



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY SENATE

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TO: Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Joseph Auslander
Professor Emeritus, Department of Mathematics

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SUBJECT: Freedom of Speech

We ask the Senate Executive Committee to place an item on the agenda of the next Senate meeting concerning a violation of freedom of speech. It regards the dismissal of a university affiliate staff member, Dr. Jeff Schmidt.

Dr. Schmidt was a staff editor of "Physics Today" published by the American Institute of Physics, which is a university affiliate. He was fired for workplace activism, including the writing of a critical book. As a result he lost his library and other university privileges.

We propose the following resolution:

The University Senate is dismayed to learn that a university affiliate, the American Institute of Physics, dismissed a staff member, Dr. Jeff Schmidt, after discovering that he did some critical writing at work. The Senate calls upon the University to:

- Reaffirm that freedom of expression is a defining feature of the university community and that free expression must be allowed throughout this community
- Make public its affiliation agreement with the American Center for Physics
- Appoint an impartial committee of faculty members to investigate the action of the American Institute of Physics in this matter
- Restore Schmidt's university privileges, so as not to participate in punishing him for his advocacy, pending the outcome of the investigation.

A letter in support of the restoration of his privileges was signed by eight faculty members: John Benedetto, Joseph Auslander, Raymond Johnson, Thomas Cohen, James Griffin, Steven Klees, Judith Hallett, and Rose-Marie Oster.

In addition, there was a report of a committee of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) which substantiated the unfairness of Schmidt's dismissal. One of the signers of this report is Professor Victor Granatstein of the University's Electrical Engineering Department.