



[Home](#) > [About AFT](#) > [Resolutions](#) > [2004](#) >

## **Opposition to Outside Control Over Academic Decision Making Under the Banner of Intellectual Diversity**

**WHEREAS**, a variety of proposals to impose greater "intellectual diversity" in higher education have circulated throughout state and federal legislatures; and

**WHEREAS**, the cornerstone of these proposals has been a call for the implementation, either by institutions of higher education or by state or federal legislation, of what its proponents call an "Academic Bill of Rights" or a nearly identical " Student Bill of Rights"; and

**WHEREAS**, proponents of these measures have made clear through their writings and public testimony that the true purpose is to end the supposed monopoly of left-wing faculty and administrators over curriculum and teaching; and

**WHEREAS**, proponents of these measures have offered policy solutions to the "problem" of left-wing domination of the academy such as the following:

- Hire Republicans as vacancies occur in humanities and social science departments;
- Require that all points of view be presented equally in all classes under the theory that no knowledge is truly established in the humanities and social sciences and therefore all ideas have equal merit;
- Require proportional voting on curriculum and hiring decisions so dissenters can determine a fractional share of the outcomes;
- Allow distinct schools of thought within "adversarial" fields to organize themselves in a state of partial independence from their rivals, with some significant control over hiring and tenure decisions affecting their members; and

**WHEREAS**, hiring academic professionals on the basis of their ideology, rather than strictly on the basis of their scholarly and teaching aptitude, is inimical to the fundamental concept of the university in our society as well as in opposition to all established academic practices; and

**WHEREAS**, political control and/or interference in scholarship and teaching are totally incompatible with the maintenance and development of a free, democratic and progressive society; and

**WHEREAS**, the passage of legislation to impose such

requirements, even when its provisions are not made mandatory, would be an invitation to tie up institutions of higher education in an endless round of public hearings and litigation in which non-academics would decide whether enough balance was achieved in the reading list of a particular course or certain persons were hired or asked to be speakers based on their left-wing or right-wing ideologies; and

**WHEREAS**, this same point of view has surfaced in a federal legislative proposal to instill political oversight into the activities of international scholars:

**RESOLVED**, that the AFT oppose the imposition of so-called intellectual diversity requirements as an unacceptable infringement of academic freedom and an unwarranted intervention of persons who are not academic professionals into academic decision making; and

**RESOLVED**, that the AFT work vigorously with like-minded individuals and organizations, including other national faculty organizations, to ensure that these proposals are not imposed as academic or legislative policy, from within or outside institutions of higher education.

(2004)

American Federation of Teachers | 555 New Jersey Avenue NW Washington, DC 20001

© American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. All rights reserved.  
Photographs and illustrations, as well as text, cannot be used without permission from the AFT.