

B. Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics

It is fundamental to the health of an academic institution of higher learning, and ultimately to the health of society at large, that individuals and groups of persons exercise both responsibility and freedom to search for the truth, and to speak the truth as it is discovered. As an academic community, the University as a whole and individual or groups of faculty, administrators and students bear mutual responsibility for extending to one another the trust and respect that foster an environment of inquiry and academic freedom.

Mount St. Joseph University endorses and supports the principles of academic freedom and of professional ethics. This statement is primarily based upon those recommended by the American Association of University Professors. For background of this section of the Handbook, acknowledgment is given to the American Association of University Professors, Policy Documents and Reports (January 1990), "Academic Freedom and Tenure" (1940 Statement of Principles), and "Statement on Professional Ethics" (1966).

Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in publishing the results of research, in accord with federal guidelines. Research for pecuniary return, however, must be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the University. Teachers are also entitled to freedom in discussing a subject in the classroom.

College or university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession and representatives of their institution. Each of these roles imposes unique obligations. As citizens who are persons of learning and representatives of education, faculty members should remember that the public may judge their profession, as well as their college or university, by their statements. Hence, faculty members should at all times strive to be accurate, exercise appropriate judgment, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking in the name of the University.

Deeply committed to intellectual honesty and to the advancement of knowledge, faculty members recognize the special responsibilities they bear. Their primary responsibility to their own discipline is to seek and to state the truth as they honestly see it. To this end they continue to develop and improve their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation of self-discipline and responsible judgment as they extend and transmit knowledge.

As teachers, faculty members encourage in their students a love for learning and hold before them the highest scholarly standards. They respect students as individuals and serve as their intellectual guides. They make every reasonable effort to foster honesty in academic conduct, as described in the University's Academic Honesty Policy, and to assure that their evaluation of students reflects their true performance. Faculty members respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. Faculty members acknowledge student achievements and avoid any exploitation of students for personal advantage. Faculty members are obligated to protect the students' academic freedom.

As colleagues, faculty members have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars: to respect and defend the free inquiry of associates; to show due

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respect for the opinions of others in the exchange of criticism and ideas; to acknowledge or credit academic sources; to strive to be fair in the professional judgment of colleagues; and to accept a share in faculty responsibilities for the governance of the University.

As members of an academic community, faculty members have a primary professional goal to be effective teachers and true scholars. Although they are bound by the stated regulations of the University, faculty maintain the right to question and to seek revision.

As members of society, faculty members have the rights and obligations of any citizen. They measure the urgency of these obligations in light of their responsibilities to their discipline, to students, to the profession, and to the University. When speaking or acting as private persons, faculty members avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting in the name of the University. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, faculty members have a particular obligation to promote free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

Disputes involving a charge that academic freedom has been abrogated or that professional ethics have not been maintained are to be settled through the established Mediation and Resolution Process. While affirming academic freedom as a right, Mount St. Joseph University recognizes that, in some circumstances, the questions of academic freedom become confused with questions of professional incompetence or irresponsibility. In the effort to distinguish between these issues, the guiding principle is that charges of professional incompetence or irresponsibility shall not be used to limit academic freedom, nor shall appeal to academic freedom be accepted as a shield for professional incompetence or irresponsibility.