



# PSA Professional Staff Association at NJIT | AAUP

**Mutual Gains. Reasonable. Justifiable.**

## Academic Freedom: What is it?

- Academic freedom is the right of scholars in institutions of higher learning freely to study, discuss, investigate, teach and publish. Academic freedom applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspects is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. (Source: PSA Contract Article VII)

## Academic Freedom: Why is it important?

- Institutions of higher education conduct their activities primarily for the common good and not exclusively to further the interests of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. (Source: PSA Contract Article VII)

## Academic Freedom: Why and how must it be defended?

- Academic freedom provides the right to pursue and disseminate matters of scholarly inquiry, pedagogy and curriculum without interference from non-academic administrative or governmental bodies. As such it provides an important check and balance against excesses of these entities. Academic freedom is defended through the tenure system, shared governance, as well as due process rights supported by unions such as the PSA.

## Why Academic Freedom is Crucial AND Important to Faculty, Students, Staff and the Community:

- It fosters a robust learning environment
- Promotes intellectual exploration and the advancement of knowledge – Curiosity and Inquiry
- Protects the advancement of knowledge and the development of new ideas and new technologies
- It allows faculty and students to engage in open inquiry, debate diverse ideas, and challenge existing paradigms without fear of reprisal – even those that may be unconventional or controversial
- Promotes a Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environment
- It safeguards intellectual independence
- It promotes civic engagement and responsibility encouraging the contribution to positive changes
- This freedom is essential for the growth of knowledge and the development of critical thinking skills – which are all vital to the success of the modern world