

Attachment 4  
Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility

**POLICY MANUAL  
FACULTY**

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**Number 403**

**Subject: Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility**

**Effective Date: July 1, 1997**

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**403.1 INTRODUCTION**

The University is operated for the common good which depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to teaching, research, and service. (See policy 401.9.1 regarding provisions which are the same or similar to certain statements of the AAUP).

The University is a community dedicated, through promulgation of thought, truth, and understanding, to teaching, research, and service. It must, therefore, be a place where innovative ideas, original experiments, creative activities, and independence of thought are not merely tolerated but actively encouraged. ~~Because thought~~ Thought and understanding flourish only in a climate of intellectual academic freedom and integrity, expressed collectively by colleges and departments as well as individually through research and teaching and as they exist within the wider context of advanced study as commonly understood by all universities. The community also values diversity and respect, without which there can be no collegiality among faculty and students. In addition, the University community values individual rights and freedoms, including the right of each community member to adhere to individual systems of conscience, religion, and ethics. Finally, the University recognizes that with all rights come responsibilities.

~~and because~~ Because the pursuit of truth is fundamentally a personal enterprise, a statement of faculty responsibility must be strongly anchored to principles of intellectual freedom and personal autonomy. While faculty must abide by standards of professional responsibility, the University must provide and safeguard a climate of intellectual freedom. Relationships within the university should consist of shared confidence, mutual loyalty, and trust. Dealings should be conducted with courtesy, civility, decency, and a concern for personal dignity. Such an atmosphere can be achieved only when all concerned behave responsibly. While the right of academic freedom is respected, the exercise of the right cannot be through disruptive actions or physical force. The University works to uphold its collective values by fostering free speech, broadening fields of inquiry, and encouraging generation of new knowledge that challenges, shapes, and enriches our collective and individual understandings.

**403.2 ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. The faculty member is entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility.

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## 2.1 Freedom and Responsibilities of the University

Subject to the power and authority of the Board of Regents to control, manage, and supervise the State System of Higher Education, and Utah State University as a member institution, the University has the freedom to pursue its ends without interference from government. Included therein are the four essential freedoms of the University to determine for itself on academic grounds: 1) who may teach; 2) what may be taught; 3) how it shall be taught; and 4) who may be admitted to study. Consistent with principles of academic freedom, the faculty, individually and collectively, has the responsibility for determining the content of the curriculum.

The University consists of many components all of which support the interactive, collegial enterprise that exists in the quest for knowledge and its transmittal. The University has the general responsibility to protect the academic freedom of every faculty member and the freedom of every student to learn. The University itself shall not violate the academic freedom of any faculty member or the freedom of any student to learn and shall use its powers and resources to defend its faculty and students from unjustified attempts to compromise or restrict those freedoms, even should the exercise of those freedoms generate hostility.

## 2.2 Freedom and Course Content Requirements

Students are expected to take courses that will challenge them intellectually and personally. Students must understand and be able to articulate the ideas and theories that are important to the discourse within and among academic disciplines. Personal disagreement with these ideas and theories or their implications is not sufficient grounds for requesting an alternative course requirement. Alternative requirements requested on such grounds will not necessarily be granted. The University recognizes that students' sincerely held core beliefs may make it difficult for students to fulfill some requirements of some courses or majors. *The University assumes no obligation to ensure that all students will be able to complete any course or major.*

## 2.2 2.3 Violations of Academic Freedom or Standards and Regulations

Persons having a formal association with the University shall not be involved in acts which violate the academic freedom or constitutional rights of others, or the standards and regulations of the University or the State Board of Regents.

## 403.3 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY; STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The concept of academic freedom is accompanied by an equally demanding concept of professional responsibility. The standards for professional responsibility listed in the following subsections are standards to which faculty members are expected to adhere. University faculty members are citizens, members of learned professions, and officers of an educational institution. When speaking or writing as citizens, faculty members are free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As individuals of learning and as educational officers, they should understand that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their individual utterances. Hence, they should at

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all times strive to be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

### 3.1 Standards of Conduct – Faculty Responsibilities to Student

(1) Faculty members engage in reasonable and substantial preparation for the teaching of their courses, appropriate to the educational objectives to be achieved **and consistent with the standards of the discipline.**

(2) Faculty members meet scheduled classes. Schedules are altered or classes canceled only for valid reasons and only after adequate notice is given to students and to the department head, dean, or other appropriate academic officer. Failure to meet a class without prior notice to students is excusable only for reasons beyond the control of the faculty member.

(3) Faculty members **shall select course content requirements based on the legitimate pedagogical goals of the course and discipline, and inform students of the general content, requirements, and evaluation criteria in the syllabus or comparable documentation** at the beginning of any course ~~that~~ they teach. Faculty members evaluate student course work promptly, conscientiously, without prejudice or favoritism, and consistently with the criteria stated at the beginning of the course **in the course documentation** and related to the legitimate ~~academic purposes~~ **pedagogical goals** of the course. **The documentation for the course should define, to the extent possible, the writings, lectures, films, or presentations, performances, or other course content requirements in sufficient detail to allow the student to identify course materials requirements that may conflict with a the student's sincerely held core beliefs.** ~~Instructors may include a statement in the course documentation if they believe course materials may conflict with students' sincerely held core beliefs. However,~~ **Faculty will not always be able to predict in advance which if any materials requirements that may conflict with the sincerely held core beliefs of a given student or group of students. If conflicts arise, Procedures for Alternative Course Requirements due to Conflicts with Sincerely Held Core Beliefs [location] provides guidance to students and faculty for the resolution of conflicts.** [See the end of this attachment for a clean version of this policy.]

(4) Faculty members with teaching responsibilities maintain regular office hours for consultation with students, or they otherwise assure accessibility to students.

(5) Faculty members do not plagiarize the work of students. When faculty members and students work together, appropriate credit is given to the students. Faculty members do not limit or curtail the right of any student to publish or otherwise communicate the result of the student's own independent scholarly activities.

(6) Faculty members do not use their positions and authority to obtain uncompensated labor or to solicit gifts or favors from students. Faculty members do not ask students to perform services unrelated to legitimate requirements of a course unless the student is adequately compensated for such services.

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(7) Faculty members do not reveal matters told to them in confidence by students except as required by law, and then only to persons entitled to such information by law or institutional regulation. Faculty members may, however, report their assessment of a student's performance and ability to persons logically and legitimately entitled to receive such reports.

(8) Faculty members create and maintain environments in which students are provided the opportunity to do original thinking, research, and writing.

(9) Faculty members avoid the misuse of the classroom by preempting substantial portions of class time for the presentation of views on topics unrelated to the subject matter of the course. Faculty members do not reward agreement or penalize disagreement with his or her views on controversial topics.

(10) Faculty members do not engage in the sexual harassment of students (policy 407.9).

**CLEAN COPY OF CODE 403.3.1(3) WITH SUGGESTED REVISIONS**

(3) Faculty members shall select course requirements based on the legitimate pedagogical goals of the course and discipline, and inform students of the general content and evaluation criteria in the syllabus or comparable documentation at the beginning of any course they teach. Faculty members evaluate student course work promptly, conscientiously, without prejudice or favoritism, and consistently with the criteria stated at the beginning of the course in the course documentation and related to the legitimate pedagogical goals of the course. The documentation for the course should define, to the extent possible, the writings, lectures, films, presentations, performances, or other course requirements in sufficient detail to allow the student to identify requirements that may conflict with the student's sincerely held core beliefs. Faculty will not always be able to predict in advance requirements that may conflict with the sincerely held core beliefs of a given student or group of students. If conflicts arise, Procedures for Alternative Course Requirements due to Conflicts with Sincerely Held Core Beliefs [location] provides guidance to students and faculty for the resolution of conflicts.