

Unapologetic Commitment to DEISA+ and Academic Freedom

A Joint Resolution of the Mt. SAC Academic Senate and Faculty Association

2025-02

Whereas, national political developments and recent federal actions have targeted DEISA+ initiatives and faculty speech¹, threatening the integrity of public higher education by imposing ideological restrictions on curriculum, teaching, and governance;

Whereas, Mt. San Antonio College has formally embedded its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Social Justice, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (DEISA+) into the college's mission and goals², identifying DEISA+ as essential to advancing access, success, and equity in student learning and outcomes; and this commitment is further institutionalized through the work of the Academic Senate's Student Preparation, Equity & Achievement Council (SPEAC)³, which guides and supports faculty led strategies to improve preparation, achievement, and student equity;

Whereas, the Mt. San Antonio College Faculty Contract (Article 18.O)⁴ defines academic freedom in alignment with the American Association of University Professors' 1940 Statement of Principles, and guarantees that professors shall have the freedom to study, teach, research, publish, assess, and participate in shared governance without censorship, discipline, or retaliation—including on topics that may be controversial, unpopular, or politically sensitive; and,

Whereas, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), at its Spring 2025 Plenary Session, adopted Resolution 111.06 affirming that advancing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (IDEAA) is inseparable from protecting academic freedom; this position is reflected in the national statement "*A Call for Constructive Engagement*" from the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) endorsed by hundreds of leaders in higher education including the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the ASCCC, the Community College League of California, and Mt SAC, which calls on higher education institutions to safeguard inclusive teaching and faculty expression from political intrusion; and the California Teachers Association (CTA), in its 2024–25 Organizational Handbook⁵, likewise affirms that academic freedom is essential to the profession, encompassing the freedom to teach, express ideas, and select materials, while upholding democratic values, professional ethics, and inclusive education consistent with state laws such as the FAIR Act (SB 48).

¹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/blogs/resident-scholar/2025/02/21/dear-colleague-letter-defense-dei-shaun-harper>

² <https://www.mtsac.edu/about/mission-and-goals.html>

³ <https://www.mtsac.edu/governance/committees/spas/index.html#:~:text=Equity%20&%20Achievement%20Council-,Purpose,%2C%20achievement%2C%20preparation%20and%20success>

⁴ https://www.mtsac.edu/hr/facultyassociationcontract/FA_Contract_2023-24_Year_Two-of-Three_Accessible-Updated-hyperlink.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cta.org/about-us/organizational-handbook>

Resolved, that the Mt. SAC Academic Senate and Faculty Association jointly affirm the indivisible nature of DEISA+ and academic freedom, upholding faculty rights to teach, conduct research, and participate in professional discourse free from threats of political mischief, censorship, suppression, or institutional retaliation;

Resolved, that the Mt. SAC Academic Senate and Faculty Association jointly reject any external or internal attempts to restrict curriculum, undermine shared governance, or narrow the scope of faculty expertise and inquiry particularly those that target DEISA+ related efforts; and

Resolved, that this resolution be communicated to the Mt. SAC President and CEO and the Mt. SAC Board of Trustees as a united expression of Mt. SAC faculty's defense of academic freedom, inclusive education, and professional integrity.

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