



November 22, 2016

## **The Atmosphere on Campus in the Wake of the Elections**

*The AAUP's national Council has approved the following resolution.*

Since the election of Donald J. Trump almost two weeks ago, the US has experienced an [unprecedented spike in hate crimes](#), both physical and verbal, many of them on college and university campuses (see [here](#) and [here](#)). These have been directed against African Americans, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community, religious minorities, women, and people with disabilities. In some instances the perpetrators have invoked the president-elect in support of their heinous actions. The AAUP national Council unequivocally condemns these attacks and calls on college and university administrators, faculty, staff, and students to unite against them. Violence, threats of violence, and harassment have no place on campus.

To fulfill their missions, colleges and universities must ensure that all members of their communities may seek knowledge freely. In our 1994 statement [On Freedom of Expression and Campus Speech Codes](#) the AAUP declared: "On a campus that is free and open, no idea can be banned or forbidden. No viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful or disturbing that it may not be expressed." But threats and harassment differ from expressions of ideas that some or even most may find repulsive. They intimidate and silence. The free exchange of ideas is incompatible with an atmosphere of fear. Colleges and universities must be places where all ideas and even prejudices may be freely and openly debated and discussed, but such discussion cannot happen when some members of the community are threatened or excluded. Our goal must be to provide safety for both ideas and for all those who wish to engage with them.

We therefore call on college and university administrators to take swift and firm action, consistent with due process rights, against those who have perpetrated violence and those whose menacing behavior threatens both the safety of members of our community and their sense of inclusion. We urge administrators to make clear to all on the campus that such assaults will not be tolerated and to encourage frank and respectful discussion instead. The [call issued by administrators at Villanova University](#), where a violent assault on an African American student rocked the campus, urging faculty members to take time in classes "to ensure that silence on this issue is not misinterpreted as indifference or, even worse, tacit agreement with malicious actions," is worth emulating.

We also call on AAUP chapters and state conferences and all faculty members to speak out against these assaults and to support all efforts to ensure that campus communities are welcoming and inclusive of all groups and ideas. During this difficult time the faculty voice needs more than ever to be heard loud and clear. At UCLA more than five hundred faculty members

have signed [a petition](#) "pledg[ing] to stand up for, support, and defend the most vulnerable among us, those deliberately targeted in the lead up to the election, and those who are now victims of hate in its wake." We encourage faculty members at other institutions to issue similar statements.

Of special importance is the status of those among our students who are undocumented, many of whom have been in this country since early childhood. Concern for the welfare of these students has already prompted [a rash of petitions](#) calling on colleges and universities to become "sanctuary campuses." We support the movement for sanctuary campuses. While colleges and universities must obey the law, administrations must make all efforts to guarantee the privacy of immigrant students and pledge not to grant access to information that might reveal their immigration status unless so ordered by a court of law. Nor should colleges and universities gather information about the citizenship or immigration status of people who have interactions with the administration, including with campus police. College and university police should not themselves participate in any efforts to enforce immigration laws, which are under federal jurisdiction. Faculty members should join efforts to resist all attempts to intimidate or inappropriately investigate undocumented students or to deny them their full rights to due process and a fair hearing.

Finally, we call on president-elect Trump to reconsider his appointment of Steve Bannon as his chief strategist and to more vehemently denounce the hate crimes being committed in the president-elect's name and act to ensure the safety of members of threatened communities and the freedom of all to teach, study, and learn.