

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 reductions of 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 they 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

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.