

New York Conference, AAUP  
Spring Meeting, 2007  
Report of New York Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure  
April 13, 2007

This report is written by Irwin Yellowitz, Chairman of NY Committee A. The other members of the Committee are Martin Fried, Jane Koretz, Lionel Lewis and John Thomas.

Committee A had four cases that continued from my last report to the Fall 2006 meeting. Two have had no new developments, which means that the institutions have not taken further actions against the faculty members. No news is good news in these cases. In a third case, the faculty member apparently has decided not to take any further action. In the final case, the faculty member lost an appeal in the federal courts, and has appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. I wrote a letter to national AAUP supporting the faculty member's request that national AAUP file an amicus brief in support of his appeal. National AAUP declined to do so, although it left the door open to entering the case should the Supreme Court take the appeal.

There have been no new inquiries about academic freedom and tenure issues since the Fall 2006 meeting. I would like to think this means all is well in New York State. Instead I believe there are other reasons for the quiet time. In CB chapters, members often turn to their union for assistance, which I fully support. In non-CB chapters, some members take their problem directly to national Committee A. We do not know about such cases unless national Committee A consults with us, which happens in some situations, but not in others. Finally, many members are probably unaware of the work of NY Committee A, and how we may assist them.

Hopefully to increase our visibility, I will do two things... First, I will ask the editor of NY Academe to run regularly the article on the work of Committee A that I developed some years ago with John Diehl. Second, I will ask Tom Policano to do a simple survey of the non-CB chapters to find out if there have been academic freedom and tenure issues recently, and if so how they were handled? Was the Chapter involved? Did the faculty member consult directly with national Committee A? Such a survey should raise the visibility of NY Committee A with the leadership of our chapters, and also give us some information about what is happening.