

**Resolution of the
Faculty of the
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Florida
November 15, 2021**

The UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) Faculty Council, like every other faculty governance body at the university, is deeply disturbed by the continued revelations that ordinary administrative procedures regarding outside activities, curriculum and other academic matters, community health, and other issues pertinent to shared governance have been distorted by direct or indirect political interference.

The Faculty of the CLAS expresses its unequivocal and unwavering support for our colleagues who put their own careers in jeopardy to bring nationwide attention to this interference. We express equally clear and resolute support for efforts by our colleagues in the Faculty Senate, UFF, and other faculty bodies to insulate and protect our academic freedom from undue external influence. This includes efforts by the UF Faculty Senate and UFF to advocate for an outside body to conduct an investigation.

We reaffirm our commitment to the values of academic freedom and free speech, curriculum development and academic independence, and specifically to the rights of students, faculty, and staff to express their thoughts without fear of direct or indirect reprisal. A similar reaffirmation by UF administration would constitute an important step in restoring faith and confidence in shared governance, as well as demonstrating UF's commitment to protecting academic freedom to the broader public. Policy changes that do not address the need for a firewall between decision-makers and outside influence will not be sufficient. It is necessary to establish the independence of the university from outside political pressure on all issues, not simply on questions of paid outside work.

We ask the Dean's Office to redouble its efforts to restore mutual trust between faculty and the College Administration by communicating in a transparent manner (and inviting faculty input on) the process for arriving at important decisions affecting CLAS faculty and the college.

Finally, we express serious concerns about both the complete absence of CLAS representation and the predominance of administrators on the newly formed Task Force on Conflicts of Interest charged with establishing clearer and more appropriate guidelines for *Faculty* who offer their professional expertise in public service in the state of Florida. The reputational damage that UF continues to suffer is not a result of particular outside activities by faculty, but of the failure by UF administration to sufficiently insulate **decisions** about those activities from outside interference. Policy changes that do not address the need for a firewall between decision-makers and outside influence will not be sufficient.

Thus, CLAS faculty call for:

- UF administration, including CLAS Dean's office, to reaffirm commitment to ensuring academic freedom, curricular development and academic independence, free speech, and shared governance.

- Transparent communication from CLAS administration in processes of decision-making regarding outside activities, academic freedom, curricular development and academic independence, free speech, and shared governance.
- UF Administration to demonstrate this reaffirmed commitment by making policy changes that erect a firewall between decision-makers who are UF employees and outside influence.
- “The University of Florida Administration to invite an external and independent evaluation to ensure the separation of the University of Florida from outside groups in academic matters and in governance, particularly federal or state governments but also industry and other external interest groups with a report to be presented to the University of Florida Faculty Senate within the 2021-2022 academic year.”
- A CLAS faculty member representative to be appointed to the President’s Task Force on Conflicts of Interest.