



November 28, 2023

Dear Members of the Whitman Community,

We are writing in our capacity as officers of the Whitman College Chapter of the AAUP in response to campus divestment protests, procedures, and policies.

A group of students recently brought forth a proposal for Whitman College to “divest from any companies that supply weapons to Israel.” We want to help empower Whitman faculty to act on President Bolton’s subsequent statement from November 12 that “all members of the Whitman campus community” should “have an opportunity to provide their views” on divestment.

For faculty, providing views on divestment means, in part, exercising academic freedom in the following contexts:

- As members of a political community, faculty are entitled to freedom to speak on matters of public concern;
- As members of an academic institution tasked with a role in governance, faculty are entitled to freedom to speak on matters of institutional policy.

While the Whitman College Chapter of the AAUP takes no official position on the merits of the call for divestment, we do offer an unequivocal affirmation and defense of academic freedom on this campus, and value President Bolton’s November 28 assertion of its protection. We look forward to a discussion about divestment that is free and open, and implore the campus community to learn, respond, express, and organize as a practice of our educational mission.

For more information on the principles of academic freedom, see:

<https://www.aaup.org/programs/academic-freedom/fags-academic-freedom>

Sincerely,

Prof. Lisa Uddin, President of the Whitman AAUP Chapter
Prof. Jack Jackson, Vice President of the Whitman AAUP Chapter
Prof. Pavel Blagov, Secretary of the Whitman AAUP Chapter