



**Columbia College Chicago AAUP Advocacy Chapter**

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March 19, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Dr. Kim, CFO Jerry Tarrer, Provost Marcella David, members of the Board of Trustees and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:

In light of Dr. Kim's Draft Advisory Report, we, the Columbia College AAUP Advocacy Chapter Executive Committee, call your attention to the recommendations of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) regarding the role of faculty in conditions of financial exigency, and the central role of faculty in curricular decision making. We are cognizant that the administration has asserted that the college is in a financial crisis and that change is necessary. However, we strongly assert that the Board of Trustees' determination regarding steps to be taken to address any Adverse Circumstance must adhere to AAUP principles of shared governance and primacy of faculty responsibility in determining the educational mission and curricular direction of the institution to ensure the integrity and future viability of the college.

See AAUP's 2014 report "The Role of the Faculty in Conditions of Financial Exigency" in which they define "financial exigency [as] entail[ing] a severe financial crisis that fundamentally compromises the academic integrity of the institution as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by less drastic means."<sup>1</sup> It is our understanding that the declaration of an Adverse Circumstance as outlined in Section XXII.E. of the Statement of Policy and the recommendations in the Draft Advisory Report would signal drastic means.

The overarching re-configuration of the college proposed in the President's Advisory Report, a reimagining of the core curriculum, potential program closures, and attendant termination of full time faculty appointments are all matters for which faculty should have primary decision making: "Program closures are matters of curriculum, central to the educational missions of colleges and universities—**missions over which the faculty should always have primary responsibility.**"<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added].

An article on AAUP's website summarizing an amicus brief filed recently in the New York Supreme Court states that "Procedurally, faculty terminations due to financial exigency require processes that safeguard basic due process rights and that maintain respect for the principle of shared governance by ensuring meaningful participation by the faculty. At a bare minimum, the brief emphasizes, such processes 'must feature meaningful involvement by the faculty in assessing whether the claimed financial exigency actually exists and whether it necessitates faculty terminations, as well as faculty participation in questions concerning the implementation of any truly necessary terminations.'<sup>3</sup>

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**American Association of University Professors**

Advancing academic freedom and shared governance, defining professional values and standards, promoting the economic security of those who teach and research in higher education, Organizing to make our goals a reality, and ensuring higher education's contribution to the common good.

Joan Giroux

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**Our Mission**

To advance best practices of higher education in the fields and disciplines represented at the college.

We achieve our mission by championing academic and creative excellence, working collaboratively to uphold both the mission of Columbia College Chicago and AAUP, and advocating for the advancement of academic freedom, shared governance, and the economic security, professional development, and well-being of faculty.

**Our Vision**

To foster a thriving, inclusive community of teaching, learning, scholarship, and creative practice that attracts and retains a diverse faculty and student body, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders.



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While faculty consultation is provided through shared governance via the Faculty Senate Executive Committee's comments and recommendations, such consultation must be followed by faculty design of curriculum. The accelerated timeline suggested by the President's Draft Advisory Report and in subsequent meetings do not instill confidence that decision making and implementation will occur in a reasonable, thoughtful sustainable fashion driven by faculty expertise and input.

We request that any directives to the current and future interim presidents from the Board of Trustees regarding this sweeping transformation of the institution be, *at the minimum*, afforded reasonable time for meaningful faculty input in late May, after the semester's teaching responsibilities are concluded. To not provide such time would go against the spirit of the principles of shared governance and due process that should be observed by our institution at all levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Giroux". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joan Giroux

chapter president, on behalf of CCC AAUP Advocacy Chapter Executive Committee

cc: Columbia Chronicle Editorial Board  
CCC AAUP Advocacy Chapter Executive Committee members  
Rich King, chair, Humanities, History, and Social Science, chair, Chairs Council  
Tom Dowd, Interim Dean, School of Media Arts  
Rosita Sands, Dean, School of Fine and Performing Arts  
Steve Corey, Dean, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Suzanne McBride, Dean, School of Graduate Studies

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aaup.org/report/role-faculty-conditions-financial-exigency>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aaup.org/news/new-amicus-brief-supports-right-tenure-canisius-college>