

Policies of the UNT Dallas College of Law	Chapter 07 Faculty Affairs
<b>07.201 Academic Freedom and Responsibility</b>	

**Policy Statement.** Institutions of higher education exist for the common good, which can be assured only through the free search for, and the free exposition of, truth and understanding, wherever and whenever they may be found. The freedoms protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States are indispensable safeguards to a democratic society. Within the academic community, the vigorous exercise of constitutional freedoms, together with the freedom to learn and to teach what scholarship suggests is the truth, to question generally accepted tenets, and to publish without fear of reprisal what scholarship has discovered, gives vitality to the UNT Dallas College of Law. Indeed, without these freedoms, the College of Law cannot fulfill its duty to society; although these freedoms have long been accepted in democratic societies and reaffirmed when tested, they need continuous reaffirmation and recommitment.

For these freedoms to endure within the academic environment, a concomitant dedication to academic responsibility is also essential. The academic community, which asks protection from outside interference in order to perform its mission, cannot tolerate actions by its members that hinder or make less effective the carrying out of that mission.

The right to these freedoms and the demands of academic responsibility apply equally to all those who teach at the College of Law, tenured or non-tenured, full time or part time.

**Application of Policy.** This policy applies to all faculty.

**Procedures and Responsibilities.**

**Constitutional Freedoms and the University.**

The constitutional freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment are enjoyed equally by all citizens under the law. The College of Law encourages the exercise of these rights by members of its academic community, as citizens, with the assurance that they will not be subject to institutional censorship or discipline.

When members of the academic community at the College of Law speak or write as citizens, they must bear in mind that the public will inevitably judge their profession and their institution by their actions. Therefore, they are under obligation at all times, both to their profession and institution, to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, to show respect for the opinions of others, and to make it clear that they are not official spokespersons for the institution. Consequently, official university equipment and supplies (including but not limited to telephones, computers, printers, stationary, letterhead, email and other College of Law related

equipment and supplies) must not be used to express personal opinions held as citizens.

### Academic Freedom.

The College of Law believes that academic freedom is essential to the full development of an academic institution, and that this freedom applies to teaching and scholarship. In the development of knowledge and scholarship, the faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism, and to examine ideas and develop knowledge, in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence. The faculty must be free to engage in scholarly activity and publish the results in a manner consistent with professional obligations. A similar atmosphere is required for university teaching. College of Law students must likewise have the opportunity to study a full spectrum of ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that they may acquire maturity of analysis and judgment. Objective and skillful exposition of such matters is the duty of every instructor.

Academic freedom can be sustained only when it is accompanied by academic responsibility. Faculty members must fulfill their responsibility to society and to their professions by manifesting academic competence, scholarly discretion, and good citizenship. Faculty members are citizens, members of learned professions, and academic officers of the College of Law. They must be constantly mindful that these roles may be inseparable in the public view, and should therefore at all times exercise appropriate restraint and sound judgment.

### Academic Responsibility.

Academic freedom is accompanied by the corresponding responsibility to:

- i. Be forthright and honest in the pursuit and communication of scholarly knowledge;
- ii. Respect students, staff, and colleagues as individuals and avoid any exploitation of such persons for private advantage;
- iii. Respect the integrity of the evaluation process with regards to students, staff, and colleagues, so that it reflects their true merit;
- iv. Clearly delineate when one is speaking or writing as a private citizen or expert in an area of expertise and when one is speaking or writing as an official representative of the university;
- v. Recognize the responsibilities arising from the nature of the educational process, including but not limited to such responsibilities as observing and upholding the ethical standards of their discipline; participating, as appropriate, in the shared system of collegial governance; respecting the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student; and adhering to one's proper role as educator, researcher, intellectual mentor, and advisor; and

- vi. Provide due notice of one's intention to interrupt or terminate employment with the College of Law.

A primary responsibility of all teaching faculty members at the College of Law is effective teaching. The academic climate that the College of Law seeks to maintain can only be achieved when members of the faculty regularly and conscientiously meet their fundamental instructional responsibilities: prepare for and conduct their classes, confer with and advise students, evaluate fairly and report promptly student achievement, and participate in the instructional, curricular, and assessment discussions and methods that are core to the instructional program of the institution and the growth of its students.

No less important is the responsibility of College of Law faculty members as teachers-scholars to maintain professional competence in their field of specialization and to exercise such competence publicly in lectures, discussions, publications, or other means by which scholarly and professional expertise and knowledge are demonstrated and may be appraised.

It is the responsibility of the administrators of the College of Law to promote, protect, and defend academic freedom, and, with the assistance of the faculty, to assure that members of the academic community fulfill their responsibilities. In addition, administrators have special responsibilities for which they are held accountable - namely, the marshaling of human, physical, and financial resources to realize institutional goals.

#### **References and Cross-references.**

UNT System Board of Regents Rule 06.400

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