

Policy Title: Academic Freedom

Impact: Faculty and Students

Responsibility: Office of Instruction

Effective Date: 6/30/1999

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Relates to Procedure: 3.02.23, 3.02.30 and 5.16

Legal Citation(s):

North Idaho College provides an environment where relevant parties, as described in this policy, should expect the standards of academic freedom and academic responsibility to apply to all discourse intended to advance the mission of this institution.

Academic Freedom advances the right of postsecondary students and faculty, to pursue educational opportunities that seek to examine, apply, discuss, and build knowledge, theories, principles, concepts, or ideas without fear of censorship or retaliation.

Academic Responsibility is the commitment by students, faculty, and institutions to strive to protect the academic freedom of others by appreciating their special position in the community, performing academic obligations with intellectual honesty, promoting the free exchange of ideas, and showing respect toward those with whom they both agree and disagree.

Intellectual honesty encompasses truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, and open-mindedness in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding by applying a method of problem solving characterized by an unbiased, honest attitude (see Academic Integrity policy).

Students

A student is defined as any person duly admitted and enrolled at this institution. This policy recognizes the academic freedom and academic responsibility to individuals with the status of student.

A. Academic Freedom of Students

In addition to constitutionally protected freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion, students have the right to engage in free inquiry, intellectual debate, and freedom of scholarship both on and off campus. Students shall not be subject to retaliation or censorship in response to their beliefs, opinions, research, publications, creative activity, and participation in institutional governance. Students are subject to the responsibilities outlined in this policy. This academic freedom includes but is not limited to:

i. Instructional Environments

- A. Students have the right to express personal opinions about concepts and theories presented in their courses and to disagree with opinions expressed by

faculty and fellow students. Students are entitled to fair and even treatment in all aspects of student-faculty relationships.

- B. Students may not be directed, evaluated on, or otherwise compelled to personally affirm, adopt or adhere to any particular political, religious, philosophical, or ideological tenets.
- ii. Research, Publication, and Creative Activity
 - A. Students may pursue research topics of their choosing, pursuant to institutional research and course standards.
 - B. Students have the right to publish and present their research as well as engage in the production and exhibition of creative works.
 - C. Students are entitled to attribution for discoveries and original research conducted.
- iii. Participation in Institutional Governance
 - A. Students have the right to participate in institutional governance through appropriate institutional processes.
 - B. Students have the right to express opinions and provide feedback concerning institutional governance and administration without fear of censorship or retaliation.
 - C. In matters of disciplinary action, students have the right to due process and to be held accountable using academic standards and institutional procedures (see Student Code of Conduct policy)
- iv. Community and Campus Involvement
 - A. Students have the right of free expression on and off campus (see Time, Place, and Manner for Exercising Freedom of Speech policy).
 - B. Students have the right to organize student associations and to request official recognition or status from the institution for such associations.
 - C. Students have the right to be free from requirements to make personal or political choices against their beliefs or values.

B. Academic Responsibility of Students

Academic freedom carries certain responsibilities which broadly include contributions to the academic community, acknowledgement of the validity of a diverse range of perspectives, commitment to learning relevant information, and good stewardship of the academic community. Students assume, at minimum, the following responsibilities in relation to academic freedom:

- i. By enrolling in a public postsecondary institution, students agree to adhere to the institutions' student codes of conduct and to respect the rights of others, including the right to express differing opinions. Students also agree to acknowledge that faculty may expose students to a broad range of diverse perspectives, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off campus. Expression of dissent and attempts to produce change shall not be carried out in ways which injure individuals, damage institutional facilities, disrupt classes, or interfere with institutional activities. Students who seek to call attention to grievances must do so in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, and in ways that do not significantly impede the academic functions of the institution.
- ii. Students have a responsibility to engage in scholarship, learn material that is relevant to course outcomes, and adhere to course syllabi and institutional student codes of

- conduct. A student's personal opinion does not permit them to avoid responsibility for completing assigned course content.
- iii. Students are responsible for the academic integrity of their coursework, including, but not limited to producing original works for assignments and completing assessments and activities using their own knowledge and experience.
 - iv. Students are responsible for conducting and reporting research in an ethical manner and with intellectual honesty. Students shall not threaten the rights or the safety of others while exercising academic freedom. Students will frequently participate in learning environments with the free exchange of ideas, but shall not be required to make personal or political choices against their beliefs or values.

Faculty

Faculty forward the academic mission of a college through teaching, research, service, and other scholarly contributions. This policy recognizes the academic freedom and academic responsibility to individuals with the status of faculty.

A. Academic Freedom of Faculty

Faculty have the right to engage in free inquiry, intellectual debate, and freedom of scholarship both on and off campus. Faculty shall not be subject to retaliation or censorship in response to their research, publications, creative activity, pedagogy, participation in institutional governance, and all other official aspects of their job description. When speaking or writing as a citizen, each faculty member should be free from institutional censorship or discipline so long as it's made clear that such action is not taken as a representative of the college (see Political Activities Policy). Faculty are subject to the responsibilities outlined in this policy. This academic freedom includes but is not limited to:

- i. Pedagogy and Curriculum Development
 - 1. Faculty have the right to determine course content, including the use of relevant materials, subject to institutional curriculum development processes.
 - 2. Faculty have the right to determine the instructional methodologies used to engage learners in the course content and evaluate student performance.
- ii. Research, Publication, and Creative Activity
 - 1. Faculty may pursue research topics of their choosing, pursuant to institutional research standards.
 - 2. Faculty have the right to publish and present their research as well as engage in the production and exhibition of creative works, within the requirements related to intellectual property (see Intellectual Property policy 2.03.03).
 - 3. Faculty are entitled to attribution for discoveries and original research.
- iii. Participation in Institutional Governance
 - 1. Faculty have the right to participate in institutional governance.
 - 2. Faculty have the right to express opinions and provide feedback concerning institutional governance and administration without fear of censorship or retaliation.
 - 3. Faculty have the right to due process in matters of academic freedom.
 - 4. Faculty have the right to participate in institutional processes that determine who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and what methods will be used for student admission into selective enrollment programs.

B. Academic Responsibility of Faculty

Academic freedom carries with it certain responsibilities which broadly include maintaining competence in scholarship, exposing students to a diverse range of perspectives, ensuring that students are taught relevant information, and being good stewards of the academic community.

Faculty assume the following responsibilities in relation to academic freedom:

- i. Each faculty member of the institution is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a representative of the institution. Membership in the academic community imposes on faculty an obligation to respect the rights of others, including the right to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off campus. Expression of dissent and attempts to produce change shall not be carried out in ways which injure individuals, damage institutional facilities, disrupt classes, or interfere with institutional activities. Faculty who seek to call attention to grievances must do so in accordance with institutional policies and procedures (see Grievances policy). Furthermore, faculty members must refrain from using institutional resources to further interests or activities that are not a part of the assigned responsibilities to the institution.
- ii. Faculty members are expected to maintain professional competence in their field(s) of specialization, congruent with their teaching, service, and scholarly expectations.
- iii. Faculty are responsible for presenting the content in their courses in a way that is consistent with the mission of the institution, department, program, and discipline. When presenting content, faculty may expose students to an intellectual diversity of scholarly and creative views related to the faculty member's discipline and/or specific field of study.
- iv. Faculty shall respect the rights and maintain the safety of students, other faculty, and administrators, while exercising academic freedom.
- v. Faculty may not refuse to teach a student because of the student's beliefs, interpretations, or applications of knowledge. Faculty have the responsibility to facilitate pluralistic learning and work environments, but shall not require others to adopt personal or political choices against their beliefs or values.

Institutional Support of Academic Freedom

North Idaho college is an institution providing postsecondary academic instruction, including career technical and workforce training programs.

Academic Responsibility of the Institution

I. Academic freedom carries with it certain responsibilities which broadly include the educational functions of an institution, the ethical administration of academic affairs, and the protection of student and faculty academic freedom. North Idaho College assumes, at minimum, the following responsibilities in relation to academic freedom:

- i. The institution has a responsibility to set, maintain, and enforce policies that protect the academic freedom and promote the academic responsibility of faculty and students.
- ii. The institution shall use methods that are consistent and respectful of the ideals of academic freedom when evaluating faculty members.

- iii. The institution shall dedicate adequate resources, space, and programming toward the advancement of academic freedom.
- iv. The institution has a responsibility to create and deliver academic programs. It shall maintain appropriate policies and processes to aid content and curriculum delivery that are consistent with the ideals of academic freedom.

Limitations

The following limitations exist to the academic freedom of faculty and students and the academic responsibility of students, faculty, and this institution:

- A. Academic freedom does not permit members of the institutional community to harass, threaten, or intimidate others.
- B. Student academic freedom does not grant students the right to refuse to complete assigned coursework without consequence.
- C. Academic freedom does not protect faculty members from colleague or student challenges to, or disagreement with, their instructional methods.
- D. Academic freedom does not protect faculty or students from institutional or noninstitutional penalties for violating the law.
- E. Academic freedom does not confer the right to faculty or students to violate institutional policies; though academic freedom does confer the right of faculty and students to criticize such policies.
- F. Academic freedom does not protect faculty or students from disciplinary action consistent with established institutional policies.
- G. Academic freedom does not protect faculty or students from sanctions or dismissal for professional misconduct or poor performance consistent with established institutional policies.
- H. Academic freedom does not protect faculty or students from investigations into allegations of or discipline for scientific misconduct or other violations of institutional policy.

Procedures applicable to resolving academic freedom complaints are:

Grievances
Remediation of Tenured Faculty
Student Complaints and Concerns

This policy is adapted from Idaho State Board of Education Policy III.B – Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility.