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**AFT Releases Policy Statement Focused on
Protecting the Free Exchange of Ideas in American Higher Education**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The American Federation of Teachers today released a policy statement titled “Academic Freedom in the 21st-Century College and University.” The document provides specific standards for protecting the academic freedom of all faculty and instructional staff—particularly the 70 percent of the instructional workforce who do not have the protections of tenure. The statement also offers a road map for protecting academic freedom through activism, collective bargaining and political action.

“Educators are highly trained professionals and they don’t need the ‘thought-police’ to tell them what to teach and how,” said Sandra Schroeder, head of the AFT Higher Education program and policy council and an AFT vice president. “All faculty and instructional staff should be free to make educational decisions. Anything less compromises the quality of instruction they can offer their students.”

Art Hochner, associate professor of human resource management at Temple University’s Fox School of Business and Management, and the statement’s primary author, added: “The AFT’s statement is rooted in the collective efforts of a unionized campus workforce, and it addresses the political and educational realities of the 21st century.”

In its statement, the AFT points to factors that pose serious threats to academic freedom, including: public funding cutbacks; an increasingly commercialized curriculum and research agenda; co-opting of educational decision-making by management; and the withdrawal of tenure and governance rights to a growing proportion of the faculty. The statement also cites ideological attacks on higher education professionals as an affront to the spirit and quality of academe. To download a copy of the full statement, go to http://www.aft.org/higher_ed/pubs-reports/AcademicFreedomStatement.pdf.

The AFT represents more than 165,000 higher education faculty and staff members across the nation. Earlier this year, the union released a report evaluating the scientific rigor of research frequently cited by opponents of academic freedom. The report, titled The “Faculty Bias” Studies: Science or Propaganda?, was sponsored by the AFT on behalf of the [Free Exchange on Campus](#) coalition. To download a copy of that report, go to www.aft.org/pubs-reports/higher_ed/FacultyBiasStudies.pdf.

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The AFT represents 1.4 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers, paraprofessionals and other school