

Resolution to Establish Mutual Academic Defense Compacts in Defense of Academic Freedom, Free Expression, Institutional Integrity, and the Research Enterprise

Whereas, escalating actions by governmental bodies threaten foundational principles of American higher education, including the autonomy of university governance, the integrity of scientific research, and the protection of the freedoms of inquiry, speech, and association;

Whereas, political actors have targeted individual institutions with legal, financial, and political incursions designed to undermine their public mission, silence dissenting voices, and exert unlawful control over academic inquiry;

Whereas, governmental actors have signaled a willingness to censor curricula, restrict inquiry, target scholars and students, and carry out politically motivated detentions;

Whereas, America's Medical Universities represent a longstanding tradition of academic collaboration, research excellence, and commitment to democratic values and shared governance;

Whereas, over 150 American Medical Schools represent more than 200,000 faculty and over 100,000 medical and graduate students;

Whereas, institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—public and private, large and small—share a longstanding commitment to academic freedom, democratic governance, civic responsibility, and the pursuit of knowledge for the public good;

Whereas, Massachusetts is home to a diverse and nationally respected higher education ecosystem that serves hundreds of thousands of students and employs tens of thousands of educators, researchers, and staff whose work supports innovation, critical inquiry, social mobility, and community engagement;

Whereas, the preservation of one institution's integrity is the concern of all, and an infringement against one institution shall be considered an infringement against all;

Whereas, there already exist networks for cross-institutional coordination and support (e.g., the Five Colleges Consortium, the Boston Consortium, and the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center) demonstrating that our institutions can and do cooperate on shared infrastructure, policy, and advocacy,

Whereas, our colleagues in the Faculty Senate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst have proposed the establishment of a Massachusetts Higher Education Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MHEMADC) among public and private colleges and universities across the Commonwealth that choose to participate;

Be it resolved that, the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School Faculty Council urges the President of the University of Massachusetts system, the Chancellor of the University, and the Faculty Council Rules Committee to formally offer to help to establish and join the MHEMADC proposed by our colleagues at the University of Massachusetts Amherst ;

Be it further resolved that, the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School Faculty Council urges the President of the University of Massachusetts system, the Chancellor of the University, and the Faculty Council Rules Committee to formally propose and help establish a Medical School Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MSMADC) among public and private medical universities across the country that choose to participate;

Be it further resolved that, under these compacts, participating institutions shall invest meaningful support—financial, legal, organizational, and/or strategic—as permitted by institutional policy and legal authority to a shared or distributed defense infrastructure designed to respond immediately and collectively to attacks by governmental actors on any member institution;

Be it further resolved that, these compacts shall facilitate the mobilization of institutional resources—including legal expertise, faculty governance leaders, public affairs professionals, research capacity, and media relations—to coordinate a unified and robust response, including but not limited to:

- Legal cooperation and, where appropriate, countersuit actions;
- Public communication strategies to counter misinformation and defend academic principles;
- Filing of amicus briefs, publication of expert testimony, and other legal interventions;
- Legislative advocacy and coordinated policy engagement at the state and federal levels;
- The development of collaborative strategies and frameworks to diversify funding streams beyond the federal government; and
- Rapid-response research and public-education initiatives;

Be it further resolved that, this resolution does not suggest that the University of Massachusetts should enter into any open-ended commitment of funds beyond what it would budget for its own defense; nor should it indemnify any other institution;

Be it further resolved that, this resolution does not suggest that the University of Massachusetts Office of the General Counsel should represent any non-UMass entity;

Be it further resolved that, this resolution be transmitted to the leadership of all Medical Universities across the nation as well as their shared governance bodies;

Be it finally resolved that, the President of the University of Massachusetts system and the Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School take leading roles in convening summits of faculty and administration leaders to initiate the implementation of these Compacts and affirm the collective commitment to defend academic freedom, free expression, institutional autonomy, and the public mission of higher education in the Commonwealth.