

Synopsis:

This resolution affirms the [*1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*](#) of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Educators, not politicians, should make decisions about teaching and learning. Therefore, this resolution supports the rights and academic freedom of faculty to design courses, curriculum, and pedagogy, and to conduct related scholarly research and presenting and performing creative works. Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and other members of the executive and legislative entities misunderstand and misrepresent critical race theory and mischaracterize faculty and the educational environments we cultivate. Tenure exists to protect teaching, learning, and research/creativity from the whims of politicians regardless of their political ideologies and affiliations. This resolution affirms academic freedom is fundamental to the right of faculty and the rights of students in learning.

Rationale:

WHEREAS, the University of Houston-Downtown is a federally-designated Minority- and Hispanic-Serving Institution, which conveys a responsibility to provide a comprehensive education including the unique histories and contributions of its student populations to the social, economic, and cultural milieu of Texas, the United States, and the world; and

WHEREAS, in a state and a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ history and the policies that contributed to inequities, universities across the state of Texas not only have the opportunity, but a responsibility to help build equity and social justice; and

WHEREAS, the American Association of University Professors' [*1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*](#) affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities; and

WHEREAS, the proposal to end tenure would fundamentally change the way Texas universities operate in terms of hiring, teaching, and research/creativity and will impose challenges for all Texas universities to recruit and retain top tier researchers, scholars, and instructors from across the country and the globe; and

WHEREAS, "...every dollar spent tracking 'productivity' in order to ferret out a small handful of bad actors is one fewer dollar available to go to actual instruction;" and

WHEREAS, eliminating tenure may significantly reduce any university's ability to attract external research dollars; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN FACULTY SENATE, that we affirm the principles of academic freedom and acknowledge its import and necessity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we fully reject the brazen, politically motivated efforts to censor educators, and we recognize and support educators' right and responsibility to teach on the topics they deem appropriate and necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate stands with our colleagues in the Texas Council of Faculty Senates and other institutions of higher education in Texas who believe that matters of curriculum and instruction including matters related to racial and social justice are the purview of the faculty. We are opposed to any and all attempts to restrict or dictate the content of university curriculum and instruction on bases other than evidence-based, pedagogically-sound processes that include educators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate rejects any and all attempts to restrict or dictate tenure and faculty performance evaluations on bases other than evidence-based, pedagogically-sound processes that include educators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Faculty Senate calls upon President Blanchard and Interim Provost Uzman to affirm that they reject any attempts by entities external to the faculty to restrict or dictate the content of university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority.

¹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/just-visiting/do-nots-and-dos-when-defending-tenure>

² https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-slips-in-ranking-as-research-spending-declines/article_183a7570-6dfd-541e-b770-806ac807d9c0.html