



[Back to Volume One Contents](#)

Professionalization as the Basis for Academic Freedom and Faculty Governance

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In 1994, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) adopted a policy statement, *On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom*. The statement asserted that these two principles—faculty governance and academic freedom—are “inextricably linked,” so that neither is “likely to thrive” except “when they are understood to reinforce one another.”¹ The statement further noted that the close connection between academic freedom and faculty governance was reflected in the earliest work of the AAUP. In 1915, the first year of its existence, the AAUP established “Committee A on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure.” At its annual meeting the following year, the members of the association voted to create “Committee T on the Place and Function of Faculties in University Government and Administration” (now called the Committee on College and University Governance).²

A brief examination of the conditions in American higher education in the early twentieth century reveals how the same forces brought about the development of academic freedom and

faculty governance—principles that the AAUP has done so much to advance. At bottom, the development and subsequent legitimization of both principles was the product of the increasing professionalization of faculty in the United States. Thus, it is no coincidence that the AAUP itself became a crucial cross-disciplinary vehicle for the development of a professional identity for faculty at the same time that it came to define academic freedom and faculty governance as necessary means for the fulfillment of the faculty's professional responsibilities. By the mid-twentieth century, the professionalization of higher education faculty resulted in the institutionalization of tenure as a protection of academic freedom and a broad recognition of the faculty's primary responsibility for academic decision making. More recently, however, an alarming trend toward the deprofessionalization of faculty at American colleges and universities, most clearly reflected in the rapid expansion of contingent appointments, has seriously eroded the institutions of tenure and faculty governance, and thereby undermined the basic protections of academic freedom and the quality of American higher education.

Before the last quarter of the nineteenth century, college teaching was not a very prestigious vocation. Many faculty before the Civil War were aspiring young clergymen who saw college teaching as a temporary position until they could find a pulpit. Colleges were typically quite small and poorly funded. Most enrolled a few hundred students at best, and even as late as 1869, the largest college in the nation, Harvard, had barely over a thousand students.³ Presidents and governing boards, which before the mid-nineteenth century drew heavily from the clergy, exercised decision-making authority with little input from faculty. Faculty were responsible for maintaining discipline, building character, and passing on received wisdom to their students, but were not expected to engage in research or the production of new knowledge. No American institution before the 1870s could legitimately have claimed to be a "university." Neither college faculty nor the recipients of college degrees were highly regarded by most Americans.⁴

Professors may have thought of themselves as "gentlemen," but until the late nineteenth century, they hardly met what are now considered basic criteria for "professional" status.⁵ No

form of specialized postgraduate training was required to become a college teacher. The doctoral degree had not yet become a necessary qualification; in fact, no American school awarded an earned doctoral degree before 1860.⁶ College teachers were generalists rather than experts in a particular field. There were no professional associations or specialized journals for college professors, organized either by discipline or as a whole. Faculty did not enjoy autonomy in the performance of their work or control over the selection of their colleagues. Neither did they enjoy the social status that came from being identified with a vocation that was viewed as serving a crucial public interest.

Both the nature of American institutions of higher learning and the status and responsibilities of American professors underwent a dramatic transformation after the Civil War. A number of factors contributed to the emergence of the modern American university and to the accompanying professionalization of American faculty. The United States experienced a rapid process of industrialization and urbanization that created a demand for new knowledge and the training of experts in specialized fields. Some American colleges responded to this demand by offering more practical subjects to go along with the traditional liberal arts curriculum and by adding research to their institutional missions. A college degree began to make recipients more attractive candidates for many of the jobs being created in America's expanding and modernizing economy, as a new class of business leaders began to place greater value on higher education. College professors, especially in the emerging social science disciplines, began to be seen as possessing the expertise needed for the country to deal successfully with rapid social and economic change.⁷ Increasing numbers of American college graduates in fields ranging from history to physics began to seek postgraduate training in Germany, where the modern research university had first taken shape in the early nineteenth century. Many of these German-trained scholars returned to the United States to foster the development of comparable institutions on this side of the Atlantic.⁸

The founding of Johns Hopkins University in 1876 symbolized the start of a new era in American higher education. The first purely graduate institution in the United States, Johns Hopkins's emphasis on original research, doctoral training, and departmental organization based on specialized disciplines became a model that many other institutions tried to emulate; in most cases, they did so by adding a graduate school to an already existing undergraduate college, rather than by establishing a stand-alone, research-oriented entity without undergraduate students. The increasing importance Americans attached to higher education was reflected in a substantial increase in philanthropic support for colleges and universities. In addition to Mark Hopkins, prominent businessmen Leland Stanford and John D. Rockefeller funded the establishment of new research universities, while other business leaders began to make larger donations to existing institutions. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a growing number of American institutions, both private and public, could be described as true universities. Among the most prominent, in addition to Johns Hopkins, were Cornell, Columbia, Harvard, Yale, and the universities of Chicago, Wisconsin, and Michigan.⁹ As the demand for a college education increased, and the nation's resources to fund colleges and universities grew, the size of those institutions expanded dramatically. By 1909, there were six universities that enrolled more than 5,000 students, and three of those employed more than 500 instructional staff.¹⁰

Winning a faculty appointment at a university became increasingly dependent on holding a PhD. This meant that, in comparison to teachers at even the best American colleges of the antebellum period, faculty at emerging American universities at the turn of the century went through far more specialized training and were making a longer-term commitment to college teaching as a career, with many engaging in original research. Faculty could now join such specialized disciplinary associations as the American Economic Association, the American Statistics Association, and the American Historical Association, all of which were founded in the 1880s, and which were soon joined by numerous other disciplinary organizations that

contributed to a growing sense of professional identity for their members, even though these organizations remained open to non-academics.¹¹

It was in the context of these changes that a newly professionalizing faculty took up the issues of academic freedom and university governance. The German-trained scholars who returned to the United States were eager to replicate something approaching the model of the German research university and brought with them the German concept of *lehrfreiheit*, which the fledgling AAUP defined, in part, as the “freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college.”¹² Such freedom was, in the words of historian Walter Metzger, “the distinctive prerogative of the academic profession, and the essential condition of all universities.”¹³ Academic freedom became a rallying cry for many professors whose role began to change from simply passing on accepted truth and moral values to becoming involved in the quest for new knowledge and in playing a more active role in public policy debates. As Americans attempted to confront the problems created by rapid industrialization and the widening gap between rich and poor, academic social scientists became involved in highly publicized controversies about the best solutions to these new problems. Often, these controversies involved corporate donors to universities demanding the dismissal of professors who challenged conventional thinking. Key figures in the professionalization of American social science, such as Edward A. Bemis, John R. Commons, and Edward A. Ross, all lost their academic positions in celebrated academic freedom cases between 1894 and 1900.¹⁴

The concept of academic freedom was not simply another term to describe “freedom of speech” as guaranteed under the First Amendment, which in a limited way protected the speech of all citizens from direct government suppression, but rather a more specific safeguard of the right of faculty at both public and private colleges and universities freely to teach in a manner they thought appropriate, to engage in research of their own choosing, and to publicize the results of that research.¹⁵ The increasingly rigorous and specialized postgraduate training required to become a faculty member at America’s emerging universities provided a basis for

claiming the right and the need for a more robust form of academic freedom than had been known before. Expertise was thus a crucial component of the emerging concept of academic freedom. Richard T. Ely, a well-known economist and the driving force behind the establishment of the American Economic Association, nearly lost his position at the University of Wisconsin in the 1890s because of his defense of labor strikes and boycotts, but he successfully defended his right to speak out on controversial public issues by arguing that his specialized training as an academic economist meant that if the “science of economics is not humbug,” then the economist “must know more about industrial society than others.”¹⁶

Challenges to academic freedom did not end with the turn of the century and the beginning of what came to be known as the Progressive Era. Dismissals and threats of dismissal of outspoken professors continued after 1900; the principle and practice of academic freedom remained on shaky ground in many of the country’s colleges and universities. Some of the recently formed disciplinary associations, including the American Economic Association, the American Sociological Association, the American Political Science Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Philosophical Association participated in frustrating and generally unsuccessful efforts to intervene in a number of highly publicized academic freedom cases. A growing determination among leading academics to define and defend the principle of academic freedom for all faculty in a way that would cross disciplinary boundaries led to the formation of the AAUP in 1915.¹⁷ One of the first acts of the new faculty organization was a resolution directing John Dewey, the first president of the AAUP, to establish a special committee to develop a report on the general subject of academic freedom. This committee was chaired by noted Columbia University economist Edwin R. A. Seligman and included such other prominent faculty as Roscoe Pound of Harvard and Arthur O. Lovejoy of Johns Hopkins. Richard Ely of the University of Wisconsin, whose threatened dismissal twenty years earlier had become a cause célèbre in the developing debate over academic freedom, was also a member of the committee.¹⁸

Although concerns regarding academic freedom were central to the AAUP both at the time of its formation and in its subsequent history, from the beginning these concerns were inextricably linked to faculty involvement in college and university governance. Both were manifestations of the new professional identity that professors were seeking to establish at the turn of the century. Some of the earliest AAUP statements on academic freedom reveal the importance that the association placed on faculty governance as the institutional basis for faculty academic freedom and for the identification of appropriate boundaries for the exercise of that freedom. Just as doctors and lawyers in the last decades of the nineteenth century were asserting their right to govern themselves based on their esoteric knowledge acquired through extended formal training, professors, too, were increasingly beginning to claim a similar responsibility for evaluating colleagues and engaging in other aspects of academic decision making.¹⁹

Peer review became an essential element of the academic profession's claim that faculty, not laypeople, should have the responsibility for determining the legitimacy of charges that a professor had engaged in behavior not protected by the principle of academic freedom. In one of the first academic freedom cases for which the newly formed AAUP authorized a formal investigation, the dismissal of radical economist Scott Nearing from a position at the University of Pennsylvania, the investigating committee's report affirmed its belief that those "who were in the best position to judge" the "professional qualifications" of an academic were "colleagues . . . who were also specialists in his own department of knowledge."²⁰ The committee further elaborated on its view of the significance of faculty peer review as a necessary means of safeguarding academic freedom:

It is the opinion of your committee that such recommendation [for the retention of Nearing] from the responsible and accredited representatives of the educational staff of a university—especially when, as in this case, no question of moral unworthiness or neglect of duty is involved—should be disregarded by governing boards of laymen only on grave

occasions, and after definite charges have been brought against the teacher concerned, and opportunity for judicial hearings has been afforded; and that the grounds for removal should be clearly stated and communicated to the faculties concerned. Summary action in such cases, and in circumstances such as attended the action of the Pennsylvania trustees, is not directed solely or most significantly, against the individual teacher affected; it is directed also against the local faculty as a body, and against the academic profession at large. For it is an instance of lay intervention in what is essentially a professional question.²¹

Several months before the University of Pennsylvania report was published, the special committee appointed by AAUP president John Dewey issued its landmark *1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*. In developing both a definition and a defense of academic freedom, the special committee made a point of explaining what it saw as the “nature of the academic calling” that justified the faculty’s right to claim a distinctive form of freedom that was by definition “academic.” Putting particular emphasis on the professional status of faculty, the declaration proclaimed that the “conception of a university as an ordinary business venture, and of academic teaching as a purely private employment,” demonstrated “a radical failure to apprehend the nature of the social function discharged by the professional scholar.” That function, the committee explained, “is to deal at first hand, after prolonged and specialized technical training, with sources of knowledge; and to impart the results of their own and of their fellow-specialists’ investigations and reflection, both to students and to the general public, without fear or favor.” In carrying out their critical service to society, faculty might well be appointed by university trustees, but they were not “in any proper sense the employees” of those trustees, because “once appointed, the scholar has professional functions to perform in which the appointing authorities have neither competency nor moral right to intervene.”²²

The drafters of the AAUP statement recognized that professors did not perform their duties outside an institutional context and that they could not ignore professional standards. The committee, therefore, announced: “It is, in short, not the absolute freedom of utterance of the individual scholar, but the absolute freedom of thought, of inquiry, of discussion, of teaching, of

the academic profession, that is asserted by this declaration of principles." This led to an affirmation of the notion that in matters relating to the carrying out of the faculty's academic endeavors it would be "unsuitable to the dignity of a great profession that the initial responsibility for the maintenance of professional standards should not be in the hands of its own members."²³

In the AAUP's initial statements regarding the still-evolving concept of academic freedom, the question of the faculty's role in governance was posed most directly in terms of the need for peer review in the retention or dismissal of a faculty member. Yet from the beginning of its existence, the AAUP applied the same logic to the need for faculty involvement in other areas of academic decision making. The first investigating report ever issued by the AAUP concerning an institution charged with violating the principles of academic freedom also addressed general issues of academic governance.²⁴ The report condemned the administration of the University of Utah for improperly dismissing two longtime associate professors without just cause or appropriate peer review and cited the resignation of seventeen faculty members in protest of the administration's actions as evidence of a crisis situation at the university. However, the report noted "with much satisfaction" that in an effort to resolve the crisis that had developed, the faculty had proposed, and the administration had accepted, a plan for the creation of a new system of shared governance.

The Plan of Administration called for the establishment of an Administrative Council with the president and deans of the schools serving as *ex-officio* members, and with faculty electing from their own ranks representatives who would hold two more seats than the *ex-officio* members on the council. The duties that were spelled out for the Administrative Council reflected a formal recognition of the appropriateness of faculty involvement in all areas of academic decision making:

The Administrative Council shall determine, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents, all matters pertaining to the educational policy and educational administration of

the University. Examples of these matters are—requests for appropriations, apportionment of funds, the appointment, promotion, demotion, removal, or failure to recommend for reappointment, members of the teaching force, and such other matters as may be referred to the Council by the President, Board of Regents, or the Faculty.

The AAUP committee that investigated the situation at the University of Utah observed that such a “scheme of organization . . . might, in the Committee’s opinion, be considered and imitated with advantage by many other universities and colleges.”²⁵

The growing size of American universities raised issues of governance in a way that had not arisen in the smaller non-bureaucratized college of the nineteenth century. Curricular changes, including the creation of new programs, became much more frequent; and as academic departments and colleges became important administrative units within rapidly growing institutions, the method of selecting department heads and deans took on new importance. Professors in Germany, all of whom were state appointees under the authority of a minister of education, did not enjoy an absolute form of self-government, but compared to their American colleagues in the late nineteenth century, they exercised a good deal more control over not only their own research and teaching, but also the selection of administrators and other important aspects of university governance. Thus, faculty elected not only their own deans, but also the rector who presided over the university as a whole. Just as the *lehrfreiheit* of professors in Germany provided an ideal that newly professionalizing faculty in the United States sought to emulate, the degree of faculty control that German professors exercised over the appointment of academic administrators and other academic matters also served as a standard that many American faculty hoped to adapt to American conditions.²⁶

The members of the AAUP’s Committee T on the Place and Function of Faculties in University Government and Administration first began to confer in 1917, but it was not until 1920 that the committee issued its first substantive report. In his introductory remarks to the committee’s report, the chair, J. A. Leighton, a professor of philosophy at Ohio State University,

acknowledged how the growing size and consequent bureaucratization of American universities were contributing to problems of governance:

Critics further say that the type of organization at present prevailing seems designed for quantity production in credits and degrees, and that the result is that we have too large a proportion of mediocre and mechanized teachers engaged in turning out ever-increasing numbers of graduates without any clear sense of, or respect for, the nature and value of scholarship and thoughtfulness. They attribute this situation largely to the autocratic type of university organization.²⁷

Leighton was highly critical of governing boards that attempted to “interfere in the internal conduct of the universities,” in spite of their having only a “slight acquaintance with educational problems.” At the same time, the committee’s report implicitly recognized that the governing boards of American universities had no clear parallel in German universities, in which no layer of administration existed between state officials and faculty, and that it was necessary to develop a system of “joint responsibility and control, with the distribution of emphasis on responsibility and control varying with the particular aspect of the whole matter of the conduct of university affairs which may be uppermost in a given situation.” The report acknowledged that governing boards were ultimately responsible for the well-being of the universities under their care, and that, therefore, both as a matter of law and as a matter of right, the “trustees should be primarily the custodians of the financial interests of the university, and as such they should have the consenting voice in the final determination of its educational policies.” However, the report went on to argue that, based on a proper understanding of joint responsibility: “In the matter of the determination and carrying out of educational policies, the members of the faculty *are the experts* [emphasis added], and should usually have the principal voice in the decision.”²⁸

While recognizing that institutions needed to establish “a recognized mode of procedure for the joint determination, by trustees and faculties, of what is included in the term *educational policies*,” the AAUP’s Committee T offered what it considered to be a minimum list:

. . . [S]tandards for admission and for degrees; determination of the proper ratio between numbers of students, of courses and of instructors, respectively; numbers of teaching hours; the establishment of new chairs and departments of instruction, of new curricula and courses; the organization of new administrative units; the promotion of research; provision for publication; the abolition of any established form of educational or research activity; the distribution of income between material equipment and personnel.²⁹

This was clearly not intended to be an exhaustive list. The report included as an appendix the results of a survey that had been sent to more than one hundred colleges and universities to determine the “actual status of faculties in university government and administration.” The issues addressed in the survey reflected the increasing attention the professoriate was paying to its role in various aspects of academic decision making. Committee T, therefore, sought to determine current practice regarding constitutional or statutory provision for faculty participation in “control of educational policy,” “appointments and nominations of its own members,” nomination of “departmental executives,” “budget-making,” “nomination of deans,” and selection of a president.

The survey documented a wide variety of governance practices in American institutions of higher education, but the committee report concluded that the results revealed:

. . . a growing tendency in the better class of institutions to accord to the faculty official participation in the selection and promotion of its own members, in the nomination of deans and president, and in the preparation of the budget, as well as in the determination of educational policies. Often trustees who are accustomed to autocratic methods in business and industry oppose a larger faculty participation in university and college government. In every case where faculty self-government has been tried out for a term of years and under

fair conditions, as notably for example at Oberlin and Reed Colleges, it has proved a signal success.³⁰

The faculty's claim to a distinctive role in the governance of the institutions in which they worked was based on their expertise—an expertise that was typically lacking in governing boards, and that became more attenuated the higher one went on the administrative ladder. The advocates of faculty governance directly challenged the notion that professors could be viewed as “employees” who were simply carrying out the directives of their superiors. Professors had become professionals. Although professors, in contrast to doctors or lawyers, enjoyed less independence by virtue of the fact that increasingly they worked in large institutions, they still needed not only academic freedom, but also substantial responsibility for academic decision making if they were to carry out their professional responsibilities successfully.

According to the principle of academic freedom, the individual faculty member's right to engage in research and to teach without interference is not absolute. Institutions do set constraints on how research is conducted, determine who is qualified to teach, and review and approve courses before they are included in the curriculum. When such determinations are made, concerns about academic freedom and governance become closely linked. When colleges and universities make decisions relating to teaching and research, it is essential that they make them on the basis of academic criteria and not on the basis of external political pressures or arbitrary administrative fiat. Academic freedom, in other words, requires a governance system in which faculty expertise—often residing in an individual, but also expressed at times in a collective fashion—is the determining factor in institutional decisions affecting academic matters. A system of shared governance does not guarantee that violations of academic freedom will never occur. It is possible for some faculty members to make decisions that violate the academic freedom of other faculty members. But it is far more likely that academic values, not extraneous concerns, will guide decisions about teaching and research when faculty members

make those decisions instead of people who are removed from the classroom and the laboratory.³¹

The members of Committee T (with one exception) subscribed to the “fundamental principle . . . that in all cases the faculty should have a recognized voice in the preparation of the annual budget.” The committee thus recognized that the allocation of resources was directly linked to the determination of educational policies and priorities, as well as to the evaluation and remuneration of individual faculty members. However, there were differences of opinion among committee members as to how that voice ought to be expressed.³²

These differences carried over to the membership as a whole, so that when the AAUP officially endorsed the concept of shared governance by adopting a series of resolutions at its annual meeting in 1921, no specific statement on the faculty role in budget-making was included. One resolution that was approved declared that “the formal consent of the Faculty directly or through its elected representatives should be prerequisite to all changes in educational policy.” The annual meeting also called upon all colleges and universities to establish “an officially recognized medium of communication between the Trustees and the Faculty other than the President” and to provide for “periodic conferences on matters of educational policy or institutional conditions between Governing Boards and Faculties or their elected representatives.” Two other resolutions affirmed the faculty’s primary role in hiring and promoting members of the teaching staff, and in assuming the “corresponding responsibility to take initiative in removing from the teaching staff incompetent as well as unworthy members.” The AAUP also expressed its support for faculty being “officially consulted” in the selection of deans and the president of the institution.³³ However, as the AAUP’s own survey demonstrated, when these resolutions were adopted by the AAUP in 1921, the practice of shared governance was still in an early stage of development, and the principle of primary faculty responsibility for academic decision making was not yet widely recognized throughout American higher education.

Both the expansion of American higher education and the professionalization of American faculty continued apace in the years after the founding of the AAUP. While the number of faculty in the United States increased by roughly 300 percent between 1920 and 1940, the number of PhDs being granted by American universities increased well over 500 percent as the doctorate became even more widely required for entry into the professoriate.³⁴ Although faculties began to play a more prominent role in college and university governance in the interwar years, the principle of academic freedom and the recognition of tenure as a means of protecting that freedom won more rapid and widespread acceptance than did the notion of faculty responsibility for academic decision making. Thus, just prior to United States entry into World War II, the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities) were able to agree on the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, which effectively institutionalized tenure as a safeguard for academic freedom at most American colleges and universities.

In contrast, it would not be until 1966 that the AAUP, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the American Council on Education would succeed in jointly drafting the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* which, in quite general terms, recognized the desirability of affording faculty a major role in governance. A 1939 survey by the AAUP's Committee T on Place and Function of Faculties in College and University Government revealed that, in spite of the AAUP's earlier policy recommendations, in the majority of the more than 200 hundred institutions responding, faculty still played little direct role in such key areas of academic decision making as hiring and promotion of colleagues; selection of department heads, deans, and presidents; or budgeting. To the extent that faculty were involved in key academic decisions, the responsibility was usually exercised by department heads whom deans appointed with minimal or no consultation with faculty. Departmental faculty elected the chair of their department in only nine percent of institutions included in the survey.³⁵ Nevertheless, the 1940 *Statement* did help to institutionalize one important area of faculty governance by

calling for a hearing before a “faculty committee” in the case of dismissal of a tenured professor for cause. The justification for such faculty involvement in the form of peer review was clearly grounded in a notion of professional expertise. The Committee T report about the 1939 survey also indicated that even though faculty played a limited role in governance at most institutions, there was a noticeable trend toward greater “self-government” as a means of “safeguarding administrative officials against the danger of making professional mistakes.”³⁶

The expansion of higher education and the rising status of faculty as professionals was even more dramatic in the quarter century after the adoption of the 1940 *Statement* than it had been in the previous twenty-five years, following the founding of the AAUP. By the time the AAUP issued the *Statement on Government* was issued in 1966, the number of college and university faculty in the United States had reached half a million, while the number of doctoral degrees awarded in 1965 had risen to 16,500.³⁷ Politicians and industry leaders increasingly saw faculty research as necessary to the economic advancement and general well-being of the country, and professors had gained greater respect than ever before, as more Americans recognized the importance of a college degree.³⁸ This recognition of the importance of faculty expertise is reflected in a comparison of data about the status of faculty self-government obtained from comparable surveys taken in 1939 and 1953. Overall, faculty involvement in such decisions as the hiring of a president or a dean was clearly greater in the early 1950s than it had been before, although survey results showed that faculty still had little role in determining budgets, and departmental executives were still only rarely elected. Faculty at many institutions did see a continuation of what by then had become a long-term trend toward greater involvement in academic decision making—a trend that would certainly continue in the 1950s and 1960s.³⁹ It was in this context of growing faculty status and professional recognition that the AAUP was able to work collaboratively with administrators and trustees in the 1960s to develop the *Statement on Government*.⁴⁰

The underlying premise of the 1966 *Statement* is that academic decision making should be entrusted to those who have the knowledge and experience to make decisions that are most

likely to advance the educational mission of the institution. It offers broad guidelines for how authority should be shared and divided among the three principal parties in college and university governance: governing boards, presidents (including their administrative subordinates), and faculty. The *Statement on Government* explicitly recognizes that “with few exceptions,” governing boards are legally established as “the final institutional authority” in American colleges and universities. The governing board thus has the ultimate authority to determine the mission of its institution and is responsible for exercising financial oversight. However, governing boards, which are composed primarily of non-academics, are not competent to make decisions about how to carry out their institutions’ educational objectives, including how professors should teach or conduct research. The issue, then, is how responsibility for determining the means for carrying out the essential educational mission of the institution should be divided or shared between the administration and the faculty.

The jointly formulated 1966 governance statement advances the view that decision making authority ought to be vested in those who have the requisite competence to make an informed judgment on the particular question at issue. Thus, the statement assigns to the faculty “primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.” While individual faculty members should decide how to teach their own courses and set their own research agendas, broader issues of academic policy, such as changes to the curriculum or the hiring and retention of faculty, should be determined in a collaborative process involving those with the relevant expertise to make an informed judgment. Because faculty actually do the academic work of the university – while administrators have become increasingly divorced from direct involvement in teaching and research – they are best positioned to evaluate the teaching and research contributions of their colleagues and to make other judgments about the best way to carry out the overall educational mission of their institutions.

The faculty, however, are not one undifferentiated mass. Shared governance taps into their many overlapping communities of expertise by giving primary responsibility for different academic issues to the appropriate group. Shared governance does not mean giving all physics faculty an equal vote with English faculty in judging the qualifications of professors of literature; nor does it mean allowing the history faculty to determine what classes should be required of a chemistry major. But many academic issues cut across disciplinary boundaries, and on these all faculty should have an equal voice.

The 1966 *Statement* recognizes that in “exceptional circumstances and for reasons communicated to the faculty” a president (or by analogy a provost, dean, or department head) might reverse a faculty judgment, if an entrenched majority of faculty have become implacable defenders of an unproductive status quo. The 1966 *Statement* recognizes that a “president must, at times, with or without support, infuse new life into a department.” However, because faculty have amassed significant expertise and experience, it is preferable to rely on the collective wisdom of such a group of professionals than to depend on the wisdom of a single individual.

In many areas of governance, the 1966 *Statement* calls for “joint effort” among faculty, administrators, and trustees with “differences in the weight of each voice” being “determined by reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand.” Many nonacademic issues arise in a college or university—such as building construction, financial investments, or parking. But for issues that impinge on carrying out the educational mission of the institution, administrators who hold primary decision-making responsibility should at least seek faculty input. Faculty might not be equipped to decide which contractor should construct a new biology building, but it would be foolish not to consult them about the facilities to include in that building.

The statement highlights several areas requiring “joint effort,” which at one time had been almost exclusively the domain of governing boards and administrators: long-range planning, facilities, budgeting, and the selection of a president and other academic administrators. However, the lack of specificity in the agreed-upon language about the faculty role in some of

these areas would lead the AAUP to develop its own clarifying policy documents in the following decade.

In 1972, the AAUP adopted a more comprehensive statement, *The Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters*. Elaborating on the principle of “shared authority” set forth in the 1966 *Statement*, the new document declared that faculty should be responsible for establishing “faculty salary policies,” as well as participating “in the preparation of the total institutional budget,” because budgets directly affect the “educational function of the institution” for which faculty have “primary responsibility.” Going beyond the 1966 *Statement*, the 1972 document recommended that institutions create formal mechanisms for obtaining faculty input into budget decisions:

The soundness of resulting decisions should be enhanced if an elected representative committee of the faculty participates in deciding on the overall allocation of institutional resources and the proportion to be devoted directly to the academic program. . . . Budgetary decisions directly affecting those areas for which, according to the Statement on Government, the faculty has primary responsibility—curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process—should be made in concert with the faculty.⁴¹

This statement implicitly recognized that the freedom to teach and conduct research would be severely impaired if faculty did not play a role in the allocation of resources that made teaching and research possible.

Two years after drafting the language for the policy statement on the role of faculty in budgeting, the AAUP’s Committee T on College and University Government developed a statement, *Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators*, which also elaborated on the principles set forth in the 1966 *Statement*. The latter statement had called for faculty involvement in the selection of a president and other academic administrators, and had specifically argued that the chair or head of a department, “who serves as the chief

representative of the department within an institution, should be selected either by departmental election or by appointment following consultation with members of the department and of related departments." The policy first drafted in 1974 and then formally adopted by the AAUP's national Council in 1981 recommended more specific procedures for involving faculty in the selection of a president than did the 1966 *Statement*, and also asserted the need for faculty to be involved not only in the selection of academic administrators, but also in their evaluation and in decisions about their retention.⁴²

In so doing, the statement stressed the relevance of professional expertise. The policy declared that the faculty's role "should reflect the extent of legitimate faculty interest in the position." Faculty involvement in the selection of an administrator "whose function is mainly advisory to a president or whose responsibilities do not include academic policy" might be limited so as to be "appropriate to its involvement with the office." On the other hand, in the case of academic administrators, such as deans, whose duties make them "more directly dependent upon faculty support," the search process ought to reflect "the primacy of faculty interest." In such instances, the statement advised that "sound academic practice dictates that the president not choose a person over the reasoned opposition of the faculty."

Survey data for 1970 indicated that the faculty role in institutional governance had continued to expand over the previous two decades. Faculty control over curriculum and degree requirements, for example, was firmly established. Nevertheless, the AAUP's Committee T observed that the reality of governance at most institutions was still "a far cry from the ideals envisaged by the 1966 *Statement on Government*."⁴³

There is contradictory evidence about what has happened to the practice of shared governance since 1970. The most recent comprehensive survey of governance practices, conducted in 2001 by Gabriel Kaplan with the cooperation of the AAUP, found that faculty involvement in hiring and promotion, and the selection of deans and department chairs, appeared to be substantially greater in 2001 than it had been thirty years earlier, while faculty

control over curriculum and degree requirements, which had already been well established in 1970, had been even further solidified.⁴⁴

On the other hand, several developments in recent decades have undermined the basis of faculty self-governance and the foundation upon which academic freedom in American colleges and universities rests. Most important, over the past thirty years, there has been a rapidly accelerating deprofessionalization of the faculty. In 1975, those working full time made up 70 percent of all faculty, and of those, 57 percent were tenured or tenure track. By 2005, the increasing use of casual labor that had come to characterize much of the American labor market with the end of the postwar economic boom had clearly affected the professoriate. Of the more than one million faculty members in the United States in 2005, nearly half (48 percent) worked only part time, and less than one-third (32 percent) were tenured or tenure track.⁴⁵ More faculty were becoming contingent “employees,” rather than career professionals who enjoyed job security and a good deal of autonomy. The implications for faculty governance and academic freedom are deeply troubling. Tenure was developed as a safeguard for academic freedom, without which faculty could not carry out their professional responsibilities. At-will and part-time faculty “employees” lack the professional status and protections of their tenured colleagues. Out of concern for their continued employment, they are more likely to engage in self-censorship in their teaching and research. Although many non-tenure-track faculty have begun (with the support of the AAUP) to lay claim to a role in institutional governance, their lack of job security, frequent part-time status, and the fact that many part-time faculty work at more than one institution to earn a living, makes such participation problematic.⁴⁶

Another indication of the weakening support for the principles of shared governance set forth in the 1966 *Statement on Government* was the Association of Governing Boards’ publication in 1996 of a major report that was a partial repudiation of the earlier document in whose formulation it had participated. The AGB commission that drafted *Reviewing the Academic Presidency: Stronger Leadership for Tougher Times* claimed that the “tradition of shared

governance” needed “to be reshaped, not scrapped.” Its recommendations, however, amounted to an attack on collegial decision making and a call for a more corporate model of management in which a college or university’s chief executive officer “must resist academia’s insatiable appetite for the kind of excessive consultation that can bring an institution to a standstill.”⁴⁷ Calls for a more “efficient” business-like approach to college and university governance are not new, but the statement reflected the increasing intensity and frequency of such proposals since the 1970s. In applying a model of business organization to institutions of higher learning, the AGB was ignoring the fundamental assertion of the 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*: that faculty are not “in any proper sense the employees” of college and university governing boards, but professionals who need both academic freedom and primacy in academic decision making to carry out their responsibilities to the public interest.

Defenders of academic freedom and shared governance sometimes justify their support for these principles by referring to democratic values and the constitutional right to free speech. Even in the AAUP’s first major statement on governance, Committee T chair J. A. Leighton used the term “democratic type” to describe what he considered to be the ideal conception of university governance.⁴⁸ However, just as it is misleading to equate the constitutional right of all citizens to speak freely without fear of government repression with academic freedom, which is the special prerogative of faculty engaged in teaching and research at both public and private institutions, so too is it misleading to base the faculty claim to a primary role in academic governance on strictly democratic principles.

It is not the principle of equal representation for all citizens, or “one person, one vote,” that justifies the faculty’s role in university governance. A college or university may be a community, but it is not a polity in which all are entitled to an equal voice in determining the way the institution ought to be run. Nor can all members of a college or university community lay claim to academic freedom if they are not engaged in teaching and research. From the earliest development of the American conceptions of academic freedom and faculty governance, the ultimate justification of the faculty’s right to pursue and impart knowledge without

restraint, and to shape educational policy, has been in deference to professional expertise, not a commitment to egalitarianism. As this brief review has demonstrated, had it not been for the increasing professionalization of faculty by the early twentieth century, there would have been little basis for American professors, as represented by the newly established AAUP, to lay claim to a particular form of academic freedom and a distinctive role in the governance of universities. Looking ahead, however, if current trends toward the deprofessionalization of faculty continue, the academic freedom and shared governance that have been so vital to the emergence of American higher education as the envy of the world are not likely to survive.

¹ AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006), 143.

² *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 2 (March 1916), 15-16; *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 3 (March 1917), 20.

³ Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., *The Development of Harvard University: Since the Inauguration of President Eliot, 1869-1929* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), xc.

⁴ Samuel Haber, *Authority and Honor in the American Professions, 1750-1900* (Chicago, 1991); Richard Hofstadter, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the College* (New York, 1955); Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York, 1994); John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore, 2004); Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, 1962).

⁵ Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley, 1977), x; Logan Wilson, *The Academic Man: A Study in the Sociology of a Profession* (New York, 1942), 113-14.

⁶ Yale awarded the first earned doctorate in the United States in 1860. Lucas, 171.

⁷ Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York, 1991).

⁸ Charles Franklin Thwing, *The German and the American University: One Hundred Years of History* (New York, 1928).

⁹ John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition*, 3rd ed., (New York, 1976), 178-82; Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965).

¹⁰ Columbia, with 6,232 students, had the largest enrollment. The other institutions with more than 5,000 students were Harvard, Chicago, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Cornell. Columbia, Harvard, and Yale had

more than 500 instructional staff. Edwin E. Slosson, *Great American Universities* ([1910] New York, 1977), x, 475.

¹¹ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967), 121; Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy & Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905* (Lexington, KY, 1975).

¹² "1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure," in AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006), 292. The AAUP adopted what was both a broader and a narrower conception of academic freedom than the German concept of *lehrfreiheit*. The AAUP *Declaration of Principles* also included "freedom of extramural utterance and action" — a freedom not guaranteed to German professors who were civil servants. On the other hand, the AAUP statement put more emphasis on the obligation of American professors to be objective and to refrain from one-sided advocacy, which contrasted with the German defense of a professor's freedom, at least in the classroom and in published research, to advance a particular point of view. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York, 1988), 64-68.

¹³ Walter P. Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University* (New York, 1955), 113.

¹⁴ Metzger, 146-47; Furner.

¹⁵ William Van Alstyne, "The Specific Theory of Academic Freedom and the General Issue of Civil Liberty," in *The Concept of Academic Freedom*, ed. E. Pincoffs (Austin, TX, 1975).

¹⁶ Quoted in Furner, 114; see also Metzger, 152-53.

¹⁷ Metzger, 200-01.

¹⁸ 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure*, 291.

¹⁹ Haber cites the Supreme Court case of *Dent v. West Virginia* (1888) as a milestone in the growth of professional prerogatives, noting that the court held that only "an authority competent to judge" could determine whether an individual had the appropriate qualifications to practice a profession. Haber observes: "That authority turned out to be the profession itself." *Authority and Honor in the American Professions*, 201-02.

²⁰ AAUP, "Report Concerning the University of Pennsylvania," (May 1916), *Academic Freedom and Tenure: Published Case Reports, 1915-2006*, [CD] (Washington, 2007).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² AAUP, 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, 294-95.

²³ *Ibid.*, 298-300.

²⁴ Arthur O. Lovejoy played a critical role in both the decision to launch this first formal investigation and in drafting the committee report. See Walter P. Metzger, "The First Investigation," *AAUP Bulletin* 47 (Autumn 1961).

²⁵ AAUP, "Report of Conditions at the University of Utah," (December 1915), *Academic Freedom and Tenure: Published Case Reports, 1915-2006* [CD] (Washington, 2007).

²⁶ Metzger, 111-12; W.H. Cowley, *Presidents, Professors, and Trustees*, ed. Donald T. Williams, Jr., (San Francisco, 1980), 22-28.

²⁷ "Report of Committee T on Place and Function of Faculties in University Government and Administration," *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 6 (March 1920), 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

³¹ This paragraph originally appeared in Larry G. Gerber, "'Inextricably Linked': Shared Governance and Academic Freedom," *Academe* 87 (May-June 2001): 22-24.

³² *Ibid.*, 32-34.

³³ *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 8 (February 1922), 87-88.

³⁴ The number of faculty increased from 48,600 to 146,000, while the number of Ph.Ds granted increased from 600 to 3,300 between 1920 and 1940. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, 1957), 210-211.

³⁵ "Place and Function of Faculties in College and University Government," *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 27 (April 1941), 156.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁷ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1966* (Washington, 1966), 135, 137.

³⁸ Logan Wilson, *American Academics: Then and Now* (New York, 1979); Christopher Jencks & David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968).

³⁹ "The Place and Function of Faculties in College and University Government: Final Report on the 1953 Study," *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 41 (Spring 1955), 62-81.

⁴⁰ "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities," in AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006), 135-40. Much of the analysis presented here of this statement appeared originally in Larry G. Gerber, "Defending Shared Governance," *Change* 39 (September/October 2007), 5-6.

⁴¹ "The Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters," in AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006), 149-52.

⁴² "Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators," in AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006), 145-46.

⁴³ "Report of the Survey Subcommittee of Committee T," *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 57 (March 1971), 73.

⁴⁴ Gabriel E. Kaplan, "How Academic Ships Actually Navigate," September 20, 2002, accessed at <http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~gkaplan/Governance%20Chapter%20FINAL%20Sept.pdf>, November 6, 2009. Kaplan received survey responses from 903 institutions, the vast majority of which came from both faculty and administrators on a campus.

⁴⁵ "Trends in Faculty Status, 1975-2005," accessed at <http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/9218E731-A68E-4E98-A378-12251FFD3802/0/Facstatustrend7505.pdf>, November 6, 2009.

⁴⁶ The AAUP has addressed the growing problem of contingent faculty in a series of statements issued over the past several decades. See "The Status of Part-Time Faculty" (1980); "On Full-Time Non-Tenure Track Appointments" (1986); and "Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession" (2003) in AAUP, *Policy Documents & Reports*, 10th ed. (Washington, 2006). See also "Conversion of Appointments to the Tenure-Track" (2009), accessed at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/conversion.htm>, November 9, 2009.

⁴⁷ Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, *Renewing the Academic Presidency: Stronger Leadership for Tougher Times* (Washington, 1966), x, 21.

⁴⁸ "Report of Committee T on Place and Function of Faculties in University Government and Administration," *Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.* 6 (March 1920), 18-19, 23, 47.