

In light of changes proposed by the Arkansas ACCESS act recently signed into law, the Richard Hudson chapter of the AAUP urges administrators to work with the Faculty Senate to create an annual review framework that reaffirms their commitment to the protection of academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance at UCA.

We are particularly concerned about the sections in ACCESS that institute changes to tenure and faculty performance reviews. Accountability and transparency are important. However, such criteria as “professional incompetence,” “unprofessional conduct,” and “indoctrination” are vague, overly broad, and can be easily weaponized in ways that silence unpopular ideas and erode academic integrity. Tenure is a vital instrument of academic freedom. Any new policy that permits the removal of tenure or imposes remedial training must follow due process as outlined in the UCA Faculty Handbook or must be revised based on a Faculty Senate-led review of the current policy.

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