

Faculty Handbook

[Table of Contents](#) | [A-Z Index](#) | [Updates](#)

Section 4: Personnel Policies for Faculty

Academic Freedom and Standards of Conduct

Academic Freedom Statement

It is recognized that if faculty members are to teach and carry on research effectively, academic freedom is necessary. Academic freedom is the freedom of the faculty to teach and speak out as the fruits of their research and scholarship dictate, even though their conclusions may be unpopular or contrary to public opinion. Both within and outside the classroom, the faculty should exhibit the accuracy, restraint, and respect for the opinions of others appropriate to educators and persons of learning. In relations with the public, they should make it clear at all times whether they speak as private citizens, as experts on the subject in question, or as institutional spokesmen. In speaking as private citizens, faculty should make clear that they are doing so. In this connection, use of University titles should be permitted for identification purposes only, and it should be made clear that institutional endorsement is not implied.

The following statements were passed by the University Faculty Senate and were adopted as policy by the University administration and on May 31, 1979, by the Board of Trustees.

The teacher is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results, but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the University.

The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject but should be careful not to introduce into his or her teaching matter that which has little or no relation to the subject.

Classroom visitations for the purpose of teaching evaluations are compatible with academic freedom, but such visitation shall adhere to reasonable procedures contained in a written statement approved by a majority of department faculty. (Approved by Faculty Senate and amended by the Committee on Education and Training of the Board of Trustees, December 10, 1980)

The teacher is an individual, a member of a learned profession, as well as a member of an educational institution. When speaking as an individual, he or she should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but his or her special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and as an educator, the teacher should remember that the public may judge his or her profession and institution by his or her utterances. Hence the teacher should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he or she is not an institutional spokesperson.

Members of the University community are free to examine and to discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They are free to support causes by orderly means including any means of peaceful assembly or advocacy that do not infringe upon the rights or freedoms of others. Members of the University community are allowed to invite, and to see speakers, creative performers and artistic presentations of their own choosing. Guest appearances must not interfere with the University's regular instructional, research, and service programs. Except for ceremonial occasions, invited speakers and art presenters should be prepared for a reasonable public discussion of their expressed views.

Invited speakers and art presenters are accorded the full courtesy and protection appropriate to a university community. Individuals or groups who engage in actions designed to obstruct or in any way to prevent the speaker from speaking and the art presenter from presenting or displaying any form of artistic expression are subject to discipline and to financial responsibility in the event of damage to property or person.

The institutional control of campus facilities is not to be used as a device of censorship. Sponsorship of guest speakers and art presenters does not imply approval or endorsement of the views expressed, either by the sponsoring unit or the University.

[◀ Previous](#)

[▲ Up](#)

[Next ▶](#)

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