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February 16, 2022

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Min
1021 O Street, Suite 6710
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SR 45 (Min) Relative to Academic Freedom

Position: Support

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Min,

On February 5, 2022, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), the organization designated through statute and state regulation as the representative of all 58,000 full-time and part-time faculty in the California Community Colleges system regarding academic and professional matters, voted to support SR 45 (Min) as of February 5, 2022 based upon the recommendation of the ASCCC Legislative and Advocacy Committee and past positions of the ASCCC. SR 45 offers a strong statement of support for academic freedom, resolving in part that local academic freedom policies should provide that "within their subject discipline, a faculty member can articulate or even advocate positions or concepts that may be controversial in nature without fear of retribution or reprisal" and that "academic freedom is a necessary requisite for teaching and learning in California Community Colleges."

Academic freedom is a core value of any faculty organization, and it has been a priority and a concern for the ASCCC since our beginnings in 1969. It is a fundamental concept that exists to ensure that institutions of higher education function for the public good and assures that colleges are constructed on the foundations of genuine trust and integrity, but unfortunately it is not codified or protected in California Education Code. The ASCCC therefore adopted the AAUP 1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom through Resolution 19.05 in Spring of 1996.

Academic freedom is also closely connected to issues of equity, as is explained in the article "Academic Freedom and Equity" in the November 2020 issue of the ASCCC's *Rostrum* publication. As this article states, "Academic freedom allows for students to be introduced to a diverse range of ideas that often contrast and even compete with each other within an academic framework and invites them to participate in a rigorous analysis and comparison of these ideas as a means of developing their own interpretations." Such discussion promotes equity by allowing all voices to be heard and by encouraging the inclusion of both majority and minority perspectives on any issue. Because equity in all forms has been a primary focus of the work of the California Community Colleges system in recent years, this connection to equity makes the protection of academic freedom even more essential.

The ASCCC has developed numerous publications promoting, defending, and offering guidance regarding academic freedom. Among these publications are the formal papers [Protecting the Future of Academic Freedom During a Time of Significant Change](#) from fall 2020, *Textbook Issues: Economic Pressures and Academic Values* from spring 2005, *Academic Freedom and Tenure: A Faculty Perspective* from spring 1998, and *Academic Freedom, Privacy, Copyright and Fair Use in a Technological World* from fall 1999 as well as

February 16, 2022
Re: SR 45 (Min) Relative to Academic Freedom
Page Two

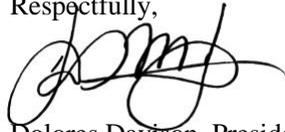
numerous articles in the ASCCC's *Rostrum* publication.

SR 45 rightly recognizes that "Freedom of thought and expression are necessary for every higher education institution" and that "Local academic freedom policies required by Title 5 vary greatly, and the state therefore lacks the uniformity necessary to uphold the principles of academic freedom across all of California's community colleges." The resolution is thus both timely and important, and the ASCCC appreciates and endorses its accurate explanation of the significance of and issues surrounding academic freedom as well as its strong statement of support for the concept.

For these reasons, the ASCCC expresses its **position of support** for SR 45 (Min) as of February 5, 2022.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dolores Davison', written in a cursive style.

Dolores Davison, President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges