



APRIL 17

To get involved by organizing an action on your campus, please [fill out this form](#). If you have questions, contact DayOfAction@proton.me

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The Future We Stand For

A Call for a National Day of Action for Higher Education for the Public Good: April 17, 2024

We Stand for Democracy — and the System of Higher Education that Sustains It

Today both education and democracy are under attack. Institutions of higher education serve to educate the public and to help generate the reliable information, broad-ranging knowledge, and reasoned analysis that a democratic society requires. Colleges and universities are spaces where research and ideas—including challenging ones—are subject to rigorous study and critical evaluation. In the interest of democracy, our educational institutions must be allowed to function free from interference by politicians, CEOs, and lobbyists seeking to repress inquiry.

We Stand for the Freedom to Teach and Learn

Education and research require free inquiry, the freedom to teach, students' freedom to learn, freedom to publish, freedom of assembly and association, and the freedom to speak as members of the public. Academic freedom differs from freedom of speech; it does not protect every opinion within a university because it relies on the collective judgment of scholarship. For example, scholars and teachers have found such ideas as scientific racism, Holocaust denial, and intelligent design to be intellectually and thus academically indefensible. To ensure the continued social value of higher education, decisions about teaching and learning must be made by qualified faculty—not by those seeking to impose private and partisan interests.

We Stand for the Democratic Value of Dissent

Democracy, like education, requires both consent and dissent. We affirm the right of every student, teacher, worker, and community member to assemble and to speak out on issues of public concern. Protest is a form of learning and community-building; it should be respected by colleges and universities as an essential component of education.

We Stand for Higher Education for All

Higher education is a public good, not only because it trains students for careers but also because learning and thinking are valuable in themselves for all members of the public. Protecting civil rights and advancing racial equality are essential to the public mission of colleges and universities, just as they are essential to a thriving democracy. High quality education at every level should be the right of all. Yet federal and state divestment has made the cost of college prohibitive, and recent attacks on diversity and equity threaten to make educational access more unequal. The burden of lifelong debt jeopardizes futures, while predatory interest on loans unfairly forces poorer students to shoulder higher costs than wealthier students. To ensure equality of access, we must make public higher education freely available to all by reversing decades of budget cuts and reinvesting in our globally leading university systems.

We Stand for Job Security

Federal and state defunding of public institutions not only harms the futures and livelihoods of students and employees; it also undermines the quality of education. Teaching has been converted into exploitative gig work through management practices shaped by manufactured austerity. Over 70% of the nation's faculty are now overworked and underpaid contingent instructors with inadequate benefits and no job security. Educators' working conditions are students' learning conditions: job security is necessary to the freedom to teach and learn, and a living wage and reasonable workload are necessary to quality education. Colleges and universities need to be stable places to work as well as exciting places to learn, and all workers on our campuses deserve fair pay and better working conditions.

We Stand for Democracy within Higher Education

Educators, researchers, staff, students, and community members must have a meaningful collective voice in the governance of colleges and universities. Attacks on entire areas of study, attempts to roll back policies supporting diversity, the defunding of research and teaching, the suppression of protest, the transformation of universities into tools of financial speculation and into real estate developers displacing local communities, and the imposition of crushing debt on students undermine and render meaningless existing structures of shared governance. State legislatures from Florida to Indiana have taken aim at public universities as part of a broader assault on U.S. democracy. At private universities, unelected trustees, billionaires, and administrators increasingly exercise unilateral power to dictate policies and academic priorities. We stand against these antidemocratic pressures in all their guises.

We Stand Together

We call on all members of the higher education community across the country to engage in collective action for higher education in the public interest. We stand in solidarity with all who are organizing unions, AAUP chapters, and student organizations to win the conditions that make teaching, learning, and research possible.

On April 17, we will mobilize for these goals on campuses nationwide. Our struggles are linked, and so are our futures. On this national day of action and beyond, we commit to working together to build the universities and the democracy that our society needs and deserves.

Endorsed by:

NYU-AAUP

University of Illinois Chicago United Faculty AAUP-AFT Local 6524

University of Washington-AAUP

George Mason University AAUP

United Academics of Oregon State University

Rutgers AAUP-AFT

Rutgers PTLFC-AAUP-AFT

University of Florida UFF-UF

UC Santa Barbara Faculty Association
Lebanon Valley College AAUP
University of Kentucky AAUP
AAUP-Penn
PA-AAUP State Conference
Higher Ed Labor United
Franklin & Marshall College AAUP
UC Davis FJP
Whitman College AAUP
UT Austin AAUP
AAUP-Ohio State
University of Maryland AAUP
Cornell University Chapter of the AAUP
Scholars for a New Deal for Higher Ed
UC Irvine Faculty for Justice in Palestine
UNCG (University of North Carolina at Greensboro) AAUP
Haverford College AAUP Organizing Collective
Northern Michigan University AAUP/AFT 6761
Columbia University AAUP
Barnard College AAUP
Norwich University AAUP
Old Dominion University AAUP
Texas AAUP State Conference
Debt Collective
Carleton College AAUP
UMass Amherst Young Communist League
Northwestern AAUP
Washburn University AAUP
Middlebury College AAUP
Lamar University AAUP
Lamar University Texas Faculty Association
Penn Museum Workers United - AFSCME DC47 Local 397
United RAs at Penn - OPEIU 153
Wayne Academic Union AAUP-AFT Local 6075
Lane Community College Educational Association
FAMCO (Faculty Association of Monmouth University) AAUP-AFT 6627
Wesleyan AAUP
UFF-FIU United Faculty of Florida—Florida International University
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Nevada Faculty Alliance
UTSF-OC MSU (Union of Tenure-Stream Faculty Organizing Committee) Michigan State University
AAUP Purdue University Northwest
EMUFT9102 (Eastern Michigan University Federation of Teachers) Local 9102
Tennessee Tech University AAUP

Sarah Lawrence College AAUP
Wyoming Young Communist League
Texas Tech University AAUP Chapter
LEO-AFT-MI (Lecturers' Employment Organization) Local 6244
New York Young Communist League
UNL (University of Nebraska Lincoln) AAUP Chapter
Portland Community College AFT Local 2277
Union College AAUP
University of Michigan—Ann Arbor AAUP
Manhattan College AAUP Advocacy Chapter
Franklin & Marshall College Coalition for Peace & Justice
Oakland University AAUP
United Campus Workers of Colorado CWA 7799
Indiana Graduate Workers Coalition
Santa Cruz Faculty Association
AAUP Advocacy Chapter at Grand Valley State University
University of Michigan—Dearborn Faculty Collective
Tennessee Coalition for Truth in Education
North Carolina State University AAUP Chapter
UC Santa Cruz Academic Senate Executive Committee
Kansas Conference of AAUP
Indiana University—South Bend AAUP Advocacy Chapter
Purdue Fort Wayne Chapter of the AAUP