

Resolution to Request an Annual University Report on Academic Freedom

Whereas: the Cornell faculty welcome students with diverse backgrounds from across the globe to pursue world-class education opportunities without obstruction on the basis of legally protected status;

Whereas: the Cornell Faculty Senate affirms that freedoms to engage in research and scholarship, to teach and to learn, to express oneself and to be heard, and to assemble and to protest, peacefully and lawfully, are essential to the function of the university, even for ideas some may consider wrong or offensive;

Whereas: faculty, students, and staff of Cornell University are entitled to due process, according to Cornell policies, with clear and fair procedures to draw conclusions and inform decisions at times when allegations of misconduct, harassment, and/or discrimination places them in potential violation of Cornell policies;

Whereas: a functioning university depends on the transparency, trust, clarity, consistency, and cooperation that derives from shared governance, where faculty have access to information, involvement in matters of concern to them, the authority to examine these issues and make recommendations, and to question all sanctions (dismissals, warnings, reprimands, course cancellations, etc.), as “guardian[s] of academic values against unjustified assaults from its own members,” per the the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommendations;

Whereas: in the case of the "Resolution Condemning the Cancellation of Professor Eric Cheyfitz's Classes and Threats of Further Severe Disciplinary Action", the Faculty Senate discussion and resulting vote revealed low trust by a substantial number of faculty in the reliability of the University's disciplinary procedures and the implementation of those procedures by the University Administration;

Be it therefore resolved that the Faculty Senate requests that the University Administration strengthen trust in the university's processes without disclosing confidential information by publishing an annual university transparency report on academic freedom. Such a report would disclose the number of external requests and internal disciplinary proceedings that involve the University Administration regarding faculty, student, and staff speech and behavior. The report would also include aggregate counts of incidents by group (faculty, student, and staff) across types of protected action (speech, behavior, etc.) and stage of disciplinary proceedings (complaint, investigation, resolution, appeal, etc.).

Draft resolution proposed by:

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