

From: Joshua Silverstein [<mailto:jmsilverstei@ualr.edu>]
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2017 5:00 PM
To: FACFOCUS@UALR.EDU
Subject: 405.1 Update -- Goings on at UAMS and Next Steps

Colleagues:

I've been in regular contact with some of our colleagues at UAMS. Their faculty senate put together a response to the proposed changes to 405.1, which I have attached. It makes many of the same arguments that I set forth in my email on Monday. (It is also linked to in the email below – the reference to “big ticket” items).

Also, set forth below is an email from Professor Leanne Lefler. She is the President of the UAMS Academic Senate. She explains, on behalf of the senate, that they received an updated draft of 405.1 from the counsel's office, which I have also attached. (I do not know why this revision has not been circulated to other campuses, such as UALR.) It is dated October 19, 2017. Apparently, this new draft was supposed to be in response to the concerns raised by the UAMS faculty. I have not had a chance to carefully review the draft because I have class today. But from a quick skim, and based on what Leanne wrote below, the counsel's office made no changes to any of the problematic substantive and procedural features of the original draft that we have been working with. She outlines the problems in her email. If this new draft is indeed the office of general counsel's considered reply to the UAMS faculty, then it should now be clear that the counsel's office – or whomever is pulling their strings – is out to destroy tenure within the UA System.

Leanne further explains – and I strongly agree – that the faculty generally and faculty senates specifically at every UA campus need to come together to oppose this proposal, which will eviscerate tenure and academic freedom if adopted.

She also highlights, and I once again agree, that the process for considering this proposal has been wholly deficient. Let me add the following: The time pressure is completely unjustified. The failure to circulate a redline (with careful notations explaining every change) to the entire UA System is simply inexcusable. The statements made that the proposal is just an “updating” of the current rule are outright false. And the general lack of faculty involvement violates basic principles of faculty governance that form part of the very bedrock of the American university system.

How should this have proceeded? Every person within the UA System should have been notified that a process was going to commence to assess possible revisions to 405.1 (and 405.4). Representatives from every system campus should have been selected for a joint committee (that certainly could have included 1-2 representatives from the counsel's office and/or the system office). And the work of the joint committee should have been circulated throughout each campus for *multiple* rounds of feedback and discussion, with each round taking at least a few months. Only after such a thorough, deliberative, and inclusive process should there even be a consideration of submitting something to the trustees for approval.

Given the litany of failures in the process actually followed, we could easily forgive someone who inferred that this process has been intentionally designed to minimize faculty participation in order to permit the covert adoption of a policy change that fatally undermines tenure and academic freedom in the state of Arkansas.

Josh

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