

Rutgers University Senate Resolution in Support of Academic Freedom and Free Expression

WHEREAS the values of academic freedom in teaching, research, and learning; freedom of expression for all members of the Rutgers community; and the integrity of scholarly inquiry are central to Rutgers University’s mission and are affirmed in University Policy 60.5.1 (“Academic Freedom”) and related Rutgers statements on academic freedom and professional ethics¹; and

WHEREAS Rutgers affirms academic freedom for faculty, students, and staff “whenever and wherever they engage in teaching, research, service, or the dissemination of knowledge,” subject to standards of professional competence and ethics, and states that faculty “shall be free from institutional discipline in the exercise of [First Amendment] rights” as private citizens²; and

WHEREAS Rutgers President Tate has echoed the University’s affirmation, emphasizing that “Academic freedom and freedom of speech are foundational to the university”³; and

WHEREAS A faculty member in the Department of History at Rutgers-New Brunswick, has been targeted by a Rutgers student organization, which launched a petition calling for his dismissal based on disagreement with the political content of his scholarship and public engagement; and

WHEREAS this campaign has created widespread concern among Rutgers faculty and governance bodies about institutional support for academic freedom and free expression under intensifying political pressure, as well as threats to any Rutgers faculty and their family’s safety; and

WHEREAS the Rutgers University Senate has previously resolved that the University “take more proactive and effective measures to prevent members of the Rutgers community from being doxxed and harassed for exercising their right to free speech, and to protect those who have already been targeted”⁴; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Rutgers University Senate affirms its strong support for academic freedom and freedom of expression, in accordance with Rutgers policy and the principles of free inquiry that undergird the University’s mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Senate calls on President Tate and his leadership to:

- Publicly reaffirm the University’s unwavering commitment to academic freedom, free expression, and the open exchange of ideas; and
- Clearly communicate to the Rutgers community and the public that disagreement with the political, scholarly, or personal viewpoints expressed by faculty, staff, or students – absent any violation of law or University policy – shall not constitute grounds for disciplinary action or institutional disavowal.

¹ <https://free-expression.rutgers.edu/academic-freedom> and <https://free-expression.rutgers.edu/professional-ethics-statement>.

² <https://free-expression.rutgers.edu/professional-ethics-statement>

³ <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/education/2025/09/02/william-tate-iv-rutgers-university-president/85831442007/>

⁴ <https://senate.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Senate-Resolution-on-Doxxing-FINAL-ADOPTED.pdf>