

Resolution on Civil Discourse and Academic Freedom

The principle of academic freedom ensures that both faculty and students have the space to engage in conversation and exchange views of agreement and difference within the confines of the discipline. Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the academy that ensures that the best knowledge will be created regardless of political or religious favor and is therefore a public good. It ensures that ideas are subject to critical inquiry and civil discourse and that all aspects of knowledge are subject to examination. Academic freedom also ensures that those within the academy are protected from retaliation for unpopular ideas or areas of research as long as those ideas or areas are governed by the ethics and traditions of the field of discipline. In its Statement on Core Principles, the AAUP explains 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. In short, faculty must be free to teach, engage in research, and participate in institutional governance without fear of punishment or repercussions because their legitimate academic activities are politically controversial or unpopular.”

The same principles must apply to our students, and all members of our community.

As a top tier research university, Florida State University has long been a proponent and champion of academic freedom. These ideals are enshrined in our history and our present practice. Faculty join Florida State University with the expectation that they will continue this tradition of academic integrity and inquiry. We are glad to see the Board of Governors recognize and affirm these principles in their statement on Civil Discourse. Therefore,

Be it resolved that the Faculty of Florida State University uphold and defend the ideals of academic freedom.

Reference Documents: Board of Governor’s Statement, Provost Academic Freedom Policy and AAUP Core Principles