



Shared Governance Update

Over the last several years, the MSFF has actively participated in institutional shared governance by holding designated positions on the Shared Governance Council and various university committees.

Additionally, faculty members involved in other committees and working groups (such as senate, college, and school) contribute our AFT/AAUP viewpoints. The opportunity to have “seats at the table” and voting rights on significant university committees is granted by current leadership and is not assured by the Board of Trustees Shared Governance Policy.

We value being included in the decision-making process and support expanding the faculty’s influence, especially for those who directly witness the challenges and achievements of our students. We extend our gratitude to **Kim Klimek**, representing MSFF on the

The Colorado AAUP: Protecting Academic Freedom and Shared Governance

Shared Governance Council, and **Sheila Rucki**, who serves on UPBAC.

Following the recent affiliation between the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) at the national level, MSFF is now a full member of the Colorado Conference of the AAUP, comprised of chapters at public and private universities and colleges across the state. MSFF is fortunate to have allies in the struggle to maintain academic freedom and productive working conditions in the Academy. The MSU Denver Faculty Senate and MSFF have formally endorsed versions of a Mutual Defense Compact in solidarity with AAUP chapters across the state.

The Conference has been meeting twice yearly, hosted

by Co-Chair **Aaron Scheider**, Professor at the University of Denver. The membership of the Colorado AAUP adopted the following resolution by acclamation at its annual meeting on June 20th, 2026: “It is the sense of this meeting that the Colorado AAUP should do everything possible to facilitate the introduction and passage of a bill that will compel the administrations at Colorado’s public colleges and universities to collectively bargain with all their employees.”

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Resolution Concerning Academic Freedom & Freedom of Association in Response to the Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (CCAC)

Investigation into Antisemitism on the Auraria Campus

WHEREAS, the CCAC has conducted an investigation and public hearings into the Auraria campus response to Constitutionally-protected assembly and speech of protests held on the Auraria campus during the Spring 2024 semester; and **WHEREAS**, this investigation and final report issued in May 2026 is premised on the assumption that these protests were motivated by Antisemitic animus; and

WHEREAS, in the course of the public hearings the Committee entertained calls for disciplining students, firing faculty, or subjecting organizers to lawsuits without evidence of criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, the Committee's final report repeatedly characterizes individuals engaged in Constitutionally protected activities as "mobs"; and

WHEREAS, the Committee's final report endorses recommendations to the U.S. Department of Justice that it use federal criminal law enforcement actions, including the enforcement of The Enforcement Act of 1871, which is a Reconstruction-era statute aimed to criminalize white supremacist paramilitary violence, as well as civil lawsuits against institutions, local

officials, and local law enforcement who fail to suppress disfavored speech; and

WHEREAS, the CCAC also calls for criminal and civil action against private individuals who engage in speech and assembly disfavored by the members of the Committee on the Auraria campus; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations threaten MSU Denver's climate of open academic exchange and respect for the First Amendment rights of all students, faculty, and staff who engage in speech disfavored by the members of the Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan State Faculty Federation has been made aware of these threats to Metropolitan State University's students, faculty, and staff via the final report of the CCAC and its analysis by Alex Boodrookas.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, that on this day, 25 September 2026, the Steering Committee of the Metropolitan State Faculty Federation condemns the report of the CCAC as politically motivated and a threat

to the educational mission of MSU Denver.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Steering Committee calls for solidarity with other academic institutions in the state of Colorado to reject politically motivated calls to suspend the First Amendment on the Auraria Campus and the use of the policing and juridical power of the U.S. government to suppress constitutionally protected speech and assembly. We do this in support of existing institutional protections for free speech and academic freedom as enshrined in MSU Denver University policy as well as the 1940 *American Association of University Professors' Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, including interpretive documents of 1968, 1972, 1982, 1990, 1998, and 2005.

ELECTION SEASON

2026 Midterm Elections

AFT Colorado has endorsed **Attorney General Phil Weiser** for governor, as well as state senate and house candidates supportive of public education. AFT Colorado's Committee on Political Education (COPE), funded through voluntary contributions, supports candidates for national and state races as well as state ballot measures. Such endorsements build the connections important for shaping legislation favorable to public higher education faculty and students. AFT Colorado and the Colorado Conference of the AAUP are hopeful that as Governor, Weiser will support a revived Worker Protection Collective Bargaining bill (twice vetoed by Governor Polis).

This legislation removes barriers for unions in the private sector in addition to some state and county employees granted collective bargaining protections since 2020. This will be a priority for Colorado's labor coalition, with hopes of working towards expansion of collective bargaining rights for additional public sector employees such as educators in higher education. Collective bargaining rights would be transformational at MSU Denver. Our workplace rights would be determined by a contract negotiated between the faculty and administration meeting as equals. Faculty input would be mandatory, rather than advisory.

MSFF Steering Committee Election

In accordance with the MSFF Constitution and Bylaws, elections for the 10-member Steering Committee to 2-year terms will take place in November.

Elected Steering Committee Members will also be eligible to be delegates to the biennial AFT Colorado Convention (new rules require delegates to be elected by the membership of the AFT Local). The constitution (amended in 2025) calls for the elected Steering Committee members to elect officers (President and Vice-President or Co-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer).

September 25: Elections Committee formed
October 1: Nominations Open
October 15: Nominations Close
November 1: Voting Opens
November 10: Voting Closes

National call: AFT Target Boycott



<https://www.aft.org/resolution/aft-urges-its-18-million-members-and-families-shop-local-not-target-back-school>

What We're Reading

“DOJ sues Colorado to overturn in-state tuition for students living in the country illegally,” Marianne Goodland, *Colorado Politics*, 24 July 2026. <https://www.coloradopolitics.com/2026/07/24/doj-sues-colorado-to-overturn-in-state-tuition-for-students-living-in-the-country-illegally/>.

“The Danger of Silence When Academic Freedom Is Under Threat,” Dominique J. Baker, *Inside Higher Ed*, 10 March 2026. <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/columns/echoes-quad/2026/03/10/danger-silence-when-academic-freedom-under-threat#>

Quote from this article:

“Let’s talk about the value of solidarity. Recently, senior leaders at the University of California, Los Angeles, made overtures to work with the Trump administration after receiving a settlement proposal

that required the university to restrict freedom of speech and expression on campus and to pay \$1.2 billion to the federal government. The UCLA Faculty Association and the Council of University of California Faculty Associations, along with the American Association of University Professors and other unions, sued the administration.”

The judge issued a preliminary injunction against the Trump administration, writing that the administration used a “playbook of initiating civil rights investigations of preeminent universities to justify cutting off federal funding, with the goal of bringing universities to their knees and forcing them to change their ideological tune.” (A ProPublica and Chronicle of Higher Education investigation detailed how the administration tasked lawyers to “rapidly ‘find’ evidence backing a preordained conclusion” at UCLA.)

Last month, the Trump administration dropped its appeal of that ruling. While the case itself proceeds, this means that unions were the ones who protected academic freedom at UCLA, not the institution’s senior leadership.

“That Same Ol’ Authoritarian Playbook,” Dominique J. Baker. 8 September 2026, <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/columns/echoes-quad/2026/09/08/same-ol-authoritarian-playbook>.

“AAUP Joins Coalition Fighting Latest Trump Anti-DEI Order,” AAUP, 20 April 2026, <https://www.aaup.org/news/aaup-joins-coalition-fighting-latest-trump-anti-dei-order>.

Reminder: most of the lawsuits defending academic freedom from the Trump administration have been not launched by universities, but by faculty unions, especially the AAUP/AFT.

“AFT, AAUP Respond to Trump Compact 2.0,” Press Release, 3 August 2026, <https://www.aft.org/press-release/aft-aaup-respond-trump-compact-20>.

“ACLU of Texas, Professors Sue Texas A&M System Over Censorship Policy, Detail Violations of Academic Freedom,” Press Release, ACLU of Texas, 4 August 2026, <https://www.aclutx.org/press-releases/aclu-of-texas-professors-sue-texas-am-system-over-censorship-policy-detail-violations-of-academic-freedom/>

“AI and the Corporate University” *Academe Magazine*, Spring 2026 Issue. <https://www.aaup.org/issue/spring-2026>

“Want to Fight Back Against Big Tech? Start Here,” Tressie McMillan Cottom. 3 August 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/03/opinion/artificial-intelligence-data-politics.html?emc=ed->

IN
SOLIDARITY,
WE CAN
TAKE BACK
EDUCATION

MSFF Fall 2026 Events

Steering Committee (Zoom)

Fri., Sept. 25, 2-3:15pm
Fri., Oct. 9, 2-3:15pm
Fri., Oct. 23, 2-3:15pm
Fri., Nov. 6, 2-3:15pm
Fri., Nov. 20, 2-3:15pm
Fri., Dec. 4, 2-3:15pm

([Zoom Link](#))

Membership Committee (CN 210 & Zoom)

Wed., Oct. 7, 12:30-1:30pm
Wed., Nov. 4, 12:30-1:30pm
Wed., Dec. 2, 12:30-1:30pm

([Zoom Link](#))

MSFF Happy Hours - I-Pie (Tivoli 229)

Wed., Sept. 23, 4pm

Topic: Artificial Intelligence

Mon., Oct. 19, 4pm

Topics: Conflict of Commitment,
Workload, Other Policies

Tues., Nov. 10, 4pm

Topics: Adjunct and CAT 2 Issues

[it_tmc_20260803&nl=tressie-mcmillan-cot-tom&segment_id=224108](https://tmc.20260803&nl=tressie-mcmillan-cot-tom&segment_id=224108)

“White House admits it used keywords to kill billions worth of California research grants,” *Associated Press*, 22 July 2026, <https://apnews.com/article/california-research-grants-terminated-keywords-lawsuit-a0ddb01413ecb-68d9668490a20be6207>.

Note: faculty unions-not the impacted universities-that launched this lawsuit, as has so often been the case in recent years.

“Faculty Quit as Texas A&M Victoria Requires Them On Campus 5 Days a Week,” *Inside Higher Ed*, 25 August 2026, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty/2026/08/25/faculty-quit-texas-university-orders-them-back-campus>

MSFF Steering Committee Election

Thrs., Oct. 1: Nominations Open
Thrs., Oct. 15: Nominations Close
Mon., Nov. 2: Ballots Sent Out
Election Buddy
Tues., Nov. 10: Voting Closes

Colorado Labor Education Collaborative

Tues., Sept. 29 Auraria Student Commons
Building, room 3216



“‘The people have spoken’: Pride flags multiply as BU students, staff protest against signage policy,” *The Daily Free Press*, April 1, 2026. <https://dailyfreepress.com/04/01/22/219214/the-people-have-spoken-pride-flags-multiply-as-bu-students-staff-protest-against-signage-policy/>

“As more universities agree to immigration enforcement on campus, students are fighting back,” Julia Luz Betancourt, *Prisim*, 14 April 2026, <https://prismreports.org/2026/04/14/universities-ice-cbp-st-johns-florida/>