

**UTSA Faculty Senate *Statement on Academic Freedom***  
April 2022

**WHEREAS** the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities;

**WHEREAS** state legislative proposals are being considered in Texas and across the United States that seek to end tenure and curtail academic discussions of racism, Critical Race Theory, gender, sexuality, and related issues in public colleges and universities;

**WHEREAS** the American Association of University Professors ([AAUP](#)) has defined tenure as “an indefinite appointment that can be terminated only for cause or under extraordinary circumstances” and further clarified that the principal purpose of tenure is “to safeguard academic freedom, which is necessary for all who teach and conduct research in higher education. When faculty members [of all ranks] can lose their positions because of their speech, publications, or research findings, they cannot properly fulfill their core responsibilities to advance and transmit knowledge. Tenure provides the conditions for faculty to pursue research and innovation and draw evidence-based conclusions free from corporate or political pressure”;

**WHEREAS** faculty should primarily determine academic policy at their universities, as stated in the AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1967) and the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System Rule [40101](#);

**WHEREAS** the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System upholds faculty freedom in research and in the classroom ([Rule 31004](#));

**WHEREAS:** The AAUP has [called for](#) the protection of all instructors, including graduate students, who teach about Critical Race Theory (CRT) and those who apply CRT frameworks in their teaching, and has affirmed that “Critical race theory is a well-established academic discipline employed by scholars in many different fields,” including, but not limited to, Art and Art History, Biology, Business, Education, Engineering, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Geography, Languages and Literatures, Math, Medical Humanities, Physics, and Political Science. As defined by the American Bar Association, CRT names the social construction of race, the institutionalization of racism, the hierarchized organization of identity according to race, and the uneven access to and distribution of resources according to race;

**WHEREAS** the University of Texas at San Antonio, a Hispanic Serving Institution, has approved an [Inclusivity Statement](#) that affirms the university’s commitment to “ending generations of discrimination and inequity”;

**WHEREAS** the University of Texas at San Antonio supports a program of inclusive excellence that “seeks to promote an inclusive community of learners, an awareness and appreciation of multicultural perspectives, and the establishment of policies, practices, programs, and resources designed to embrace and support diversity”;

**WHEREAS** the University of Texas at San Antonio’s [Core Values](#) seek to “encourage an environment of dialogue and discovery, where integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect,

collaboration and innovation are fostered”;

**WHEREAS** over seventy organizations, including the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), issued the [Joint Statement on Legislative Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History](#) (June 16, 2021) stating their “firm opposition to a spate of legislative proposals being introduced across the country that target academic lessons, presentations, and discussions of racism and related issues in American history in schools, colleges and universities . . . In higher education, under principles of academic freedom that have been widely endorsed, professors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Educators, not politicians, should make decisions about teaching and learning”;

**WHEREAS** in a nation that has for centuries struggled with issues of racial inequity and injustice, many students do not have adequate knowledge of the policies that contributed to inequities, the University of Texas at San Antonio has a responsibility and opportunity to help foster equity and social justice and build its students’ capacity to address the continued income disparities, stark segregation, and unequal educational attainment levels that shape its home city;

**Resolutions:**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate the content of university curriculum, including regarding pedagogies integral to Critical Race Theory.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate supports the academic freedom of all tenured, tenure-track, and fixed-term faculty as well as graduate instructors to teach without fear of censorship or reprisal.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate affirms that teaching with the tenets of CRT, teaching the histories of colonialism and race, and teaching all topics and theories pertaining to gender and sexuality are protected by academic freedom and free speech.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate recognizes that the teaching of issues of social justice, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, diversity, and inclusion is in fact vital to the university’s goal of ending generations of discrimination and inequity through education.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate regards itself a body of educators and leaders who take seriously their responsibility to model for students the need to act against the suppression of the academic and intellectual freedoms that are codified in UT Rule 31004, “Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members.”

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Texas at San Antonio Faculty Senate stands with our members and colleagues in K-12 education, including students of the University of Texas at San Antonio, who may be affected by legislation that attempts to censor the teaching of issues of social justice, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, diversity, and inclusion.