

University of Akron

Ohio Faculty Council



Resolution in Opposition to Senate Bill 24

The University of Akron Faculty Senate

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 24, also sometimes described as an "academic bill of rights," has been introduced into the 126th session of the Ohio General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty of the University of Akron has long respected research and scholarship in all disciplines, and

WHEREAS, study and discussion of historic and accepted theories balanced by critique and discussion of evolving viewpoints, helps advance both the education of students and general advancement of knowledge that is essential to the economic well-being of the State of Ohio, and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 24, if adopted into law, could impose serious and unnecessary restrictions on the methods of teaching, research, and grading used by college and university faculty; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 24 contains language so vague that it is likely to invite the official encouragement and support of student disrespect for the instructor's role as their mentor and the facilitator of serious scholarly inquiry in the classroom, a role that by definition requires professors to regularly, even persistently, introduce students to dissenting views and controversial issues; and

WHEREAS, portions of Senate Bill 24 recognize the importance of academic freedom, other portions include language that could be interpreted as providing administrators or legislators the power to determine for instructors how to examine controversial scholarly debates relevant to their fields of expertise, which contradicts earlier portions of the bill seeking to protect academic freedom by providing "a learning environment in which the students have access to a broad range of serious scholarly opinion" through the fostering of a plurality of serious scholarly methodologies and perspectives;" and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 24 is superfluous because the student rights that it purports to guarantee are already protected by the University of Akron Administrative Code, Rule 3359-42-01, Student Rights and Responsibilities; by the Ohio and United States Constitutions; and by the United States Supreme Court decision in *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* (1967); and

WHEREAS, there is a long accepted ethical standard for academic freedom, promulgated in 1940 and 1970 statements by the national, professional association, the American Association of University Professors, which this body endorses and recommends to all concerned;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate of The University of Akron opposes Senate Bill 24 and urges the Ohio General Assembly to reject it;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be provided to the Ohio Faculty Council, to the Faculty Senate or similar body of every institution of higher education within Ohio and to the appropriate Ohio legislators.

Adopted:

Dr. Rudy Fenwick, Chair Mrs. Rose Marie Konet, Faculty Senate Secretary Faculty Senate The University of Akron Date: February 17, 2005
