

Dear Colleagues,

At its meeting yesterday (October, 25th), MAUT Council voted on and unanimously approved the **Canadian Association of University Teacher's** (CAUT) statement on academic freedom (below).

MAUT, VP Communications (Steven Jordan)

Academic Freedom in Times of Conflict

Academic freedom, like all expressive freedoms, is particularly vulnerable during periods of war, conflict, and social unrest. The widespread dismissals of controversial professors and subsequent constraints on [CAUT Policy Statement on Academic Freedom](#)

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_____ states:

Targeted Harassment Undermines Academic Freedom

Academic freedom does not confer immunity from criticism. That an academic may face harsh critique or condemnation from colleagues, students, or members of the public is not in itself a violation of academic freedom. On the contrary, it is academic freedom that permits robust discussion and debate, including often pointed and heated exchanges.

However, if an academic is subject to malicious, libelous, abusive, threatening, or harassing speech, then their ability to exercise their academic freedom is compromised. In such instances, as specified in the [CAUT Policy Statement on Targeted Online Harassment of Academic Staff](#), college and university administrators have “a positive obligation to protect academic freedom” and should take decisive action to defend academic staff from such harassment. If institutions fail to defend academics from illegal harassment or true threats, they violate their obligation to uphold academic freedom.

Freedom from Political Interference

The exercise of academic freedom requires that institutions are autonomous from outside pressures and political interference. Universities and colleges have a responsibility to resist such external influence,