

DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION BY MSU UCFT

WHEREAS, the Engineering College Advisory Committee (ECAC) has sent a letter and literature review to the Faculty Senate raising concerns that the MSU administration may seek to add one or more new RPT standard(s) on “conduct” and/or “DEI contributions” to the three traditional standards of research, teaching and service;

WHEREAS, the MSU Steering Committee has redirected the ECAC’s letter from the Faculty Senate to the University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT) for its consideration;

WHEREAS, the ECAC’s letter and literature review provide strong evidence (e.g., a 2016 position paper by the American Association of University Professors¹) that when institutions of higher learning have added new, more subjective, RPT standards to the three traditional three, the change resulted in a reduction in faculty member’s academic freedom and discrimination against faculty members based on difference from a norm (e.g., political persuasion);

WHEREAS, the MSU administration’s DEI Plan² encouraged diversity in 10 traits protected by MSU’s Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP)³; however, diversity in the ADP-protected trait of “political persuasion” notably was not encouraged in the DEI Plan;

WHEREAS, high-level MSU administrator(s) have sent politically charged Email⁴ to the MSU community regarding a DEI-related news event that twice used the word “our” in a way that seemed to signal that the controversial political viewpoints expressed in the Email represented the political norm at MSU;⁴

WHEREAS, based on such Email from high-level MSU administrator(s), some MSU faculty whose political viewpoints differed from the perceived political norm established by high-level administrator(s) would reasonably be hesitant to express their viewpoints for fear of receiving poor ratings in new RPT standards on “conduct” and/or “DEI contributions”, thus resulting in reduction in MSU faculty members’ academic freedom;

WHEREAS, based on such Email from high-level MSU administrator(s), some MSU RPT evaluators might reasonably view political viewpoints expressed by RPT candidates that differed from the perceived political norm established by high-level administrator(s) as deserving poor ratings in new RPT standards on “conduct” and/or “DEI contributions”, thereby resulting in discrimination against MSU faculty members based on political persuasion;

WHEREAS, MSU faculty members’ performance related to conduct and DEI contributions can be assessed effectively via RPT processes based on the traditional three standards, without adding new, more subjective, RPT standards;

RESOLVED, That MSU’s RPT processes should continue to be based exclusively on the three traditional RPT standards of research, teaching, and service, without adding new RPT standards;

RESOLVED, That MSU faculty members’ performance in areas such as conduct and DEI contributions should be assessed within the three traditional standards of research, teaching, and service.

¹ <https://www.aaup.org/file/AAUP%20Collegiality%20report.pdf>

² <https://president.msu.edu/initiatives/dei-plan/dei-committee-charge.html>

³ <https://trustees.msu.edu/bylaws-ordinances-policies/policies/02-03-01.html>

⁴ https://president.msu.edu/communications/messages-statements/2021_statements/2021-04-20_impact_of_minneapolis_verdict.html