

# Resolution on Academic Freedom in Libraries in the CSU

CFA Librarians Committee, Revised April 17, 2026

**Background:** The Librarians Committee has proposed this resolution because of urgency created by specific incidents of censorship and interference with librarians' academic freedom, and intends it to be applicable to violations of academic freedom generally.

At the Cal Poly SLO / Maritime campus, a library administrator recently, without warning, changed library faculty and staff permissions in the LibGuides system, assigned themselves ownership of 19 research guides on DEI topics created by library faculty and staff, and students, and unpublished them. These actions removed access to this material for both the public and its creators. A few days later, the administrator sent an email stating that research guides were university communications which would be subject to a content policy to be created by the interim dean and the Provost, without faculty input. Soon thereafter, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) published a "Campus Antisemitism Report Card" (the "Report Card") <https://mustangnews.net/cal-poly-adl-antisemitism-grade/> on the California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO) with a "D" grade. It states that a "Israel-Palestine research guide," which it describes as antisemitic, was removed after complaints from the ADL and the community, and that books with "Zionist and/or Jewish perspectives" were added to a "display of Israel-Palestine books" after a complaint was filed. Both assertions are inaccurate. The author of the Student Protests research guide in question was not consulted about its removal from the library website, and no library faculty were asked about the ADL's allegations during administrators' apparent negotiations with the ADL. With the research guide removed, ADL's description of it, including the charge of antisemitism, cannot be either questioned or substantiated, preventing the community from freely exchanging ideas about the information in the material, and the author of clearing themselves of the charge of antisemitism.

It is likely that the research guides' removal is linked to the Report Card. The Cal Poly president has stated that Cal Poly's plans to grow are based on federal funding. Students, faculty, staff, and the local and larger community have been deprived of the information contained in these guides, violating academic freedom and the right to information that is implicit in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The work of library faculty, staff, and students has been severely affected.

This extreme example highlights threats to librarians' academic freedom, from administrative interference and third-party pressure. It is significant

that this situation involves accusations of antisemitism related to criticism of Israel. Additional threats to librarians' academic freedom, and therefore everyone's freedom to read, include consolidated vendors, many owned by data analytics companies which contract with ICE and the military; algorithmic and AI bias in access to information; and austerity. The academic freedom of librarians, like that of coaches and counselors, is an essential part of academic freedom in the CSU.

## Resolution

**WHEREAS**, librarians are Unit 3 faculty and part of the California Faculty Association (CFA).

**WHEREAS**, the Preamble to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) <https://www.calfac.org/contract-2022-2025/preamble/> includes the term "academic freedom" in the fourth and fifth paragraph: "The CSU shall support the pursuit of excellence and academic freedom in teaching, research, and learning through the free exchange of ideas among the faculty, students, and staff.... The parties recognize that quality education requires an atmosphere of academic freedom and academic responsibility."

**WHEREAS**, the CFA is a social and racial justice union.

**WHEREAS**, librarians are experts in the collection, curation, and organization of, provision of access to, and instruction in using information.

**WHEREAS**, librarians' academic freedom is a necessary precondition to, and interconnected with, the academic freedom of faculty, staff, students, and the entire academic community.

**WHEREAS**, multiple library organizations have adopted statements declaring the vital importance of academic freedom for academic and other librarians, including the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and resolution to accept [The Librarian and Library Workers' Bill of Rights](#); the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) [Statement on Academic Freedom](#); the [ACRL Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians](#); and the CSU Council of Library Deans' Statement, "[The Freedom to Read is Essential to the Mission of the California State University](#)."

**WHEREAS**, librarians' creative work, scholarly work, and instructional materials are their work, protected by copyright, as is the work of other Unit 3 faculty.

**WHEREAS**, librarians face internal and external questioning, managerial interference with, and censorship of, our research, pedagogy, collections management decisions, and other work, and librarians on all campuses report efforts by administrators to dictate their content.

**WHEREAS**, ongoing third-party efforts to censor library materials and/or librarians' work can reasonably be anticipated.

**WHEREAS**, library and university administrators may acquiesce to such efforts, or limit academic freedom in anticipation of them.

**WHEREAS**, such censorship may also affect the work of CSU faculty, staff and students, and community members, as well as their access to information.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

**RESOLVED**, that the CFA affirms its commitment to academic freedom, freedom of speech, and the right to information that is implicit in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, specifically extending to CSU libraries and librarians.

**RESOLVED**, that the CFA will act to counter efforts to censor or restrict library materials and librarians' creative work/activities and instructional materials as it would act to counter any censorship of instructional faculty research, writing, instruction, or instructional materials.

**RESOLVED**, that the CFA will issue a statement affirming the academic freedom of librarians and their right to ownership of their creative, scholarly, and instructional work.

**RESOLVED**, that in these actions CFA will intentionally involve librarians and center their expertise and input.