

American Association of University Professors

Campaign for the Common Good

Rarely has the American Association of University Professors faced challenges as serious as those it confronts today. Attempts to suppress free expression in the wake of September 11, 2001, the interference of state legislatures in the academic work of faculty, and the attempted censorship of the sciences and creative arts by special-interest ideologues have all evoked vigorous and public responses from the Association. Less visible, but no less intense, has been the AAUP's continuing resistance to the erosion of tenure in our colleges and universities and to the shameless exploitation of part-time and non-tenure-track faculty. The Association's statements on such issues serve as the academy's benchmarks. They are the ethical touchstones for a noble profession, which knows that its primary purpose, teaching learners in pursuit of the common good, is not a private enterprise but a public trust.

Founded in 1915, the Association has given shape to American higher education by insisting on academic freedom as its defining characteristic. The 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, issued jointly by the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges and Universities and endorsed by more than 185 scholarly and educational organizations, remains the definitive description of academic free speech for the American academy and aspired to around the world. The Association's definition of academic freedom served as the foundation for the statement on the status of higher education faculty worldwide that was adopted by UNESCO in 1997. In addition, the 1940 *Statement* and other policy statements are frequently cited in court decisions, and the AAUP's friend-of-the-court briefs before the U.S. Supreme

Court and federal and state appellate courts address the significant educational issues of our times. The Association works with Congress and state legislators to promote effective higher education legislation and to advance the profession and the purposes of higher education in the public eye. The Association has recently issued public statements on distance education, intellectual property, contingent faculty, graduate student education, faculty work and family responsibilities, and academic freedom and national security. Each year, it also publishes an annual survey of faculty salaries and compensation, one of the most reliable gauges of the health of higher education and a trove of demographic and financial data.

A 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Association serves the profession specifically and the higher education community generally rather than the individual members, and its services are available to all academics, regardless of AAUP membership status. Active chapters of the AAUP exist at more than five hundred accredited colleges and universities in the United States. These chapters promote principles and programs that vitally affect the quality of professional life in the academy and the general well being of higher education.

Believing that departures from sound academic standards injure the entire academic profession and the education it provides to the public, the Association publishes reports on specific cases when events at colleges and universities raise serious issues of academic freedom, tenure, due process, or faculty governance. The first of these reports was issued in 1916; as a body, they represent a jurisprudential history of academic freedom in America. The AAUP now publishes such reports in its bimonthly magazine,

Academe, one of the nation's most important journals of cross-disciplinary thinking about higher education.

The staff at the AAUP's national office fields well over a thousand inquiries requesting advice and assistance from both faculty members and administrators each year. Such service to the academic community would not be possible without the assistance of the Association's membership and volunteer faculty leaders—including a cohort of some two hundred members who serve on the Association's twenty-eight standing and eleven ad hoc committees. This grassroots membership, comprising some of the most distinguished academics in American higher education, constitutes a precious endowment of talent and service.

At present, the Association's day-to-day operations depend almost exclusively on the dues of its forty-five thousand members. It has no general endowment fund; its dedicated funds are restricted and worth less than \$1 million combined. Thus, this respected guardian of academic freedom in American higher education now survives on a budget that provides little margin for emergencies or special initiatives. Without a secure financial base, the Association's future as a trusted and independent voice for American faculty is uncertain.

To ensure the AAUP's continued contribution to the academic enterprise and to the common good, the leadership of the Association has approved its first-ever capital campaign. The goal of the campaign is to create a \$10,000,000 endowment for the Association. Gifts to the campaign will be allocated to the newly created **Endowment Fund**. Interest from the **Endowment Fund** will support the operations of the Association

and allow the AAUP to respond to current crises and undertake initiatives beyond its current financial capabilities.

Donors may also contribute to any of the following special funds:

- **Academic Freedom Fund**—to establish and maintain academic freedom through research, publication, and assistance to faculties and faculty members in institutions of higher education.
- **Burgan Fund**—to subsidize participation by staff and members in international conferences and meetings relevant to Association issues.
- **Contingent Faculty Fund**—to support and further issues of concern to contingent faculty through research, publication, leadership development, and other activities.
- **International Academic Freedom Fund**—to gather and disseminate information about violations of academic freedom in universities around the world and to assist persecuted academics.
- **Legal Defense Fund**—to provide financial assistance in cases at the trial and appellate levels that involve potential violations of AAUP policy and that have the potential to affect higher education law.
- **Yost Fund**—to support internships and fellowships for research and analysis of public policy issues affecting higher education.

The **Endowment Fund** and the other special funds will provide a financial base from which the Association can pursue its mission through the twenty-first century. The AAUP's goals continue to be clear and focused: the staunch defense of academic freedom and its major bulwarks, tenure and collegial governance; the articulation in the public policy and judicial arenas of the unique and critical role higher education plays in our society; and the promulgation of Association principles and values to a global audience. These goals are lofty but difficult to achieve without the substantial support of friends of higher education both in and outside the academy.

The American Association of University Professors, in the first capital campaign in its long and distinguished history, needs the help of every individual, corporation, and

foundation that truly believes that education is the cornerstone of the structure of society and that the interests of society are best served when scholars have the freedom to fulfill their unique and necessary role: to preserve, transmit, and discover knowledge. As the AAUP's founding document, the 1915 *Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, puts it, "The responsibility of the university as a whole is to the community at large, and any restriction upon the freedom of the instructor is bound to react injuriously upon the efficiency and the morale of the institution, and therefore ultimately upon the interests of the community." By supporting the AAUP's capital campaign, you will do your part to preserve and defend academic freedom, foster the health and well being of higher education our society and make it possible for the colleges and universities of this country to continue their critical contribution to the common good.