



September 8, 2025

President Kelly Damphousse
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Dear President Damphousse,

In my capacity as President of the Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), I am writing to convey our concern regarding Texas State University's treatment of Dr. Idris Robinson, who joined Texas State University in Fall 2022 as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy.

Free inquiry, free expression, intellectual exploration, and open dissent are critical for student learning and the advancement of knowledge. Developing and disseminating new knowledge can sometimes bring one into conflict with those entrenched in the old. Academic freedom is vital to allow a faculty member the freedom to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, and to publish the results of such work, even when it challenges the status quo.

As you are perhaps aware, the AAUP's primary mission is to serve the common good by formulating professional standards on academic freedom, tenure, and shared governance in higher education. [1][2][3] According to AAUP's professional standards, academic freedom is the freedom from censorship by the institution and applies to teaching, research, and expression by a faculty member or other teacher. [1] In classroom teaching, for example, the instructor should have control over the content and structure of the academic course without outside influence. Instructors need the freedom to teach so that students have the freedom to learn. Furthermore, academic freedom of expression applies to both intramural and extramural utterances. Safeguards for academic freedom include shared governance, due process, and tenure.

The AAUP's professional standards for shared governance [2], which were co-formulated with university presidents and governing boards, state that a higher education institution is most effective when a tripod of leadership joins in governing the college or university. That tripod consists of the administration, the Board of Regents (representing the public), and the faculty. We note with satisfaction that shared governance principles [2] as well as principles of academic

freedom and tenure [1] have been incorporated into the Texas State University Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP).

In his three years as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Texas State University, Dr. Robinson has maintained a strong record of teaching, research, and service. Yet it is our understanding that the university's decision not to renew Dr. Robinson's contract followed a coordinated campaign of online harassment in response to a talk on Gaza that Dr. Robinson gave off campus in June 2024 in his capacity as a private citizen. Rather than defending the essential right of faculty to extramural free expression, the university placed Dr. Robinson on administrative leave in June 2025 and issued a notice of non-renewal in July 2025, without clearly stating the specific charges or alleged professional deficiencies that would justify such an action.

This response is troubling in its apparent disregard for the rights of faculty and sends a chilling message to other faculty. Further, we are concerned that this decision has bypassed essential faculty input and procedures that protect the integrity of personnel decisions. [2][3] The role of peer review in appointments, evaluations, and reappointments is a cornerstone of shared governance, and departures from those norms threaten the credibility of academic institutions. [2][3]

We urge Texas State University to reconsider this action and fully reinstate Dr. Robinson throughout the course of a transparent, fair, and timely review of his grievances. In doing so, the university has an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom, faculty governance, and the principles that undergird a serious research institution—principles that are all the more essential as Texas State works toward achieving R1 status.

In the meantime, we will continue to monitor this situation. Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for your commitment to higher education.

Brian L. Evans

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References

[1] [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom & Tenure](#) defines academic freedom in teaching, research, and expression. These principles were jointly formulated by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) representing college and university presidents and AAUP representing professors. These professional standards have been adopted by more than 85% of public and private non-profit four-year universities in the US.

[2] [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#), jointly formulated by the AAUP, American Council on Education (ACE), and Association of Governing Boards of Universities & Colleges (AGB). The AAUP represents faculty, ACE represents college and university administrations, and AGB represents University Systems, Boards of Regents, and Boards of Trustees. ACE has more than 1500 college and university members and AGB has more than 1300 college, university, and system members.

[3] [Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#). Initially published in 1957 by the AAUP, these regulations are suitable for direct inclusion into handbooks of operating procedures to enable an institution to protect academic freedom and tenure and to ensure academic due process. The regulations emphasize the need for fair and transparent procedures in faculty personnel matters.

[4] [AA/PPS No. 04.02.01 Development and Evaluation of Tenure-Track Faculty](#), Texas State University, accessed July 26, 2025.

Cc: Dr. Lisa Lloyd, Vice President and Chief of Staff, Texas State University
Provost Pranesh Aswath, Texas State University
Dr. Vedaraman Sriraman, Senior Vice Provost, Texas State University
Dr. Mary Brennan, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Texas State University
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