

Shawnee State University

Ohio Faculty Council



Shawnee State University Resolution on Senate Bill 24

Summary: The SSU Faculty Senate opposes SB-24 in its current form. As written, the bill has the potential to chill the free exchange of ideas in the classroom. However, the principle of protecting academic freedom of all faculty and students in higher ed, both public and private by legislation has merit and should be discussed by faculty and students as well as the public at large.

Whereas, the principle of academic freedom is vital to the health of the University and to society at large;

Whereas, there are many threats to academic freedom that have arisen both from within the University itself and also from outside the University;

Whereas, there is at present little real protection of academic freedom for untenured faculty and adjunct faculty at many public and private institutions;

Whereas, not all private institutions of higher education recognize and uphold the principles of academic freedom;

Whereas, the open consideration, debate and discussion of some ideas will of necessity be deemed at one point or another by some people in society as unpatriotic, treasonous, racist, sexist, egalitarian, inegalitarian, excessively "liberal", or excessively "conservative" and thus threatening to the considerations of "decent" people and the moral fabric of society;

Whereas, the principle of academic freedom must also be accompanied by a commitment to responsibility to uphold scholarly and scientific standards of inquiry when considering multiple viewpoints;

Whereas, SB-24 purports to protect academic freedom;

Whereas, SB-24 as written mandates inclusion of all viewpoints in the Social Sciences and Humanities regardless of scholarly or scientific standing;

Whereas, curricular needs and limited time often do not allow for assigning all viewpoints on a subject matter in a given discipline in all classes with equal time and consideration;

Whereas, curricular decisions are best left to the collegial consultation of faculty, administrators, University and College Boards, and the Board of Regents;

Whereas, SB-24 as written would in all likelihood open the door to frivolous lawsuits against faculty whose views offend anyone on any grounds;

Be it Resolved, We the Faculty Senate of Shawnee State University oppose SB-24 and believe that rather than expanding the scope for open discussion and free exchange of ideas, SB-24 will have the opposite effect and will result in chilling the open discussion and free exchange of ideas. We urge that SB-24 be withdrawn and that subsequent attempts to protect academic freedom by legislation be considered more carefully prior to being reintroduced.
