

University of Missouri AAUP Resolution on Student Disciplinary Proceedings and Academic Freedom

May 18, 2021

Whereas on April 19th and 29th, 2021, MU students assembled in public university spaces to peacefully protest attempts by the university administration to restructure the Social Justice Centers without engaging or actively involving faculty, staff, or students in decision-making processes;

Whereas protestors were challenging administrative decisions made without regard for the principles and practices of shared governance;

Whereas the administration's decision to restructure the Social Justice Centers threatens to disrupt services vital to underrepresented and diverse students, and to compromise ongoing efforts to increase access and inclusion;

Whereas the University of Missouri Office of Student Accountability and Support has initiated disciplinary proceedings against these students as well as students not present at the protests;

Whereas “the University of Missouri is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters,” and is “uncompromising in its efforts to provide all members of the University’s academic enterprise the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn” (from “[Free Expression at Mizzou](#)”);

Whereas the University of Missouri Faculty Council has in a formal resolution (of May 6, 2021) called upon the university administration to:

- exempt student demonstrators from disciplinary procedures that would impede their careers;
- hold public meetings as soon as possible to allow dialogue about the Social Justice Centers and campus climate; and
- interpret existing Free Speech rules equitably, with full regard for power asymmetries between students and university administrators; and

Whereas, furthermore, it is the mission of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to advance academic freedom and shared governance, and the purpose of the University of Missouri AAUP chapter to defend academic freedom at the University of Missouri and throughout academe;

Be it resolved that the AAUP endorses the Faculty Council’s resolution; and joins Council in affirming the right of free expression and freedom of assembly, and reminds University leadership of its obligation to fairly implement policies and guard the rights of all persons, including those critical of administrative decisions, to voice opinions without reprisal.