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AAUP Resolution-Academic Freedom

Submitted by Michael Moore/AAUP

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478-0211

10/28/2010

Motion:

We move that the Faculty Senate of Georgia Southern University approve the following resolution:

From the College of Science and Technology Manual: For applicants who are applying for promotion or tenure, "All tenure-track faculty are to have submitted at least one external application for funding by the time of the tenure and promotion to Associate Professor review. This definition of external funding applications does not include applications to support travel and/or conference attendance. External funding is funding from any other source than Georgia Southern University, including but not limited to private or public sources, such as companies, foundations, non-profit organizations, and local, state, federal, or international government agencies. Departments shall provide additional guidance on what constitutes acceptable forms of external funding, and what the faculty member's role should be in the application, in departmental P&T guidelines" (p. 15).

Resolution:

We resolve the following: That requiring faculty to show evidence of applying for external funding for purposes of tenure, promotion, post tenure review and/or yearly evaluation is a violation of academic freedom. Even though the policy does not restrict faculty to only externally funded research, restricting the kind and nature of research at all that faculty may conduct to research that is fundable to any extent violates the faculty right to unfettered pursuit of knowledge. Violations of Academic Freedom affect all faculty in every college. This issue, if acceptable, has the potential of setting precedence for implementation in other academic units of the University.

Rationale:

Academic Freedom was defined and articulated with the founding of the American Association of University Professors. In fact, the point of the AAUP was to defend the principle of Academic Freedom. John Dewey and Arthur Lovejoy founded the AAUP and Dewey became its first President. (For a classic history see Hofstadter and Metzger, 1955.) The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure specifically, "Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution" (p. 3). Georgia Southern University in its own Faculty Handbook, p. 46, Section 201 bases its own definition of Academic Freedom on the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports specifically citing the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Louis Menand, Harvard professor and staff writer for the New Yorker, wrote of Academic Freedom as "the philosophical key to the whole enterprise of higher education" (p. 131). He goes on to note that academic freedom allows professors to pursue inquiry wherever it might lead even if the results are unpopular or even offensive. Information must be pursued without restraint and professors cannot be punished for exploring information or ideas in the classroom (Hacker & Dreifus, 2010). Further: External funding requires external approval of the academic inquiry and therefore by its very nature requires that scholars/researchers bend their endeavors to please the external funders. Fund raising is not listed as separate criteria in either BOR or GSU faculty documentation.

AAUP Policy Documents and Reports: 10th edition (2006). Washington, D.C.: American Association of University Professors.

Hacker, A. & Dreifus, C. (2010). Higher education?: How colleges are wasting our money and failing our kids-and what we can do about it. New York: Holt.

Hofstadter, R. & Metzger, W.P. (1955). The development of academic freedom in the United States. New York: Columbia University Press.

Menand, L (2010). The marketplace of ideas. New York: W.W. Norton.

This resolution passed the Georgia Southern University AAUP chapter unanimously.

SEC Response:

11/10/2010: Here is the SEC's response to the AAUP's request for a motion.

The SEC declined the request for the following reasons:

1. The motion deals with only one college, the College of Science and Technology (COST).
2. The statement in the COST manual includes no prohibitive wording.
3. The funding requested may be for an array of scholarly and/or other activities.
4. Faculty members in COST approved the statement by a 2/3 to 1/3 vote.

Sincerely,

Clara