

Article VI: Academic Freedom: Rights and Responsibilities

Section 1. Southern Illinois University shall operate under the following principles of academic freedom and responsibility.

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher(1) or the institution as a whole. 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. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

- A. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
- B. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subjects. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
- C. College or university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of educational institutions. 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 persons of learning and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institutions 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 institutional spokesmen.(2)

(1) The word "teacher" as used in this document is understood to include the investigator who is attached to an academic institution without teaching duties.

(2) Paraphrased from the "Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors," Spring Quarter, 1950, pages 45 to 49.

Section 2. In discussing controversial matters in the classroom teachers should proceed in a fair and scholarly manner.

- A. Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end they devote their energies to developing and improving scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although they may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise freedom of inquiry.
- B. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly standards for their discipline. They demonstrate respect for students as individuals, and adhere to their proper role as intellectual guide and counselor. They make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that the evaluation of students reflects their true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any

exploitation of students for their private advantage and acknowledge significant assistance from them. They protect students' academic freedom.

- C. As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas they show due respect for the opinion of others. They acknowledge academic debts and strive to be objective in the professional judgment of colleagues. They accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of the institution.
- D. As members of their institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although they observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided they do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain the right to criticize and seek revision. Professors determine the amount and character of the work they do outside the institution with due regard to their paramount responsibilities within it. When considering the interruption or termination of service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.
- E. As members of a community, professors have the rights and obligations of citizens. They measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression that they speak or act for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.(3)

(3) Paraphrase of a document approved at the Fifty-second Annual Meeting and published in AAUP Bulletin, 55(1969): 86-87.

Section 3. Membership in the academic community.

- A. Membership in the academic community imposes on students, faculty members, administrators, and trustees 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 instruction, and free expression on and off the campus. The expression of dissent and the attempt to produce change, therefore, may not be carried out in ways which injure individuals or damage institutional facilities or disrupt the classes of teachers or colleagues. Speakers on campus must not only be protected from violence, but given an opportunity to be heard. Those who seek to call attention to grievances must not do so in ways that significantly impede the functions of the institution.
- B. Students are entitled to an atmosphere conducive to learning and to even-handed treatment in all aspects of the teacher-student relationship. Faculty members may not refuse to enroll or teach students on the grounds of their beliefs or the possible uses to which they may put the knowledge to be gained in a course. Students should not be forced by the authority inherent in the instructional role to make particular personal choices as to political action or their own part in society. Evaluation of students and the award of credit must be based on academic performance professionally judged and not on matters irrelevant to that performance, whether personality, race, religion, degree of political activism, gender, or personal beliefs.
- C. It is the teachers' mastery of their subject and their own scholarship which entitle them to the classroom and to freedom in the presentation of their subject. Thus, it is improper for instructors persistently to intrude materials which have no relation to the subject matter of the course as announced to their students and as approved by the faculty in their collective responsibility for the curriculum.
- D. Because academic freedom has traditionally included the instructors' full freedom as citizens, most faculty members face no insoluble conflicts between the claims of politics, social action, and conscience, on the one hand, and the claims and expectations of their students, colleagues, and institutions, on the other. If such conflicts become acute, and the instructors' attention to their obligations as citizens and moral agents precludes the fulfillment of substantial academic obligations, they cannot escape the responsibility of that choice, but should either request a leave of absence or resign their academic position.(4)

(4) Paraphrased excerpt from a statement approved unanimously by the Council of the AAUP, Washington, D.C., October 31, 1970.