

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

(This represents Board Policy AP4030, adopted 2/12/08)

The Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors have long recognized that membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities. The protections provided under this section are correlative with certain duties. Academic freedom must be balanced with the obligation of the District to protect the right of students to learn in an environment characterized by civility, open inquiry, and rigorous attention to the search for the truth, free of unlawful discrimination.

It is recognized that an essential function of education is a probing of opinions and an exploration of ideas that may cause some students discomfort. The District affirms the use of a variety of teaching methodologies to fulfill its obligation to raise difficult and meaningful questions in the educational development of students in curricular and co-curricular settings. Faculty members are entitled to freely discuss issues germane to their subject matter as measured by professional standards set by the community of scholars. This freedom involves the right to introduce controversial topics, as long as the manner of presentation involves objective reasoning and rational discussion. There shall be no curtailment of faculty presentation of factual or theoretical material relating to all points of view.

Faculty are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, when doing so, they should apply the best standards of their professions and make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

The District will consult with discipline faculty chosen by the Academic/Faculty Senate with respect to contemporary practices and professional standards for course content and delivery when evaluating issues of academic freedom.
