

NU-AAUP Opposes NU Interim Speech Restrictions

The Northwestern Chapter of the AAUP supports all student, faculty and staff persons' peaceful assembly and speech. We condemn the egregious infractions of norms of academic freedom and shared governance that Northwestern's administration has recently enacted. President Schill's policy amendment, the so-called "Interim Policy for Student Demonstrations and Other Expressive Activities on the Evanston Campus," brazenly undermines academic speech and shared governance. Indeed, Schill advocates protocols seemingly designed to subvert the mission of education. To date nothing has been reported about the current protests on our campus that warrant this interim policy. It has been released in a rushed way without transparency and deprived the faculty an opportunity to review. To our knowledge, Schill did not even consult the Advisory Committee on Free Expression and Institutional Speech that he personally convened. We believe the FULL Faculty Senate should convey the policy to their department colleagues and then debate and discuss these changes in an emergency session.

Now is not the time to suppress debate, discussion, and protest about some of the most pressing and important issues facing us as a university and nation. We strongly support national AAUP president Dr. Irene Mulvey's recent statement: "Higher education is premised on full and free discussion and debate of all ideas. Summoning armed police officers in order to silence debate and suppress speech that poses no genuine threat to campus safety is a danger to democracy.... Our goal should be a robust exchange of ideas, open dialogue, and communication in service of knowledge and understanding for the public good." We urge president Schill to walk back the dramatic escalation in repression of speech and the academic environment that his policy and subsequent messages represent. We demand that significant stakeholders in this process—faculty, students and staff—be brought to the table as the University navigates this extraordinary moment.

Executive Committee of NU-AAUP (Northwestern University's chapter of the American Association of University Professors)

Jorge Coronado, President

Kyle Henry, Vice President

Jackie Stevens, Secretary