PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

I request that the Steering Committee consider the addition of the following sentence to the Academic Freedom policy in section III of the Faculty Handbook:

Teachers are entitled to freedom to address any matter of institutional policy or action when acting as a member of the faculty whether or not as a member of an agency of institutional governance. Although this right is taken for granted by most MSU faculty, it should be made explicit because some courts (after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Garcetti v. Ceballos, 2006) have jeopardized that right. I attach (a) the existing policy with the proposed amendment inserted, and (b) a brief article from Inside Higher Education that explains the legal history, reporting the University of California--Berkeley's decision to place a similar provision in its faculty handbook.

Below, I identify two relevant sections of the MSU Faculty Handbook and request that you involve both committees identified there, and others as you see fit, in discussion of the proposed amendment.

4.3.3 The University Committee on Academic Governance shall conduct a continuing review of the Bylaws and shall be responsible for recommending amendments in these Bylaws to the University Council.

4.6.3 The University Committee on Faculty Affairs shall have shared responsibility with the Provost for the formulation of faculty grievance procedures and on the rights and responsibilities of faculty.

Respectfully submitted,

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