

The University of North Texas at Dallas Policy Manual	Chapter 6.000
6.001 Academic Freedom and Responsibility	Faculty Affairs

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 University. Indeed, without these freedoms, the University cannot fulfill its duty to society and, although these freedoms have long been accepted in democratic societies and reaffirmed when tested, they need continuous reaffirmation and recommitment.

In order 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 University of North Texas at Dallas, 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 University of North Texas at Dallas encourages the exercise of these rights as citizens by members of its academic community with the assurance that they will not be subject to institutional censorship or discipline.

When members of the academic community at the University of North Texas at Dallas speak or write as citizens, they must bear in mind that, by their actions, the public will inevitably judge their profession and their institution. To both their profession and institution they are, therefore, under obligation at all times 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, email and other University related items) must not be used to express personal opinions held as citizens.

Academic Freedom.

The University of North Texas at Dallas believes that academic freedom is essential to the full development of a university and applies to teaching, research, and creative activity. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, the faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence. The faculty must be free to engage in scholarly and creative activity and publish the results in a manner consistent with professional obligations. A similar atmosphere is required for university teaching. An instructor must have freedom in delivering and discussing academic subjects as well as in selecting instructional materials and determining grades in accordance with the course goals and student learning outcomes. University students must likewise have the opportunity to study a full spectrum of ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that students 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. University faculty members are citizens, members of learned professions, and academic officers of the University. 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 freedom is accompanied by the corresponding responsibility to:

- i. Be forthright and honest in the pursuit and communication of scientific and 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. Indicate when appropriate that one is not an institutional representative unless specifically authorized in writing or policy by the University President as such;
- 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, especially at the unit level; 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 university employment.

A primary responsibility of all teaching faculty members at the University of North Texas at Dallas is effective teaching. The academic climate that the University seeks to maintain can only be achieved when members of the faculty regularly and conscientiously meet their fundamental instructional responsibilities: preparing for and meeting their assignments, conferring with and advising students, evaluating fairly and reporting promptly student achievement, and participating in those group deliberations that relate to the development of the instructional program of the institution and the growth of its students.

No less important is the responsibility of the University of North Texas at Dallas 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 whereby scholarly and professional stature are demonstrated and may be appraised.

It is the responsibility of administrators of the University 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 in order to realize institutional goals.

References and Cross-references.

Regents Rule 06.400

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