

A University Senate Primer: Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee

Monday, August 25th, 2025

Why is the Faculty Affairs Committee important?

- The Faculty Affairs Committee is the sole elected, University-wide committee representing faculty.
- The Committee works to ensure that any faculty grievances against departments, university administration, and regarding reappointment and promotion are handled appropriately.
- The Committee is crucial to ensure that the academic freedom of faculty is protected against political and administrative interference.

Authority

The Statutory authority for the Faculty Affairs Committee is found in §23 and §71-75 of the University Statutes.

The Senate By-Laws further state:

“Committee on Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure: Shall have jurisdiction of all matters relating to terms and conditions of academic employment including, but not limited to, tenure and academic freedom, academic advancement, sabbatical and other leaves, faculty conduct and discipline, retirement, faculty housing and other faculty prerequisites. The Committee shall also review and, when appropriate, recommend revision of policies governing the appointment of persons to named chairs.

The Committee on Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure, or one of its subcommittees shall also sit as board of appeal on faculty grievances. When acting in such judicial capacity the Committee, or its subcommittee, shall function in a confidential manner and shall not be required to report its deliberations to the Senate as a whole. With the consent, or at the request of the petitioner however, the Committee or its subcommittee may make public its recommendations and reasons therefor.”

(University Senate By-Laws Sec.4.k.v.)

The Work We Do

The Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (“Faculty Affairs”) works across the University to ensure academic freedom for faculty, address faculty grievances, and convene over all other issues pertaining to faculty and tenure. Faculty Affairs is comprised of 13 Tenured and 4 Tenure-Track and Off-Track faculty members. See the current list of members [here](#).

Major Policy Actions:

- *Resolution Reconfirming Our Commitment to the Principles of Academic Freedom and Shared Governance* (Spring 2024)
- Restoration of matching contributions to retirement funds (Fall 2020)
- *Resolution to Amend the University Statutes to Strengthen and Modify Appointments for Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Across Columbia* (Spring 2020)
- *Resolution in Support of Freedom of Expression on Campus* (Spring 2018)
- *Resolution Concerning the Principle of Academic Freedom* (Spring 2018)

Learn more about the work we do:
<https://senate.columbia.edu/committees/faculty-affairs>