

Hartfield and Stern Motion made during Sept. 20th Senate Meeting

The Senate States as Follows:

Whereas the Faculty Handbook, approved by the Board of Trustees contains the governing policy language over faculty disciplinary action and dismissal,

Whereas, the University HR department has circulated a document dated September 7, 2022, purporting to augment the basis for disciplinary action and dismissal authority over faculty,

Whereas, the University HR document is expansive, arbitrary, and creates broad and ill-defined new bases for disciplinary action up to dismissal, inconsistent with the Faculty Handbook,

Whereas the Faculty Handbook guarantees broad protection of the First Amendment and academic freedom rights of Faculty members,

Whereas, the new document from September makes no mention of the academic freedoms extoled in the Faculty Handbook, makes no mention of the Faculty Handbook, and grants nearly limitless power to the administration to surveil speech of Faculty both internal and external to the University using State of Alabama resources, which undermines academic freedom. And,

Whereas, the University HR document was not considered by the Senate processes of Shared Governance to include consideration by the Faculty Handbook Committee or the body of the Senate as required under the terms of the Faculty Handbook.

WHEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, The Senate resolves as follows:

1. The Senate does not recognize that the University HR document dated September 7, 2022, has been developed through legitimate processes and does not recognize its applicability to Faculty.
2. As such, the University HR document dated September 7, 2022, as applicable to Faculty should be immediately withdrawn and discarded by the administration.
3. Language or conditions relating to the potential basis for faculty dismissal should only be considered through the established shared governance processes as outlined in the Faculty Handbook.
4. In the interest of following the procedures established by the Board of Trustees, and in the interest of maintaining academic freedom, all policies governing the discipline or dismissal of Faculty members should be contained within the Faculty Handbook where they are modified through the agreed upon processes of shared governance, set up by the Board of Trustees.

For reference, the policy of interest is located

at: https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/Policy_on_Conducting_Background_Checks.pdf