



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Board of American Association of Philosophy Teachers Issues  
Statement of Concern Regarding Trump Administration Threats to  
Higher Education***

ORANGEBURG, NY—The [Board of Directors](#) of the [American Association of Philosophy Teachers](#) has issued the following statement of concern regarding the recent threats to higher education inflicted by the Trump administration.

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The Board of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers condemns a series of Trump administration attacks on the core principles of higher education, which threaten the essential work of philosophy educators.

Since the late 1970s, the mission of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) has been to advocate for philosophy teachers and students. We pursue this mission by working to improve the quality of philosophy teaching, facilitating professional development through mentorship and training, and providing outlets for scholars to disseminate their pedagogical research. We approach all of our initiatives with a commitment to community building, inclusivity, and learner-centered teaching. The moral, epistemic, and metaphysical questions that we examine in our classrooms have global relevance and require collaboration with widely varying perspectives and populations.

Over the last few months, sudden policy shifts, the gutting of federal support for higher education, and the general climate of chaos and fear produced by the Trump administration are threatening the AAPT's core mission—undermining what, how, and whom we teach. As philosophy teachers, we aim to create open classrooms that foster the free exchange of ideas among diverse student populations. We want our students to adopt critical attitudes and develop into autonomous thinkers. We cannot pursue these philosophical goals, essential to the functioning of democracy, when politicians are telling people what, when, and how to think. Neither instructors nor students should be sanctioned for defending controversial or unpopular ideas, or prevented from considering opposing views.

A number of threats to our core work endanger the intellectual openness and curiosity that we strive to develop in our students. Some of these threats have arisen directly from the Trump administration, while others have arisen within state and local governance agencies emboldened by the Trump administration. Our work as philosophy teachers is threatened by:

- Opposition to free speech, academic freedom, and free inquiry. This includes, but is not limited to, a broad range of [“educational gag orders”](#) aimed at restricting speech in higher education. Philosophers are committed to considering all perspectives and following arguments where they lead, which is not possible when classrooms and campus discussions are censored.
- Elimination of [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#) programs and policies. Our campuses are impoverished when a representative and diverse group of faculty and students are not empowered

to participate fully in campus life and to flourish in our classrooms. Claims that DEI programs are discriminatory, unfair, and anti-intellectual, as in the Department of Education's [Dear Colleague](#) letter of February 14, 2025, are offensive and mistaken. DEI policies and programs improve fairness by ensuring equitable access to higher education for all students. Good philosophizing requires a broad and diverse range of perspectives and voices, and DEI bans undermine this aim.

- Disregarding faculty expertise. State takeovers of higher education curricula in places like [Florida](#), [Utah](#), and [Ohio](#) in which state legislatures play-act as curriculum designers, have pushed forward educational reforms without due guidance from faculty, students, or relevant empirical research. Faculty are uniquely qualified to make decisions about curriculum and classroom activities. These policies subvert faculty expertise as scholars and teachers.
- Drastic cuts to federal and state funding for education. By defunding popular, longstanding grant programs at public agencies such as the NEH, NSF, and NIH, along with billions of targeted cuts to federal funding at specific universities, the Trump administration is endangering the future of research, threatening innovation, critical engagement, and health.
- Capricious [revocation](#) of international student visas, without explanation or due process, and arrests and deportation of international students (including green card holders) for their constitutionally protected speech and opinions. As philosophers, we strive to equip our students with the tools they need to reach their own conclusions about a range of topics, including important moral and political issues. Through the threat of deportation, students are being told that some opinions are beyond consideration; this is anathema to good philosophy. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on colleges and schools interfere with the ability of our students to learn.

The AAPT condemns these attacks in the strongest possible terms. Students cannot learn, and faculty cannot teach, in a state of acute fear. We stand in solidarity with the many other professional organizations, educational institutions, individual faculty members, and college and university leaders that have resisted the Trump administration's attacks on higher education. We urge others to join us as allies in this fight: to stand firm in fulfilling our mission as educators, preserving our institutional autonomy, and defending the First Amendment rights of free expression for all students and faculty.



*The AAPT is the primary professional organization for teaching-oriented philosophers. Through our biennial conference, journal [AAPT Studies in Pedagogy](#), regional workshops, and [Teaching Hubs](#), the AAPT: (a) improves the quality of teaching philosophy; (b) facilitates the professional development of philosophy teachers; (c) mentors and trains new philosophy teachers; and (d) provides outlets for scholars to disseminate their research in philosophical pedagogy. The AAPT approaches all of its initiatives with a commitment to community building, inclusivity, and learner-centered teaching.*

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