

BP 4030 ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Reference: Education Code section 76120; Title 5 section 51023; Accreditation Standard I.C.7; 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with Interpretative Comments, in AAUP POLICY DOCUMENTS & REPORTS (11th ed. 2015)

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

1. The free expression guarantee provided by the United States Constitution's First Amendment is vital to America's democracy; the functioning of democratic institutions depends on the people's freedom to vigorously discuss, debate, disagree, challenge and dialogue on all topics of public concern.
2. To fulfill its civic and educational mission, an institution of higher education must encourage its campus community to comprehend and value the importance of the right of free expression to an open society and an educated populace.
3. Developing the critical inquiry and thought required for individual success and societal progress can only occur in an academic environment that promotes an open and free exchange of ideas and freedom of expression must, therefore, extend to students and faculty in an educational environment.
4. The College supports academic freedom for its faculty and students and encourages them to develop and engage in opportunities for critical thinking and personal growth without compromising the respect to which all persons are entitled.

B. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE FACULTY

The District adopts the definition of academic freedom provided by the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, including the 1970 Interpretive Comments. That definition, in summary, declares that academic freedom is the freedom to teach, both in and outside the classroom, to conduct research and to publish the results of those investigations, and to address any matter of institutional policy or action whether or not as a member of an agency of institutional governance. Professors should also have the freedom to address the larger community with regard to any matter of social, political, economic or other interest, without institutional discipline or restraint, save in response to fundamental violations of professional ethics or statements that suggest disciplinary incompetence.

C. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND STUDENTS

1. By engaging in academic study within the District, students should accept that they will study in an environment designed to present a full, open, and thoughtful range of academic insights, perspectives, and viewpoints and that they are likely to be exposed to conflicting and controversial views as a result.

2. Academic freedom allows students to take reasoned exception to the concepts and conclusions presented in any course of study in a manner that is consistent with the District's Code of Student Conduct. Students remain responsible, however, for learning the content of any course in which they are enrolled, and can expect to be evaluated on their knowledge of such information.

D. DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

1. The District is committed to the full support of the principle of academic freedom within all its activities.
2. The District supports the freedom of all faculty to inquire, to teach controversial content, to model and encourage critical thinking, and to present multiple viewpoints within each discipline.
3. The District supports the freedom of all students to inquire, access the full range of information available, explore difficult and controversial material, develop and practice critical thinking skills, and learn in a climate free of intimidation and conducive to the free exchange of ideas.
4. The District recognizes that the California Education Code grants faculty the right and the professional responsibility to assign grades free from political influence, intimidation, or legal threat.

E. ROLE OF ACADEMIC SENATE

1. The Academic Senate shall establish a Committee on Academic Freedom to provide clarification and advice on matters relating to academic freedom.

See Administrative Procedure AP 4030

Approved: 11/10/2020

Next Review Date: Fall, 2026