

April 15, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Professor Hilary Tice  
School of Clinical Sciences  
University of Louisiana-Monroe  
700 University Avenue  
Monroe, Louisiana 71209

Dear Professor Tice:

In your capacity as president of the University of Louisiana-Monroe faculty senate, you have asked staff in the AAUP's Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance to review and provide comment on the university's faculty handbook, paying particular attention to the workload and collegiality policies. We are glad to do so.

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We are pleased to note that section VIII.4, "Academic Freedom," of the faculty handbook states that the principles articulated therein "reflect" the joint AAUP-AAC&U 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (enclosed).

However, we also note that the university's principles, though obviously modeled on the "Academic Freedom" section of the 1940 *Statement of Principles*, also deviate from the language of the 1940 *Statement* in at least one significant way.<sup>1</sup> As we generally recommend that the text of Association policy documents be reproduced verbatim in faculty handbooks, **we advise the faculty to amend the principles set forth in section VIII.4 so that they reproduce the language of the 1940 *Statement*.**

We are also pleased to note that section III, "Faculty Senate," quotes from the enclosed *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* in delineating the areas of the faculty's primary responsibility. We would emphasize that the AAUP formulated the *Statement on Government* jointly with the American Council on Education and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> To wit, one of the university's principles is that faculty members "should avoid the use of offensive language" in the classroom. The 1940 *Statement* includes no such admonition, presumably, at least in part, for reasons articulated in *Freedom in the Classroom* (enclosed), a report of the Association's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure:

Ideas that are germane to a subject under discussion in a classroom cannot be censored because a student with particular religious or political beliefs might be offended. Instruction cannot proceed in the atmosphere of fear that would be produced were a teacher to become subject to administrative sanction based upon the idiosyncratic reaction of one or more students. This would create a classroom environment inimical to the free and vigorous exchange of ideas necessary for teaching and learning in higher education.

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Section XIV.3, “Termination or Resignation: Tenure-Track Faculty,” of the faculty handbook sets out standards for timely notice for the nonrenewal of a tenure-track faculty member’s appointment which appear to be essentially consistent with those articulated in the enclosed *Standards for Notice of Nonreappointment* (see also Regulation 2c of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations*).

Regrettably, however, section XIV.3 does not provide for two other procedural rights to which faculty members are entitled under Association-recommended standards when their appointments are not renewed: reasons for the nonrenewal decision upon request and, if further requested, written confirmation of the reasons (see Regulations 2e-f of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations*), and the opportunity to petition an elected faculty committee with an allegation that the decision was based on inadequate consideration (see Regulation 2g) or on discrimination or a violation of academic freedom (see Regulation 10). **We therefore recommend incorporating Regulations 2e-g and 10 in section XIV.3 or another appropriate section of the handbook.** We hasten to add that all of the regulations set out in the *Recommended Institutional Regulations* are designed to be incorporated verbatim in faculty handbooks.

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It appears from section X.3, “Tenure and Promotion Appeals,” that a faculty member whose tenure application is denied has the right to appeal the decision based upon an allegation of inadequate consideration (i.e., that “the process has been violated,” as section X.3.a puts it) or of discrimination.<sup>2</sup> However, section X.3 does not provide for standards for notice of the decision, for oral or written reasons for the decision, or for the opportunity to appeal based on an alleged violation of academic freedom. **We therefore recommend adding Regulations 2c, 2e-g, and 10 to section X.3 or another appropriate section.**

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The AAUP recognizes only three legitimate bases for terminating an appointment with continuous tenure or a probationary or other nontenured appointment before the end of the specified term: adequate cause, a demonstrably bona fide financial exigency, and bona fide formal discontinuance of a program or department of instruction for educational reasons (see Regulations 5, 4c, and 4d, respectively, of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations*). We note that the ULM faculty handbook enumerates the same three bases in section X.1.j, “Tenure Status.”

The university policies governing financial exigency and program discontinuance, set forth in sections XIV.6.a and XIV.6.b, respectively, read in their entirety as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> See the enclosed *Statement on Procedural Standards in the Renewal or Nonrenewal of Faculty Appointments* for a discussion of what constitutes adequate consideration.

A declaration of financial exigency will represent a determination by the Board of Supervisors, upon recommendation of the ULM President and System President, that the financial condition of the System, an institution, program, or budget unit has reached a crisis in which the entity must carefully reexamine its priorities and reduce programs or personnel or both to affect a cost savings sufficient to alleviate the financial exigency. For more information, see the UL System Policy for Financial Exigency.

Occasionally, for educational and/or budgetary reasons, it may be in the University's best interest to discontinue an academic program. Since faculty belong to schools, faculty may be reassigned; however, such a decision should be made after consultation with the appropriate faculty groups and according to ULS policy. For more information, see the UL System Policy on Academic Program Discontinuance.

Unfortunately, these policies and the UL system policies they reference appear to be entirely inadequate vis-à-vis the detailed procedural standards set out in Regulations 4c and 4d of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations*. **We therefore urge the faculty to work toward substituting Regulations 4c and 4d verbatim for the policies articulated in sections XIV.6.a and XIV.6.b of the faculty handbook.**

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Sections XIV.4 and XIV.5 of the faculty handbook articulate procedures governing the termination of tenured appointments. As with the university's financial exigency and program discontinuance policies, the dismissal policies appear to fall woefully short of Association-recommended procedural standards, which are set forth in great detail in Regulation 5, "Dismissal Procedures," of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations*.<sup>3</sup> **This represents a fatal flaw in institutional policy. Absent the due-process protections set forth in Regulation 5—the essentials of which are pre-termination hearing before an elected faculty committee in which the administration bears the burden of demonstrating adequate cause for dismissal—tenure exists in name only at the University of Louisiana-Monroe. We therefore urge the faculty to work toward incorporating Regulation 5 verbatim in the faculty handbook to replace the policies outlined in sections XIV.4 and XIV.5.**<sup>4</sup>

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There appears to be only one mention of sanctions other than dismissal and "administrative leave" (i.e., suspension) in the faculty handbook: sections XIV.4 and XIV.5 refer to demotion in

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<sup>3</sup> See also the enclosed *Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings*.

<sup>4</sup> Regulation 5 includes procedural standards governing suspension (see Regulation 5c[1]). It appears that ULM's suspension policy, articulated in section XIV.1, "Administrative Leave," and in the system policy that section references, is inconsistent with Regulation 5c(1).

academic rank.<sup>5</sup> **We therefore recommend that the faculty incorporate (again, verbatim) Regulation 7 of the *Recommended Institutional Regulations* in the faculty handbook.**

Regulation 7a governs severe sanctions other than dismissal:

If the administration believes that the conduct of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, is sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction, such as suspension from service for a stated period, the administration may institute a proceeding to impose such a severe sanction; the procedures outlined in Regulation 5 will govern such a proceeding.

Regulation 7b governs minor sanctions:

If the administration believes that the conduct of a faculty member justifies imposition of a minor sanction, such as a reprimand, it will notify the faculty member of the basis of the proposed sanction and provide the faculty member with an opportunity to persuade the administration that the proposed sanction should not be imposed. A faculty member who believes that a major sanction has been incorrectly imposed under this paragraph, or that a minor sanction has been unjustly imposed, may, pursuant to Regulation 16, petition the faculty grievance committee for such action as may be appropriate.

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The faculty workload policy, as it is stated in section VI.2, “Faculty Workload and Responsibilities,” includes a “specific dictum” of “at least 24 semester credit hours, or equivalent, of undergraduate instruction each academic year.” The policy “anticipates exceptions and adjustments, such as higher minimums for faculty who are engaged in instructional activities only.”

While twenty-four credit hours per academic year would appear to be equivalent to the *maximum* undergraduate teaching limit set forth in the enclosed *Statement on Faculty Workload with Interpretive Comments*, it exceeds the *preferred* undergraduate teaching load stated in the same document.

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<sup>5</sup> Although AAUP policy does not explicitly address demotion in academic rank, the Association has always opposed demotion as a sanction because it is indefinite in length and negates the body of work that led to promotion. Only if the work a faculty member submitted in support of an application for promotion were found to be fraudulent would such a sanction potentially be appropriate.

Professor Hilary Tice

April 15, 2026

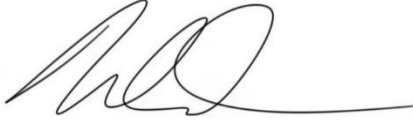
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Finally, we are pleased to report that the university's policy on collegiality, which we assume to be set forth in section VII.1, "Citizenship and Civility," of the faculty handbook, does not appear to contravene AAUP-recommended principles and standards.<sup>6</sup>

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We hope that these comments prove useful to you and your colleagues. We would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael DeCesare", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael DeCesare

Senior Program Officer

Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance

Enclosures by email attachment

cc: Professor Vipin Menon, President, Louisiana AAUP Conference

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<sup>6</sup> In case it is of interest, the Committee A statement *On Collegiality as a Criterion for Faculty Evaluation* is enclosed.