

Faculty Council Resolution in Support of Academic Freedom and the Value of Higher Education

Synopsis: In light of recent, unprecedented attacks on Higher Education, Ohio State's elected faculty senators agreed on the importance of issuing an affirmative statement of our values around academic freedom and the value of higher education more generally. We encourage Ohio State's faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community partners to unite in defense of our institution's core mission, shared values, and academic freedoms.

WHEREAS freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of inquiry are pillars of democratic societies and central to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding; and

WHEREAS universities serve the public interest both by advancing knowledge through the open exchange of ideas and by educating the public about vital issues; and

WHEREAS the open exchange of ideas through research and education is protected at The Ohio State University and other institutions of higher education through the institutional pillars of shared governance and tenure; and

WHEREAS tenure and other important due process protections against easy dismissal support faculty's freedom of research and publication, freedom in the classroom, freedom of intramural speech (especially as pertains to shared governance within the university), and freedom of extramural speech¹; and

WHEREAS these freedoms allow faculty to faithfully execute The Ohio State University's land-grant mission of excellence in research, teaching, and outreach for the common good of Ohio and its citizens; and

¹ AAUP (1940) [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) and AAUP (nd), [Academic Freedom of Students and Professors, and Political Discrimination](#); Henry Reichman (2019) [Do Adjuncts Have Academic Freedom? or Why Tenure Matters](#).

WHEREAS since 1870 Ohio State has been dedicated to supporting “Education for Citizenship,” as inscribed on our official seal *Disciplina in civitatem*, through open debate and free discussion within distinguished academic programs; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University is dedicated to promoting Education for Citizenship through the creation of new knowledge and by nurturing mature independence of thought among our students; and

WHEREAS an understanding of democracy, the human condition, the economy, science, and the natural world are among the central components of liberal education and engaged democratic citizenship; and

WHEREAS Ohio State and other institutions of higher education play a fundamental role in ensuring the flourishing of democracy, democratic institutions and the safeguarding of constitutional rights through the transparent study of elections and other democratic practices; and

WHEREAS the humanities and humanistic social sciences at Ohio State and other higher education institutions prepare citizens for the responsibilities of life in a diverse, global society by encouraging us to think deeply about the human condition through literary, historical, philosophical and theological traditions, and through cross-cultural approaches; and

WHEREAS engagement in visual, creative, and expressive arts enhances our understanding of the range of human experiences while also promoting an awareness of societal challenges; and

WHEREAS faculty at Ohio State are actively involved in creating new forms of humanistic knowledge and cultural expression, and in making them accessible to a broad community; and

WHEREAS the development of cultural literacies and the ability to critically engage in humanistic inquiry with cultural heritage records advance our understandings of the past and present of our state, our nation, and our world; and

WHEREAS Ohio and the United States face continued problems of poverty, economic insecurity, inequality, and economic mobility; and

WHEREAS faculty at Ohio State and other institutions of higher education engage in valuable research on how to improve equality of opportunity and improve the economic lives of Ohioans and all Americans; and

WHEREAS Ohio State and other institutions of higher education are central to advancing our understanding of the natural world, including efforts to avert costly, devastating climate-generated catastrophes that impact Ohio and the United States more broadly; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University benefits Ohioans and all Americans by supporting technological innovation through basic and applied research in science, engineering, medicine and other disciplines that improve the lives and the workforces of Ohioans and the nation; and

WHEREAS research at Ohio State, including research on Alzheimer's disease, cancer, heart disease, safer cars, better road materials, food safety, bird respiratory disease, sustainable food production, ultrafast dynamics for energy and information storage, AI in manufacturing, cybersecurity, alcohol and drug misuse prevention, among others, help all Americans; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University serves Ohio communities through the provision of outreach and extension in multiple domains, including agriculture, arts, humanities, education, and human and animal health²; and

WHEREAS advancing our understanding of democratic governance, the arts and humanities, human society and behavior, and the natural world requires that faculty have the freedom to teach and debate ideas, to carry out research and publicly communicate its results, and to engage in open exchanges with students; and

WHEREAS laws which restrict faculty academic freedom to research and teach and which limit students' ability to learn undermine the important societal function of universities in producing and disseminating knowledge and in promoting democratic citizenship; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University boosts local, state and national economies² through the development of research and skilled workforces that engage critically, generate innovative ideas and solutions, and respect all people; and

WHEREAS Ohio's public institutions of higher education, including Ohio State, generate impressive returns on investments for Ohio taxpayers³.

² United for Medical Research (2025) [NIH's Role in Sustaining the US Economy](#), which reports that NIH funding contributed over \$2.6 Billion dollars to Ohio's economy last year.

³ AAU (2018) [New Study Shows Ohio's Public Universities Added \\$42 Billion in Income to State's Economy](#); and <https://iuc-ohio.org/study-shows-ohios-public-universities-delivered-68-9-billion-in-economic-impact/> IUC (2023) [Study Shows Ohio's Public Universities Delivered \\$68.9 Billion in Economic Impact](#).

THEREFORE, BE IT SO RESOLVED THAT Ohio State University’s elected faculty senators:

- Affirm that Ohio State and other higher education institutions benefit the public through education, research, and student support, contributing to national and global excellence; and
- Affirm the value and necessity of free inquiry, and faculty freedom to determine the content and methods of teaching and scholarship within their areas of content expertise; and
- Affirm that academic research and scholarship, through rigorous peer review and professional accreditation, lead to evidence-based expertise rather than partisan opinion; and
- Affirm the fundamental relationship between tenure, robust due process protections and academic freedom in ensuring that Ohio State and other institutions fulfill their obligations to fully engage in our land-grant mission and “Education for Citizenship”; and
- Condemn the harassment of faculty because they adhere to recognized professional standards and ethical practices in their fields; and
- Commit to working with our shared governance partners to strengthen those due process and contractual rights which protect the academic freedoms of all faculty; and
- Call upon Ohio State’s faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community partners to unite in defending and advancing our core mission, shared values, and academic freedoms.

Resolution passed March 18, 2025.

52 in favor; 6 opposed; 2 abstained. Participation: 60 out of 71 faculty senators.