

Resolution passed by the Rutgers AAUP-AFT Executive Council

Statement in Defense of Professor Jasbir Puar's Academic Freedom

Adopted by the Executive Council of Rutgers AAUP-AFT, February 25, 2016

In recent years, we have seen increased attacks on academic freedom. Faculty at universities around the country, as well as right here at Rutgers, have faced assaults on their speech (see https://youtu.be/jPxUoT_ACws). Earlier this month, Rutgers Associate Professor Jasbir Puar gave a lecture entitled "Inhumanist Biopolitics: How Palestine matters" to an audience at Vassar College. Some detractors objected, in a scholarly fashion, to her interpretation of Israeli politics. More militant commentators, however, have accused Dr. Puar of racism. Deplorably, some have also called upon the Rutgers administration to terminate her. Many have used social media to menace her with threats of rape and murder. We remind the Rutgers administration that academic freedom does not protect such personal attacks or any threats to individuals based on race, ethnicity, politics, or intellectual disagreements. Indeed, such implicit violence is antithetical to the free exchange of ideas that is at the core of academic freedom. In response to these threats to Dr. Puar, the Executive Council of Rutgers AAUP-AFT reaffirms that academic freedom protects all scholarly research and communication, including criticism of the actions and morality of any government or non-state actor. The Union offers advice, training, and legal protection to any faculty member facing similar attacks from within or outside Rutgers University.