



November 20, 2024

Dear Senators,

I am pleased to provide a brief report on developments since our last meeting on October 29th.

1. Academic Freedom

A number of faculty who are concerned about what the future may hold. I am pleased to say that I can provide some words of reassurance: I have no indication that there will be any changes to the ability of faculty and students to engage in the research and teaching at the heart of LSU's academic mission at this time. Senate leadership remains steadfast in our support of academic freedom and I believe that our administration shares our commitment. If at any time you feel that your ability to engage in scholarship has been infringed upon please let us know and we will pursue all available options, including a possible referral to our Faculty Adjudication Committee, to investigate the situation and seek redress if appropriate.

Our ability to advocate for faculty is strengthened when a case is clearly covered by the principles of academic freedom, the parameters of which are sometimes misunderstood. One of the foundational documents defining academic freedom is the American Association of University Professor's (AAUP) [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#). A useful [FAQ on Academic Freedom](#) on the AAUP website summarizes the main elements as follows:

- **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 addressing matters of institutional policy or action; and
- **Extramural speech:** freedom from institutional censorship or discipline when speaking or writing as citizens.

The AAUP also highlights some limitations on academic freedom. The website states that when speaking on public matters, "faculty members 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." Additionally, the 1940 statement cautions that while faculty are free to discuss their subject in the classroom, they "should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter *which has no relation to their subject*". (14, emphasis added)

