

APPROVED BY SENATE

04/28/2025

RS.25.02

April 28, 2025

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

PRE-FILED RESOLUTION

(Final; Action)

RS.25.02 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate Resolution in Defense of the Core Mission, Values, and Academic Freedom of U.S. Higher Education

We are at a critical moment for higher education in the United States. The core values that define our institutions—and shape how we educate, conduct research, and serve the public—are increasingly under threat. As faculty, students, and staff at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, we stand united in our commitment to educating new generations for life in a complex world, to freedom of expression, shared governance, rigorous research, and nondiscrimination. These values are essential to our mission and vital to the public good.

Faculty governance leaders from institutions within the Big Ten Academic Alliance and beyond have collaboratively prepared a [Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Shared Values of Higher Education in the United States of America](#). This statement calls upon faculty, students, staff, alumni, community partners, and other supporters of our universities to unite in defense of the core mission, values, and academic freedoms that define U.S. higher education. The Statement reads, in part:

Private and public higher education institutions in the United States have for over three centuries contributed to the public good, and the nation's global leadership position, through the advancement and sharing of knowledge, and by providing pathways for workforce development.

Research funding in universities is judiciously used to drive innovation, providing an exceptional return on investment that advances economic growth, health and well-being, scientific breakthroughs, national security, and cultural and civic development. Academic research and scholarly expertise are also vital to excellent teaching and training, ensuring that the U.S. workforce of the future remains globally competitive.

Higher education in the United States continuously sets standards for international excellence and attracts students and colleagues from all over the world. The contributions of international scholars, staff, and students to U.S. higher education are integral to its leadership position.

U.S. higher education's global excellence and public impact require working and learning environments that ensure opportunities for all. Initiatives that reduce discrimination are part of that imperative.

- I. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate reaffirms its commitment to the University's core mission, consistent with its land grant status, *"to enhance the lives of citizens in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world through our leadership in learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development."* The Senate further pledges to collaborate with any individuals and groups who share this mission and to vigorously advocate for the rights, well-being, and academic freedom of the University's students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University community and the public we serve. We recognize that threats to higher education are, in effect, threats to this specific mission and hence to our efforts to improve the lives of citizens in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world.
- II. In keeping with the [Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Shared Values of Higher Education in the United States of America](#), the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate affirms the following principles in solidarity with other universities:¹

Affirmations

- A. Public and private universities serve the public good and are essential to the U.S.'s national and global excellence, through teaching, research, and service.
- B. Cuts to research funding in higher education undermine scientific innovation, health, societal progress, and the U.S.'s leadership position, with long-lasting detrimental consequences.
- C. Academic scholarship and research, through rigorous peer review and professional accreditation, lead to evidence-based expertise, not partisan viewpoints.
- D. We uphold the right to academic freedom and free speech and protect those who exercise these rights, whether they be citizens or non-citizens.
- E. We oppose the targeted harassment of faculty members based on their scholarly work.
- F. We support the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right of people to peaceably assemble. All community members who engage in peaceful assembly, regardless of viewpoint or citizenship status, should have the opportunity to do so without retaliation.
- G. We agree with the Department of Education that discrimination based on race, color, or national origin (Title VI), sex (Title IX), and disability (ADA) is reprehensible, and affirm our legal and moral obligation as educational institutions not to discriminate based on these or other identifying characteristics. Initiatives that help to reduce such discrimination, when grounded in best practice, increase opportunities and ensure real

meritocracy for all.

- H. We affirm the critical role of transparent and collaborative shared governance in maintaining the integrity of our universities, and commit to its continued strengthening.

III. Furthermore, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Senate calls for the University President, Chancellor, Provost, and Board of Trustees to defend the core mission, values, and academic freedom of the University and of higher education. Specifically, the Senate offers its full support to the University and System administration when it engages in efforts to:²

Calls to Action

1. Defend the ideals of higher education and the specific mission of our University.
2. Resist and, when necessary, legally challenge any unlawful directives that threaten academic freedom or university self-governance.
3. Ensure that no academic unit, program, or shared governance structure is reorganized or eliminated in response to political pressures.
4. Endeavor to protect funded research at UIUC from budget cuts, not only by continuing to engage in appropriate legal challenges, but also by seeking resources to provide financial assistance to any affected scholars, students, and research units.
5. Defend the rights to free speech on campus, including by support to any member of our university community who is at risk of any government infringement of this right.
6. Continue to collaborate purposefully and proactively with other universities and organizations of higher learning leadership in collective defense of these shared values.

We stand united in this mission and offer our full support to the University's leadership as it continues to pursue these goals. We look forward to working together to uphold the integrity and excellence of higher education.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angela Lyons, Agricultural and Consumer Economics (ACES Faculty Senator)

William Maher, Library (LIBR Faculty Senator)

¹ The *Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Shared Values of Higher Education in the United States of America* was a resolution collaboratively written by faculty governance leaders of universities in the Big Ten Academic Alliance. It does not belong to the Big Ten or any member institution, and is open for any faculty governance body to [endorse](#). It was inspired by the 2/19/25 [resolution](#) passed by the Faculty Senate of the University of Virginia, "Resolution on External Challenges to Faculty Roles and Responsibilities."

² In our calls for action, we were inspired by the 4/15/25 [Yale Faculty Letter](#), prepared by the Yale Faculty of Arts and Sciences–School of Engineering and Applied Science (FAS-SEAS) [Faculty Senate](#) and the Yale chapter of the American Association of University Professors ([AAUP Yale](#)). The letter calls on Yale's leadership to stand in solidarity with faculty in defending the rights to free expression, association, and academic freedom.