




Arizona State University

Be the Solution



Navigating Academic Freedom and Political Pressure as an Academic Leader

Elizabeth Lightfoot
Director & Foundation Professor
Arizona State University
Liz.Lightfoot@asu.edu
[@Liz_Lightfoot](https://twitter.com/Liz_Lightfoot)

Session



Free Speech/First Amendment

Academic Freedom

NASW Code of Ethics

What's a leader to do?

Two Short Stories



Story #1: Fire the Senator?



Story #2: Professor Watchlist



First Amendment





**“Congress shall make
no law . . . abridging the
freedom of speech. . .”**

*“...four essential freedoms of a
university”*

*to determine for itself on academic
grounds who may teach, what may be
taught, how it shall be taught, and who
may be admitted to it”*

First Amendment

**Applies to PUBLIC
INSTITUTIONS ONLY**

Other similar protections

Applies to all employees

Covers:

**Speech of Professors in
the Classroom**

How Professors Teach

Extramural Speech

Extramural Association

Rationale:

Democratic and
Egalitarian -- it is
not what is
helpful/harmful - or
even what is the
truth

... if you can justify
censuring others,
those EXACT
weapons can be
used against you

Free Speech Zones



Opposed by:

Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)

Goldwater Institute

ACLU



Disinviting Controversial Speakers

NO FREE SPEECH, NO I HAVE A DREAM.

Without the First Amendment, this historic American speech would never have happened. Freedom of speech gives every American a voice. Whether it's gun rights or gay rights, pro-choice or pro-life, our calls for change depend on our right to speak freely. It's because of free speech that we're all free to share our dreams.



www.thefire.org

Goldwater Institute: Model Bill

- Nullifies restrictive speech codes
- Prevents disinviting speakers
- Disciplinary sanctions for students/others who interfere with free-speech rights
- Allows for financial compensation for those whose free-speech rights have been infringed upon
- Affirms that universities out to be neutral and promote widest range of opinion/dialogue
- Publicize the free expression policy
- Requires yearly reports

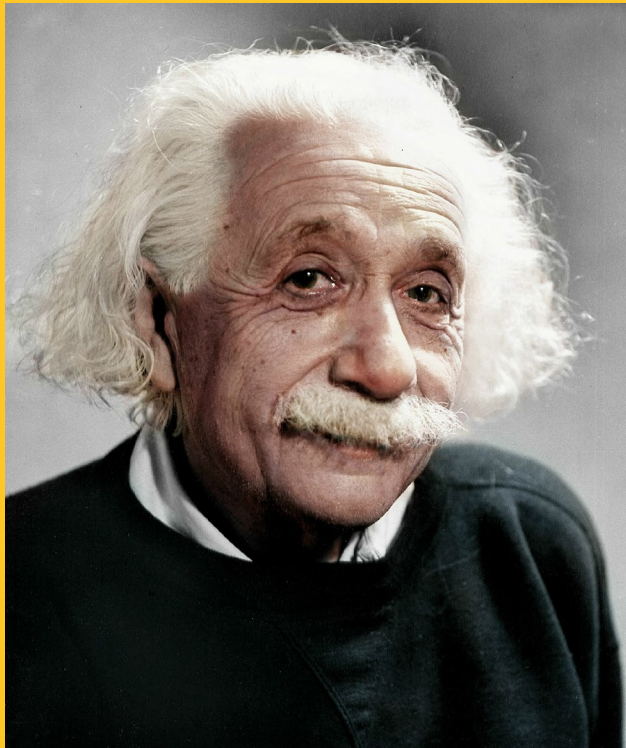
AAUP:
“Campus free-speech laws and academic freedom are false friends”

Academic Freedom



1940 Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure

Endorsed by the **Council of Social Work Education** in 1967



“By academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right implies also a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true. It is evident that any restriction of academic freedom acts in such a way as to hamper the dissemination of knowledge among people and thereby impedes rational judgment and action.” Einstein – 20 year AAUP Member

Academic Freedom

- **Teaching:** freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom;
- **Research:** freedom to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression and to publish the results of such work;
- **Intramural speech:** freedom from institutional censorship or discipline when speaking or writing as participants in the governance of an educational institution; and
- **Extramural speech:** freedom from institutional censorship or discipline when speaking or writing as citizens.

Who has Academic Freedom?

All Faculty Members – including tenured, tenure-track/probationary faculty, part-time faculty and teaching assistants

Qualifications?

Academic freedom means that faculty are free to engage in the PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT forms of inquiry and teaching that are necessary for the purposes of the university

Controversial topics and methods are alright IF they are related to the subject!

Extramural Speech?

“Faculty members to be free from institutional censorship or discipline when they speak or write as citizens, but they also impose special obligations. When speaking on public matters, faculty should strive to be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show appropriate respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.”

The Chicago Statement

“All members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn,” and makes clear that “it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.”

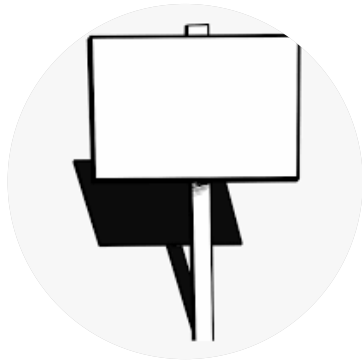
<https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/reports/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>

Adopted by 83 university/university systems

Threats to Academic Freedom?



Donors/Board/
Strings Attached



Community



State Legislatures
Laws



Harassment



Procedural
Protections

Review of the Differences....

First Amendment

- Individual rights
- Only applies to government institutions
- All speech is equal
- Protection from the government
- Extends to some parts of academic freedom

Academic Freedom

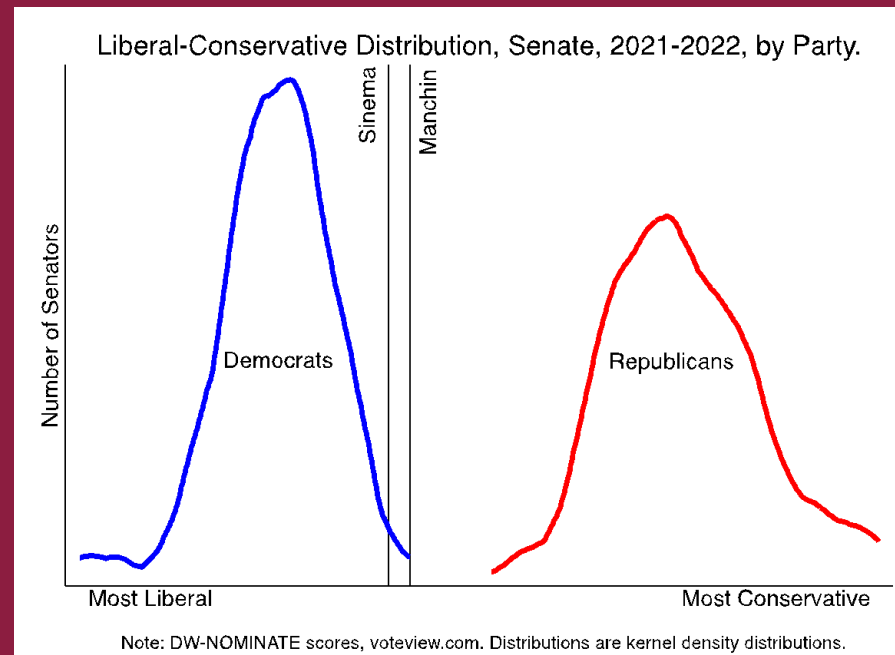
- Collective rights
- Endorsed by groups of scholars/universities
- Regulated by groups of scholars
- Inequality of status between ideas/methods – progress of knowledge
- Protection from Meddlers
- Some parts of academic freedom protected in governmental institutions

NASW Code of Ethics?



NASW – 6.04 (a)

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.



NASW – Civil Liberties and Social Justice. Approved by *NASW Delegate Assembly, August 1999.*

“The test of civil liberties is not how people treat others who express only majority opinions; it is how we treat what Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes called the “opinions we loathe” (cited in Glasser, 1991, p. 12). Dissent is a critical part of the process of democratic dialogue and an integral component of social change. The right to dissent, embodied most clearly in the First Amendment of the Constitution, is perhaps the most precious of civil liberties.”



What's a Leader to Do?



Some Ideas?



Learn



**Commit to
Academic
Freedom**



**Provide
Support**



**Teachable
Moments**



Some Ideas?



**Anticipate/
Respond**



Thick Skin



Consult



Be Bold!



Discussion/Questions

Do you have experiences with free speech/ academic freedom in your school? What did you do?

How do we protect free expression, inclusion, and the open exchange of ideas at our colleges and universities, while also keeping social work values at the forefront of schools of social work?

A silhouette of a person with a large afro hairstyle stands with their back to the camera, raising their right hand in a 'rock on' or 'Liz' hand gesture. They are positioned in front of a city skyline at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon creating a bright orange glow. The person is wearing a tank top and pants. The city skyline in the background includes several buildings of varying heights, some with distinctive architectural features like a curved roofline on the left. The overall mood is one of freedom and celebration.

Resource List:
links.asu.edu/Liz

