

Academic Freedom Policy

Abraham Baldwin subscribes to the "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" published by the American Association of University Professors. With respect to academic freedom and related responsibilities, these principles are as follows:

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

The teacher is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of his other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his subject, but he should be careful not to introduce into his teaching controversial matter which has no relation to his subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

The college or university teacher is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When he speaks or writes as a citizen, he should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but his special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a man {sic} of learning and an educational officer, he should remember that the public may judge his profession and his institution by his utterances. Hence he should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he is not an institutional spokesman. ("1940 Statement," AAUP)

In the classroom, faculty members should make every effort to create an environment in which intellectual diversity is valued and students have the assurance that they will not be penalized for expressing opinions or beliefs that differ from others' views.

Students who feel they have been penalized because of expressed opinions or beliefs have the right to file a formal written complaint to this effect with the Vice President for Student Affairs or the appropriate dean. The complaint will be investigated and a determination will be made as to whether disciplinary action is necessary. If students remain unsatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they have the right to appeal in writing to the Academic Vice President.