

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE
(Final; Information)

AF.26.04 2025-2026 Annual Report of the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure

This report summarizes the activities of the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (AF) during the 2025-2026 academic year. AF held three meetings during the fall 2025 semester (September 10, October 8, November 12) and three meetings during the spring 2026 semester (February 4, March 4, April 1). More detailed information is provided in the minutes of those meetings.

I. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA

AF.26.01, Revised Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarly Activities (OT-393)

AF sent comments to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) on this proposed policy. In comments, AF:

- noted the sentence “Nothing in this policy diminishes or replaces the procedural rights of Institutional Members under the University of Illinois *Statutes*.” and concluded that the policy contained nothing obnoxious to academic freedom as a result;
- summarized, out of an abundance of caution, those procedural rights referred to in the *Statutes*;
- noted that no penalty applied to a member of the academic staff under this policy could meet or exceed what is specified for severe sanctions short of dismissal in the *Statutes*, Article IX.6 without a threat to academic freedom;
- noted an instance of what appeared to be careless policy making, viz, " A Respondent’s failure to provide Research Records documenting the questioned Research is Evidence of Research Misconduct where the Respondent possesses the records but refuses to provide them upon request", which does not deal with the case where the respondent may not legally provide these records.

AF.26.02, Proposed Revision to the *Statutes*, Article II, Sections 3a(1) and 3a(2) – Faculty Role in Governance (ST-91)

AF sent comments to SEC on this proposed revision. In comments, AF:

- noted that the proposed definition of "faculty" in II.3(a)1 does not affect X.2(a) and X.2(d) protections which extend to "academic staff";

- noted that the main effect of the proposed definition of faculty is that persons who are now "faculty" but were not previously "faculty" are now covered by IX.6, which describes severe sanctions short of dismissal;
- noted IX.12 covers dismissal of academic staff with multi-year appointments, and sharply limits the available causes for dismissal. A difficulty might arise in the case of persons who had previously not been "faculty", but became "faculty", and were also on multi-year appointments. The difficulty occurs if dismissal was available under IX.12 for such persons as a penalty for an activity that could not result in severe sanctions short of dismissal. AF does not believe this difficulty is present.

AF.26.03, Ninth Senate Review Commission Request for Committee Feedback from the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure

A request from the Ninth Senate Review Commission (SR9) was received to provide feedback on AF's charge, composition, and function. AF responded to the request on March 16, 2026.

II. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE

AF.25.03, First Amendment/Academic Freedom Portal

AF has taken no further action since the 2024-2025 Annual Report.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE
 David Forsyth, Chair
 Ibrahim Anwar
 Chung-Yi Chiu
 Michael Gergeni
 William Maher
 Ann Reisner
 Charles Roseman
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