

POLICY 06:02:03 ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Introduction

Pellissippi State Community College affirms that academic freedom is fundamental to the faculty's role in preparing students to be independent, critical thinkers equipped to fully participate in a free society.

Academic freedom is essential to fulfilling the ultimate objective of an educational institution—fostering the skills for enabling the free search for truth--and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth, and academic freedom in teaching is fundamental to protecting both the rights of the faculty members to teach effectively and the rights of students to learn and develop the ability to think critically.

Because of the rigorous process by which faculty members become qualified and maintain qualifications to teach in a college or university, they as a group are best qualified to set and determine professional standards.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Pellissippi State Community College recognizes the principle of academic freedom, pursuant to which

- I. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom in teaching his or her subject, including but not limited to the right to determine pedagogical techniques, activities, and assignments.
- II. Faculty, as members of departments, are responsible for creating master syllabi constructed in such a way as to allow individual faculty members maximum liberty in designing their own syllabi within the limits or requirements of the master syllabus.
- III. Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of his/her other academic duties.
- IV. Each faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When the faculty members 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 men and women of learning and educational officers, they must remember that the public may judge the profession and the College by the faculty members' utterances. Hence, all faculty members must at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they do not speak for the College.
- V. Implicit in the principle of academic freedom are the corollary responsibilities of the faculty who enjoy that freedom. Incompetence, indolence, intellectual dishonesty, failure to carry out assigned duties, serious moral dereliction, arbitrary and capricious disregard of standards of professional conduct--these and other grounds as set forth in the policy on academic tenure may constitute adequate cause for dismissal or other disciplinary sanctions against faculty members subject to the judgment of peers.

VI. The right to academic freedom imposes upon the faculty an equal obligation to take appropriate professional action against faculty members who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities. The faculty member has an obligation to participate in tenure and promotion review of colleagues. Thus, academic freedom and academic responsibility are interdependent, and academic tenure is adopted as a means to protect the former while promoting the latter. While academic tenure is essential for the protection of academic freedom, all faculty members, tenured or non-tenured, have an equal right to academic freedom and bear the same academic responsibilities implicit in that freedom.

The policy on academic freedom and responsibility, is consistent with the Tennessee Board of Regents [Policy 5:02:03:30 Academic Freedom and Responsibility](#).

Approved: President Allen G. Edwards, April 12, 2004

Reviewed/Recommended, President's Council, August 25, 2014

Approved President L. Anthony Wise, Jr., August 25, 2014

Approved President L. Anthony Wise, Jr., December 2, 2019