

FAS Senate
AN ELECTED BODY OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES
YALE UNIVERSITY

October 17, 2021
Senate of the Yale Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Resolution to Establish a University Policy that Respects Academic Freedom
Approved by the FAS Senate on October 28, 2021

WHEREAS, the Senate of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Yale University (FAS) was established as an elected representative body by a vote of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences;

WHEREAS, academic freedom is defined by the American Association of University Professors as “the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher education to investigate and discuss the issues in his or her academic field, and to teach or publish findings without interference from political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities”;

WHEREAS, the 1975 Woodward report established principles that promote freedom of expression at Yale;

WHEREAS, the influence of political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities on specific curriculum, faculty hiring, and the direction of research may pose threats to academic freedom;

WHEREAS, the Yale Faculty Handbook lacks specific policies to protect academic freedom from the influence of political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities;

WHEREAS, events in recent years have highlighted concerns regarding adverse influences on faculty activities, for example by financial donors;

THEREFORE, the FAS Senate of Yale University resolves as follows:

RESOLVED, that the University establish an ad hoc committee of faculty with wide representation and advised by staff with expertise in gift agreements and other areas relating to academic freedom, to survey existing University commitments that may restrict academic freedom (such as donor agreements), to recommend policies that protect academic freedom, and to establish an appeals process with faculty representation, all to be incorporated into the Faculty Handbook.