

MEMO

To: Executive Committee
From: FPAC Charge S-2115-1 working group
Date: 12/13/24
Re: Status report on Senate charge S-2115-1 on Academic Freedom

Following conversation with the remaining working group dedicated to examining this charge, it is our recommendation that the charge assigned to FPAC be suspended or revised.

The charge was originally assigned back in 2022 or 2023 at a time when a Rutgers professor (Prof. Audrey Truschke) was undergoing a very serious case of academic freedom (and broader professional and personal) threat, and there was interest in understanding how the university was responding – and how it generally does respond, through established policies and practices – to academic freedom threats to its faculty. Since then, the university (and higher education more broadly) has navigated an extensive and intensive set of challenges related to academic freedom. Examples of such developments include how Rutgers and other universities respond to student protests (like the spring encampments), and to activism by varied student and multi-constituent interest/advocacy groups and to faculty engagement of them; and “free expression” guidelines that have been newly devised by administrations at Rutgers and other universities. We believe that continuing to work on the charge as is would not adequately incorporate those newer developments, and ask for the EC to review the charge and either revise/update its call for investigation or table it.