

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

*University Statement 12.01.99.C1.02 - Approved January 20, 1995*

1. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good. The common good depends upon a free search for truth and its free expression. Hence, it is essential that the faculty member be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction, and to voice and publish conclusions concerning the significance of evidence considered relevant. The faculty member must be free from the corrosive fear that others, inside or outside the University community, because their vision may differ, may threaten his or her professional career or the material benefits accruing from it.
2. Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject which he or she teaches, including the absence of pressure from the institution or from regulations which violate the First Amendment in insisting on orthodoxy in the classroom, but should be careful not to persistently introduce controversial matters which have no relation to the classroom subject.
3. Exercise of professional integrity by a faculty member includes recognition that the public may judge his or her profession and institution by statements made by the faculty member. Therefore, when speaking or acting as a private person, the faculty member should strive to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraints, to show respect for the opinion of others, and to avoid creating the impression that he or she speaks or acts for the College or University.
4. Faculty members have constitutionally protected rights as citizens to freedom of expression on matters of public concern. A faculty member's comments are protected even though they may be highly critical in tone or content, or erroneous, but such statements are not protected free speech if they either substantially impede the faculty member's performance of daily duties or if they are part of a continuing pattern of expression of such nature as to destroy the ability to work cooperatively and the morale of a division, department or college.
5. False statements and/or falsification of scholarly work made with knowledge of their falsity or in reckless disregard of the truth are not entitled to constitutional protection. Furthermore, public statements may be without sufficient foundation as to call into question the fitness of the faculty member to perform his or her professional duties. In such cases, where the facts are in dispute, hearings will be conducted by a committee of administrators, and faculty appointed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs from persons recommended by the Faculty Senate. Due process will be followed. The controlling principle is that a faculty member's expression of opinion as a citizen cannot

constitute grounds for dismissal unless it clearly demonstrates the faculty member's unfitness for his or her position. Extramural utterances rarely bear upon the faculty member's fitness for job performance. Moreover, a final decision should take into account the faculty member's entire record as a teacher and scholar.

6. Every member of the faculty or staff has the right to participate in political activities so long as such political activities do not interfere with the discharge of the duties and responsibilities that the employee owes to the System or any of its component institutions.