

**New Jersey State Conference
of the
American Association of University Professors**

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• Monmouth University • New Jersey Institute of Technology •
• Princeton Theological Seminary • Rider University •
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October 6, 2016

To: The New Jersey Senate Higher Education Committee: Sandra B. Cunningham (Chair); Nellie Pou (Vice-Chair); Thomas H. Kean; Paul A. Sarlo; Robert W. Singer

From: Dan O'Connor, Past-President, NJ State Conference of the AAUP ¹

RE: A412 making changes to tenure of faculty and professional staff

Thank you for the opportunity to address the New Jersey Assembly Higher Education Committee. Diane Campbell from Rider University serves as the elected President of our organization and she is unable to attend today's hearing. I serve as immediate Past-President of the NJAAUP. Our NJAAUP Vice-President is Dr. Joe Doria. There are twelve Chapters affiliated with our State Conference and these are located at Bloomfield College, Centenary College, Drew University, Felician College, Monmouth University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Princeton Theological Seminary, Rider University, Rutgers University, St. Peter's University, Seton Hall University, and Union County College. The NJAAUP State Conference represents the professional interests of over 7,000 teachers, researchers, and professional staff who work at these institutions of higher education. Our institutions are diverse, and include both public and private institutions as well as collective bargaining and non-collective bargaining chapters.

Your committee is addressing an area of critical importance to the citizens of New Jersey—the need to have the best college education in this country. That opportunity addresses the availability of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty who truly serve as mentors to our students and who create a curriculum to meet the challenges facing our State. Directly connected to this is the very purpose of a college education.

Recently, I asked a class I teach in statistical methods within an information technology and informatics major this question: why are you in college? Why does NJ want you to become a college graduate? What is it that

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we expect you to know and do after you walk across the stage to get your diploma at graduation? There was silence in the classroom and then a student offered this: you want to prepare us to get a job. I said no, that we were preparing them to create jobs—for themselves and others. We were also expecting them to be involved in our participatory democracy serving at local, State, and Federal levels as individuals who can be leaders in guiding our communities, towns, counties, and State to create a better society and a sustainable and productive government. I reminded them that we require them to take over two-thirds of their courses in other disciplines. We want them to be educated individuals who respect the viewpoints of others, who have explored the meaning of culture, who are aware of the fabric of science, and who understand the importance of the arts.

We can now ask this question: will the continued dilution of tenure given to administrators fulfill the purposes just mentioned. Each tenure position in our State is a treasure we need to cherish because faculty can exert tremendous influence over their students. All of us can think of professors who taught us and the influence they have had on our careers and on our lives. Administrators who are not fulfilling the important roles expected of full time faculty are occupying tenure lines. This has tremendous consequences. Let me give an example.

Last Friday, my academic department had one of our regular retreats where over 20 of us spent an entire day discussing what content we want our students to know beyond writing code, assessing cybersecurity threats, and exploring systems technology. We considered how important it is that our technology courses include such topics as information ethics, the importance of gender and diversity inclusion in our information society, the role of technology in our democracy, and the principles underlying the value and importance of information property. We shared stories of how we advise students with career choices and how we recommend them for leadership positions.

Tenure brings with it the protection of academic freedom. Let me clarify what that concept means within the AAUP. Academic freedom is not job protection but an essential component needed in the discovery of new knowledge. Academic freedom means that there is no list of right questions or wrong questions, not right methodologies or wrong methodologies. Each professor is free to articulate how knowledge should advance.

Giving away tenure to administrators betrays the importance of the goals of college. We need to keep our focus on producing educated individuals who can improve our society and expand our economy. We need to stop the contraction and dilution of tenured faculty ranks. Faculty need to “profess” in the classroom, in their research, and in their service to society.

The NJ AAUP is pleased to give its full support to Assembly Bill 412.