

RESOLUTION OF THE FULLERTON COLLEGE FACULTY SENATE (NORTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT)

Resolution No. 2024-2: Reaffirmed Commitment to Academic Freedom

Whereas, academic freedom guarantees all faculty freedom to teach, research, and discuss issues germane to their academic field, free from retaliation, censorship, or discipline. The practice of academic freedom preserves the integrity of educational institutions, the pursuit of truth, and the advancement of the public good. Thus, academic freedom has been fundamental in higher education for over a hundred years, supported by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP),¹ the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU),² the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC),³ and codified in North Orange County Community College District's (NOCCCD) Board Policy 4030⁴ and Administrative Procedure 4030;⁵

Whereas, faculty are officers of an educational institution, and their academic freedom extends beyond the classroom. The American Association of University Professors asserts that "The academic freedom of faculty members includes the freedom to express their views (1) on academic matters in the classroom and in the conduct of research, (2) on matters having to do with their institution and its policies, and (3) on issues of public interest generally, and to do so even if their views are in conflict with one or another received wisdom."⁶ Further, "the protection of the academic freedom of faculty members in addressing issues of institutional governance is a prerequisite for the practice of governance unhampered by fear of retribution;"⁷

¹ *Statement on Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments*. American Association of University Professors, <https://www.aaup.org/file/1940%20Statement.pdf>.

² *Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility: A Statement from the Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges and Universities*. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2006, <https://secure.aacu.org/AACU/PDF/academicFreedom.pdf>.

³ *Protecting the Future of Academic Freedom During a Time of Significant Change*. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Fall 2020, https://www.asccc.org/sites/default/files/Academic_Freedom_F20.pdf.

⁴ North Orange County Community College District. Board Policy 3050 Institutional Code of Ethics, https://www.nocccd.edu/files/3050bpfinalrevisedbot-2019-10-22_43653.pdf.

⁵ North Orange County Community College District. Administrative Procedure 3050 Institutional Code of Ethics, https://www.nocccd.edu/files/3050apfinalrevisedcst-2016-09-14_57648.pdf.

⁶ "On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom." *American Association of University Professors*, June 1994, <https://www.aaup.org/report/relationship-faculty-governance-academic-freedom>.

⁷ Ibid.

Whereas, threats to academic freedom have been escalating,^{8 9} and institutions of higher education are facing restrictions on teaching and learning of various topics deemed controversial, most notably the “teaching about the history, policies, and actions of the state of Israel and teaching about the history and perpetuation of racism and other accounts of state-enabled violence in the United States”.¹⁰ Such political infringements on academic freedom hinder freedom of inquiry and expression foundational to higher education;

Whereas, attacks on academic freedom tend to portray faculty engaged in rigorous academic inquiry as dangerous, often resulting in censorship, intimidation, harassment, doxing, threats and even physical violence to faculty.¹¹ These actions disproportionately target faculty of historically marginalized identities and those engaged in teaching about matters of race, class, gender, and sexuality and in scholarship that exposes and challenges systems of oppression¹²— necessarily the faculty members whose academic freedom is in greatest need of safeguarding; and

Whereas, NOCCCD has systematically failed in cultivating a healthy and vibrant academic culture for the “probing of opinions and exploration of ideas” (AP 4030), illustrated by past and ongoing intimidation and silencing of faculty exercising their academic freedom. Such administrative failures reverberate a “chilling effect” on expression and *de facto* censorship which denies students the opportunity to engage in the open inquiry and critical reflection and therefore undercuts Fullerton College’s aspirations to “dismantle all interlocking systems of oppression” and “inspire positive change in the world.”¹³

⁸ Douglass, John Aubrey. “Here and Abroad, Universities Face and Autocratic Playbook.” *Fall 2023: Confronting Legislative Attacks on Higher Education*, American Association of University Professors, <https://www.aaup.org/article/here-and-abroad-universities-face-autocratic-playbook>.

⁹ Ruth, Jennifer. “Subnational Authoritarianism and the Campaign to Control Higher Education.” *Fall 2023: Confronting Legislative Attacks on Higher Education*, American Association of University Professors, <https://www.aaup.org/article/subnational-authoritarianism-and-campaign-control-higher-education>.

¹⁰ “Legislative Threats to Academic Freedom: Redefinitions of Antisemitism and Racism.” *American Association of University Professors*, March 2022, <https://www.aaup.org/report/legislative-threats-academic-freedom-redefinitions-antisemitism-and-racism>.

¹¹ Tiede, Hans-Joerg, Samantha McCarthy, Isaac Kamo, and Alyson K. Spurgas. “Data Snapshot: Whom Does Campus Reform Target and What Are the Effects?” *Spring 2021: A New Deal for Higher Education*, American Association of University Professors, <https://www.aaup.org/article/data-snapshot-whom-does-campus-reform-target-and-what-are-effects#.YJWkm31KhTY>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ “Fullerton College affirms that Black Lives Matter and commits to an antiracist paradigm.” President’s Advisory Council, https://www.fullcoll.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Fullerton-College_AntiRacism-Statement_PAC-Oct-28.pdf.

Resolved, that the Fullerton College Faculty Senate affirms the right of faculty to exercise their full academic freedom in teaching and research, institutional governance, and matters of public concern. The privilege and responsibility of academic freedom applies to all faculty and is not diminished due to a faculty member's full-time or part-time status or their membership or perceived membership in one or more historically marginalized groups. Nor is it diminished for faculty whose scholarship exposes or challenges systemic oppression or those teaching race, class, gender, sexuality, social justice, and other topics deemed controversial;

Resolved, that Fullerton College Faculty Senate calls on the NOCCCD administration to respect and enforce its board policies *consistently* at all times. No faculty member or faculty association shall be held to board policies while others are not. Where board policy is incomplete, vague, or open to arbitrary or biased enforcement, we expect district leadership to act quickly to engage in policy revision via a transparent and inclusive process;

Resolved, that the Fullerton College Faculty Senate joins the American Association of University Professors in denouncing the ongoing threats to academic freedom and resists attempts at silencing faculty and/or restricting the exercise of their pedagogy and expertise; and

Resolved, that in response to ongoing infringements of academic freedom, we call on the Fullerton College and NOCCCD administrations to acknowledge their transgressions and to publicly reaffirm their commitment to academic freedom through formal statements and subsequent actions to protect academic freedom and cultivate a vibrant educational environment that is conducive to the free exchange of ideas and rigorous academic inquiry.