

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

It is the policy of the University to maintain and encourage full academic freedom. Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the full development of a true university and apply to teaching, research and creative activities. An employee engaged in such activities shall be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence.

Academic freedom is accompanied by the corresponding responsibility to be forthright and honest in the pursuit and communication of scientific and scholarly knowledge; to respect students as individuals and avoid any exploitation of students for private advantage; and to indicate, when appropriate, that one is not an institutional representative unless specifically authorized as such.

Consistent with the exercise of academic responsibility, employees shall have freedom to present and discuss their own academic subjects, frankly and forthrightly, without fear of censorship, and to select instructional materials and determine grades in accordance with University policies. Objective and skillful exposition of such subject matter, including the acknowledgment of a variety of scholarly opinions, is the duty of every such employee. Employees shall also be free to engage in scholarly and creative activity and publish the results in a manner consistent with their professional obligations.

Academic freedom is accompanied by the corresponding responsibility to:

1. Be forthright and honest in the pursuit and communication of scientific and scholarly knowledge;
2. Respect students, staff, and colleagues as individuals; treat them in a collegial manner; and avoid any exploitation of such persons for private advantage;
3. Respect the integrity of the evaluation process with regard to students, staff, and colleagues, so that it reflects their true merit;
4. Indicate when appropriate that one is not an institutional representative unless specifically authorized as such; and
5. Contribute to the orderly and effective functioning of the employee's academic unit (program, department, school, and/or college) and/or the University.

In addition to their assigned duties, employees have responsibilities arising from the nature of the educational process. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, observing and upholding the ethical standards of their discipline; participating, as appropriate, in the shared system of collegial governance, especially at the department/unit level; respecting the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student; adhering to one's proper role as teacher, researcher, intellectual mentor, and counselor; and conducting oneself in a collegial manner in all interactions.

Ethical Conduct of the University Community

The University acknowledges a concern for values and ethics that are important to the whole educational experience. A faculty member is expected to show an awareness that membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities. The following responsibilities of faculty members are taken from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement on Professional Ethics, with slight modifications.

The professor, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognizes the special responsibilities of the profession. The professor's primary responsibility to his or her subject is to seek and to state the truth as he or she sees it. To this end, the professor devotes energies to developing and improving scholarly competence. The professor accepts the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending and transmitting knowledge. The professor must never seriously hamper or compromise freedom of inquiry.

As an instructor, the professor encourages the free pursuit of learning in students. The professor holds before him/her the best scholarly standards of his or her discipline. The professor demonstrates respect for the student as an individual and adheres to the proper role of intellectual guide and counselor. The professor makes every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that the evaluation of students reflects their true merit. The professor respects the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. The professor avoids any exploitation of students for private advantage and acknowledges significant assistance from them. The professor protects academic freedom.