on Grounds of Physical or Mental Disability") of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure (RIR)*, Committee A agreed that Regulation 4e

should be deleted from the RIR. In time for the November meeting of the parent committee, the subcommittee will produce a draft policy statement that will provide guidance for appropriately addressing the situations of faculty members with disabilities and that would be cited in the RIR and other relevant Association documents. The Subcommittee on Program Closings, which is considering revisions to RIR 4c ("Financial Exigency") and 4d ("Discontinuance of Program or Department Not Mandated by Financial Exigency"), provided an account of its progress and agreed to draft a full report with recommendations for discussion at Committee A's November meeting. Committee A also encouraged Michael Bérubé, the chair of the subcommittee, to distribute immediately the following statement deploring actions taken and planned regarding program discontinuances at institutions in the University of Louisiana System:

As chair of the Committee A Subcommittee on Program Closings, I am deeply disturbed by reports that the University of Louisiana System has embarked on what appears to be an unprecedented and unwarranted assault on its faculty. In 2010, Southeastern Louisiana University discontinued its undergraduate major in French, dismissing its three tenured professors with a year's notice. This action alone would draw the attention of the subcommittee, insofar as no reason was given for the decision, and the French program was not underenrolled in comparison to majors such as Spanish; but we are especially alarmed by SLU's subsequent action, in which the administration proceeded to offer a temporary instructorship to one of the tenured professors it had just dismissed.

This year, the AAUP has learned that the University of Louisiana at Monroe is planning to do the same, or slightly worse, to its four tenured professors of chemistry: dismiss them with six months' notice, then offer to rehire them at the rank of instructor without tenure. We believe we do not have to wait to hear a third report from the UL System before concluding that we see an emerging pattern.

Both the SLU French department and the ULM chemistry department perform vital services for their institutions; SLU is located in a parish and a state that is officially English-French bilingual, and ULM is known particularly for its pharmacy and health-care programs. Both programs have sufficient enrollment to justify the size of their

faculty, as evidenced by the fact that they are able to rehire their dismissed professors in order to teach scheduled classes: SLU, for example, is offering twelve French courses next fall. It is simply refusing to staff them with its own tenured professors.

These practices violate so many AAUP principles that it is hard to know where to begin. But we should probably start by remarking that if senior professors with tenure can be dismissed and then immediately offered employment as short-term instructors, then tenure is essentially meaningless in the University of Louisiana System. There is no evidence that these decisions at SLU and ULM involved faculty consultation or that they "reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuance," in violation of RIR 4d(1) on program closure absent a declaration of financial exigency. There was no attempt to place the faculty members "in another suitable position," as required by RIR 4d(2); we do not regard a position as "suitable" when it involves the loss of tenure and a 50 percent cut in pay, as would be the case for one of the SLU French professors (a person only three years from retirement). Finally, we note that throughout the UL System, nontenure-track faculty can be released on thirty days' notice regardless of their length of service to their institutions—a policy that violates RIR 13 on the nonrenewal of contingent faculty.

The Committee A subcommittee acknowledges that many institutions are facing financial hardship, and will have to make difficult and painful decisions. The University of Louisiana System, however, appears to be going well beyond anything that can be justified by economic hardship, launching a capricious assault on tenure as well as on minimal standards of job security for the untenured. Faculty nationwide should be advised that the UL System has effectively nullified its tenure procedures; and students in the UL System, and their parents, should be advised that maintaining the quality of core liberal arts programs is no longer a priority of the UL System administration.

As I also noted in my introduction, Committee A approved the appointment of an ad hoc committee, consisting of members of Committee A and other Association committees, to work with the Canadian Association of University Teachers and possibly other

groups in formulating a statement of principles on corporate funding of faculty research.

Conclusion

The work of Committee A depends on the efforts of its volunteer members and of the staff. The successful resolution of the post-Katrina New Orleans investigations and the publication of the report Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions highlight these contributions. Bob O'Neil chaired the Special Committee on Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans Universities, to my knowledge the first Committee A undertaking ever to coordinate several related investigations; Matt Finkin served on the special committee; and Jordan Kurland staffed it. Together with the other members of the special committee, Bob and Matt conducted numerous interviews in New Orleans, wrote major portions of the reports, and have actively followed subsequent developments. After the impositions of censure, Jordan had the primary role in supporting the affected faculty and negotiating with administrators the conditions for the removal of censure. Bob, Matt, and Jordan have worked tirelessly for the AAUP since the 1960s. Bob is currently serving his third term as general counsel of the AAUP, each term separated by twenty years, and is a former chair of Committee A. Matt, who began his legal career as staff counsel for the AAUP, has served subsequently both as general counsel and as chair of Committee A. Jordan, who led the Committee A staff for more than three decades, continues to draw on his extensive experience and knowledge in handling Committee A matters and advising his colleagues. Their involvement in the post-Katrina New Orleans investigations represents only a small fraction of their AAUP careers, but it is fitting that they played key roles in this historic achievement.

Ernst Benjamin, as chair of the subcommittee that wrote *Ensuring Academic Freedom in Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions*, and Anita Levy, who provided staff support to the subcommittee, worked tirelessly and efficiently to produce a lengthy, major report within a year of the establishment of the subcommittee. Ellen Schrecker, as a member of the subcommittee, brought her scholarly expertise as a historian of academic freedom to bear in drafting the important historical sections of the report. Debra Nails, the third member of the subcommittee, is another wonderful example of the outstanding volunteer efforts on which the AAUP depends. Debra provided acute analysis of the background materials and drafts of the report during a period in which she also chaired a Committee

A investigating committee, one of many investigating committees on which she has ably served over the years. Working with these inspiring colleagues is one of the great benefits of membership on Committee A.

DAVID M. RABBAN (Law), *chair* University of Texas at Austin

Cases Settled through Staff Mediation

The four representative accounts that follow serve to illustrate the nature and effectiveness of the mediative work of Committee A's staff in successfully resolving cases during the 2010–11 academic year.

On the stated basis of several post-tenure evaluations, the performance of a professor with nearly three decades of experience on the faculty of a private Midwestern university was found unsatisfactory on grounds of a lack of recent scholarship and a failure to fulfill the terms of an administratively imposed improvement plan. Following the completion of the fall semester, administrators informed him of his immediate suspension from duties, his banishment from campus, the cessation of salary and benefits effective one month later, and their intention to recommend to the president that his tenured appointment be terminated. As an alternative, they asked for his resignation, which the professor declined to tender. The next month the president informed him that his appointment would terminate effective immediately and that he could request a faculty hearing if he wished to do so.

The professor requested assistance from the Association, and a staff member wrote promptly to the university president. His letter conveyed the AAUP's concern that the professor had been suspended from his assigned class and banished from campus without any evidence that his continuance would threaten harm to himself or others and then had been dismissed without adequacy of cause having been demonstrated in a pretermination hearing before faculty peers. The president's response provided assurance that AAUP-supported procedures would be followed, and a month later he wrote again to report a settlement, confirmed by the subject professor, under which the professor retired with full rights to be on campus and to continue to use its facilities.

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A faculty member began at a church-related institution in the Southwest with a three-year renewable appointment. In January of her third year, despite a faculty committee's recommendation that she be retained, the president informed her that the position could not be continued because of worsening financial constraints.

The AAUP staff, asked to assist, explained to the president that the six months of notice the faculty member was receiving fell short under the generally accepted academic standard of one year for those who have completed two or more years of service. The president asked if payment through the calendar year would suffice. The staff explained that a January-to-January terminal year, with its expiration thus occurring in the middle of an academic year, does not meet the standard of one year of notice following the expiration of the current appointment. The president concurred, and in a resulting settlement agreement the faculty member submitted her resignation effective at the end of a paid sabbatical year following the completion of her three years. She also received a modest sum of money to assist with moving expenses.

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An assistant professor at a public university in the Northwest was notified by her dean, with the provost concurring, of the rejection of her candidacy for tenure. She alleged that her application had received inadequate consideration, particularly because the decision was based on different expectations from those that she had understood to be applicable during her probationary period. A faculty review committee, supporting her claim, recommended that the decision to deny tenure be set aside. The university president accepted the committee's finding of inadequate consideration. Rather than grant tenure as the candidate had hoped, however, he remanded the case to the faculty for a new evaluation.

The candidate consulted with an Association staff member, who advised her of her rights in going through the re-evaluation, advice that was shared with the

responsible parties. A favorable departmental result was this time accepted by the respective administrative officers. The candidate thanked the Association for providing valuable assistance.

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The faculty of a school of art on the West Coast consists of only a few full-time professors, most of them tenured, and a very large number of part-time instructors, all of them serving on one-year renewable appointments at a rate of pay only a small fraction of what their full-time counterparts received. One of these part-timers, who had taught at the school for twenty years and whose academic credentials and student evaluations were arguably as strong as anyone else's on the faculty, had presented a case to successive school administrations for better working conditions for herself and similarly qualified part-time faculty. She asked the Association for its support in her campaign.

In ensuing correspondence and telephone discussion between an AAUP staff member and the current school president, it soon became clear that the number of full-time faculty positions would not be increased and indefinite tenure for part-time faculty was out of the question. Achieving improved security and compensation for the stronger among the part-time faculty did prove possible, however. A year of negotiation resulted in the establishment of a "senior adjunct" category of faculty at the school, and the faculty member who sought the AAUP's assistance was in the initial group admitted to the new category. She was promoted to a professorial rank, reappointed for a three-year term, and awarded a substantial increase in pay.