

Academic Freedom

Intellectual freedom and responsibility

Intellectual freedom is to be guarded as a basic right of all citizens in a free society. To this end, the colleges of the district are committed to free discussion and open inquiry in the pursuit of truth. It is recognized that freedom to think, to read, to speak and to question is necessary to the development of an informed citizenry. This freedom shall be integral to the philosophy of this district and is guaranteed to all staff and students.

For each faculty member, intellectual freedom is both a right and a responsibility. As a right, it guarantees the instructor freedom to interpret personal findings and to communicate the conclusions without being subjected to interference, molestation, or penalty because the conclusions are at variance with those of other persons. As a responsibility, it carries the obligation to study, to investigate, to present, to discuss and to interpret fairly and objectively facts and ideas related to the instructor's assignments and to avoid teaching material which has no relation to the subject.

Since human knowledge is limited and changeable, the instructor will acknowledge the facts on which controversial views are based and show respect for opinions held by others. While striving to avoid bias, the instructor will cite the evidence available and present the conclusions to which the instructor believes this evidence points without limiting the freedom of the student to express and defend the student's own views and beliefs. With the understanding that the student must also respect the rights of others, the student shall have the freedom to question and differ without jeopardy to the student's scholastic standing.

The college faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an employee of an educational institution. As a person of learning and an educational employee, the faculty member should remember that the public judges the profession and the institution by his/her utterances. Hence, the faculty member should at all times be accurate, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesperson.

To insure these principles of intellectual freedom for this district's colleges, the administration and the board, as the governing body of the district, will demonstrate their support by actively working toward a climate which will foster this freedom. Such participation will extend to the point of defending and supporting any tenured or non-tenured faculty member who, while maintaining the high standards of the profession, finds personal freedom of expression unfairly attacked or curtailed.

Academic Freedom (continued)

Freedom of Speech, Political Activities

The governing board recognizes the right of any employee of the district to take or refrain from taking a stand on any political issue and to support or oppose any issue or candidate. In accordance with the Education Code, such activities must be conducted on the employee's own time. The employee will exercise reasonable care to show that he/she is acting in his/her capacity as a private citizen. Nothing in this policy shall prevent:

1. The discussion and study of political, social, and moral issues when such discussion and study are appropriate to the subject matter of a course.
2. The conducting of student and employee elections and campaigning connected therewith.

See Administrative Regulation 4030

Reference: Title 5 Section 51023; Accreditation Standard 2.2

Adopted by the Governing Board: June 8, 1978; June 4, 1996; October 5, 2004

Revised: October 13, 1982; January 1984; July 1, 2008