

Resolution on the Defense of Academic Freedom, University of Pittsburgh

Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee, Date June 1, 2022

Whereas, academic freedom, as defined by the AAUP and the University of Pittsburgh's 2003 statement (<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/statement-academic-freedom>), is necessary for the pursuit of knowledge wherever it may lead, and is a cornerstone of the modern university, including the University of Pittsburgh;

Whereas, the defense of academic freedom is a University-wide concern;

Whereas, academic freedom is an institutional and individual scholar's right;

Whereas, the Plan for Pitt states the following goal: "Protect academic freedom; institutional independence; and the associated rights, responsibilities and privileges;"

Whereas, the By-laws of the University of Pittsburgh assert in Article II, Section 2.5, Paragraph (e) that "The rights to membership on the faculty and to academic freedom carry with them the obligations to uphold academic freedom against invasion or abuse, to not violate the academic freedom of others, and to perform in a productive, professional fashion so as to deserve membership on the faculty. It is equally a responsibility of the officers of the University administration and of the Board of Trustees to assure, to protect, and to defend academic freedom. The tenured faculty and the officers and Board members should work together to that end;"

Whereas the position of the University on academic freedom exists as part of the By-laws (see above), it is neither prominent nor readily evident on the University's website;

Whereas the above statement in the By-laws fails to define academic freedom, the conditions necessary to maintain it, and policy and procedure to ensure it;

Whereas the statement in the By-laws also fails to include University scholars other than tenured or tenure-stream faculty;

Whereas, the TAFC recommends the adoption of the following resolution; therefore, be it

Resolved that,

1. the Faculty Assembly recommends the University Administration and Board of Trustees to include academic freedom in the Mission Statement of the University;

2. the Faculty Assembly recommends that University Administration develop specific policies and procedures on academic freedom as it applies to all University scholars and actions necessary to maintain it; and

3. the Faculty Assembly recommends the University administration to protect academic freedom against all threats, whether arising internally or externally.

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50 Respectfully submitted on behalf of TAFC and approved unanimously by voting members
51 present during the meeting of 06/01/2020.

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53 Maria Kovacs, Ph.D. and Abbe De Vallejo, PhD. Co-Chairs