

# Know Your Rights!

## Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is the freedom of an individual who is an expert in a specific academic discipline and employed in that capacity by an academic institution to use their substantive academic judgment as a disciplinary expert in determining what to research and how to teach their classes.

The gold standard authority on academic freedom is the [American Association of University Professor's 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#). The Statement is incorporated by reference into Article IV of both the [TT unit collective bargaining agreement \(CBA\)](#) and the [FTNTT unit CBA](#), allowing KSUFA to defend the academic freedom of faculty represented by KSUFA through the contractual grievance process.

The 1940 Statement is also incorporated by reference into [University Policy 6-17 regarding faculty code of professional ethics](#) and serves as the University's definition of 'academic freedom'. Section A of that policy states:

*"Within the rationale in the AAUP statement, it is emphasized that academic freedom is necessary to the mission of the faculty of a university, since it is eminently in the interest of society that, without fear of retribution, the professor should be free to conduct research and make public its results and to teach [their] subject in the classroom. Professional responsibility is a logical correlative of this freedom."*

Among the professional responsibilities that are the correlative of academic freedom acknowledged in the 1940 statement is that faculty *"should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject."* A comment on the Statement formally added by AAUP in 1970 clarifies that:

*"The intent of this statement is not to discourage what is 'controversial.' Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster. The passage serves to underscore the need for teachers to avoid persistently intruding material which has no relation to their subject."*

Additionally, a series of court cases has established a relationship between academic freedom and the First Amendment freedom of expression. See especially, *Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234 (1957) and *Keyishian v. Board of Regents*, 385 U.S. 589 (1967).

- **Nothing in state law (including in the text of SB 1) limits your academic freedom.** In fact, several sections of SB 1 carve out exemptions for academic freedom (see ORC 3345.0217.B.5, 3345.0217.B.7, 3345.0217.D.1, and 3345.453.E).

**Contact KSUFA at (330) 673-9118 or [office@ksufa.org](mailto:office@ksufa.org), if you have been summonsed to a meeting to discuss your research or course content by a University administrator and/or believe that your academic freedom rights have been abridged or chilled by an administrator.**