

**Senate Question Period**  
February 28, 2012

**1. From Senator Young on academic freedom. Written response provided by Principal Woolf.**

**The AUCC has revised its Academic Freedom statement and has been criticized for narrowing the scope of previous editions. The University of Toronto has pointed to their own academic freedom statement as a preferable position. In fact, the QUFA Collective Agreement provides more protection than the AUCC document. Where does Queen's stand on this issue? Which document would you endorse as a better position to hold?**

I would begin by pointing out that the two documents referred to have distinct purposes and perspectives.

The AUCC Statement has as its goal the provision of a broad, pan-Canadian perspective on academic freedom. It seeks to reaffirm the important role of universities in the maintenance of a democratic society through their activities of teaching, learning and research. The Statement affirms the freedom of faculty and students to pursue truth and take unpopular stands, even where this entails intellectual risks and the tackling of controversial subjects. It balances this freedom with the responsibility of faculty and students to commit themselves to reasoned discourse, rigorous evidence-based scholarship and peer review. It also commits university administrators and faculty members to support university autonomy in the face of extraneous pressures. As the Executive Head of a member institution of the AUCC, I supported, and continue to support, this statement as one means, among many, for Canada's universities to affirm their place in the social fabric as loci of reasoned discourse.

The QUFA Collective Agreement, on the other hand, is a local, contractual document. Those faculty members whose terms of employment are governed by it fall under the Article on Academic Freedom (Article 14) found therein. However, not all faculty members at Queen's are members of QUFA. Examples include some clinical faculty as well as faculty members in administrative positions. Those faculty members with academic rank (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) who are not covered by the QUFA Collective Agreement are nevertheless covered by the Senate policy on Freedom and Responsibility, which may be found at <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/aptfreedom.html>.

In sum, I hope that I have shown that the two documents to which the question refers are therefore complementary in their scope and intent and that there is no need to choose between them.