

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Academic Freedom and Responsibility

NUMBER: 1:11

1. The importance of academic freedom in teaching and learning and research and publication is well recognized and accepted. All employees whose duties include teaching, scholarly or creative work, or research are guaranteed the right of academic freedom in such pursuits, subject only to accepted standards of professional responsibility, including, but not limited to, those herein set forth:
 - A. Academic freedom is the freedom to inquire, discover, access, study, discuss, publish, investigate, research, disseminate, and teach, subject to the control and authority of the rational methods by which knowledge is established and accepted in the field. Freedom in teaching and learning and research and publication is fundamental to the advancement of truth and the creation of knowledge.
 - B. Academic freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in freedom in learning. It includes the freedom to perform one's professional duties and to present differing and sometimes controversial points of view, free from reprisal. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in the discussion of their subject and in the presentation of various scholarly views, including controversial matter, which is relevant to a given course and course objectives. While controversy is at the heart of free academic inquiry, faculty members should avoid persistently including material that does not relate to a given course or course objectives, or that otherwise detracts from the underlying course objectives. In the many instances where there are differing and even controversial scholarly views, divergent viewpoints and materials should be presented, studied, analyzed and debated to challenge and support students in developing their ability to think critically, form opinions and draw conclusions.
 - C. The concept of academic freedom is accompanied by an equally demanding concept of responsibility. Faculty members are members of a learned profession. When they speak or write as private citizens on matters of public concern, they must be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As learned people and as educators, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, show respect for the opinions of others and make every effort to indicate when they are not speaking for the institution.

2. To secure student freedom in learning, faculty members in the classroom and in seminar should encourage free and orderly discussion, inquiry and expression of the course subject matter. Student performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
 - A. Students must be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
 - B. Student appeals alleging an academic evaluation was tainted by prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards shall be addressed under Board Policy 2:9. Additionally, each institution shall establish a method by which students can submit complaints regarding allegations of any instruction conducted in a manner which is inconsistent with this policy. These procedures shall prohibit retaliation against persons who initiate appeals or complaints, or who participate in the review of appeals or complaints.
 - C. Students are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

SOURCE: BOR, Aug. 1979; BOR, December 2005; BOR December 2021