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Academic Freedom Policy (6-2-1998)

Georgia Southern University

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PREAMBLE

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom. Academic freedom exists within the institutional framework of shared governance in which collegial forms of deliberations are valued, responsibilities are shared, and constructive joint thought and action are fostered among the components of the academic institution⁽¹⁾. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interests of either the individual or the institution. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning⁽²⁾. Membership in the academic community imposes on students, faculty members, administrators, and board members an obligation to respect the dignity of others, to acknowledge their right to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry, and free expression on and off the campus⁽³⁾.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM⁽⁴⁾

Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing issues relevant to their subject. Pedagogical decisions should be made by the faculty in accordance with the policies of that academic unit. Pedagogical decisions should be consistent with university policies, codes of professional ethics and conduct as well as the educational goals of the course and the evaluation standards held in the academic unit.

Teachers are entitled to full freedom in scholarly activities and in dissemination of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties. Scholarly activities for pecuniary return should be based upon policies established by the governing bodies of the institution and the University System.

College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinion of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

¹⁾ based on the *Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, as it appears in the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports 7th edition, 1990: 119.

2) based on the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, as it appears in the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports 7th edition, 1990: 3.

3) based on *A Statement of the Association's Council: Freedom and Responsibility*, as it appears in the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports 7th edition, 1990: 77.

4) based on the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, as it appears in the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports 7th edition, 1990: 3-4.

Last Updated on June 4, 1998 by Ginger Malphrus