

BP 4030 Academic Freedom

References: Title 5 Section 51023, ACCJC Accreditation Standard I.C.7
ACCJC Eligibility Requirements 13 and 20, Ed Code 70902,
AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure

I. General Support of Academic Freedom

The San Luis Obispo Community College District protects the academic freedom of students, staff, managers, and faculty; no limitations shall be placed upon the study, investigation, presentation, or interpretation of ideas. The District values the expression of a wide range of viewpoints and promotes creativity and innovation among its students, staff, managers, and faculty.

The current national standard for the definition of academic freedom was published by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which was endorsed by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in 1996:

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.

The District upholds the following elements of academic freedom:

- the obligation of academics to ask difficult and meaningful questions and to pursue those inquiries wherever they may lead;
- the open and free exchange of ideas to support academic critical inquiry; and
- the protection of those who discuss, present, and research ideas that may be seen as controversial, obscene, unpopular, or challenging.

II. Specific Support of Faculty's Academic Freedom

The District shall support and protect every faculty member's academic freedom from any adverse action or censorship. The District shall support and protect each faculty member's academic freedom within, but not limited to, the following areas:

- College-wide Curriculum
 - Freedom to develop curriculum and instructional methods for academic programs and courses—including, but not limited to, course descriptions, course outlines, course goals, course objectives, and course standards—in

accordance with college procedures that have been mutually agreed upon by the Governing Board and the Academic Senate and conform with state requirements and existing articulation agreements with other higher learning institutions.

- Course Content
 - Freedom to select all content for their individual courses—including, but not limited to, texts, materials, labs, discussion topics, technology, videos, and assignments. Faculty will base their decisions on their professional training, expertise, and pedagogical practices. The approved Course Outline of Record, as developed from mutually agreed upon standards, shall provide the individual faculty with requirements and guidelines for each specific course.
- Grades
 - Freedom to design assessment tools and methods, assess student performance, and serve as the final authority for the assignment of grades.
- Research
 - Freedom to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, publication, and academic and/or creative expression within the classroom, college, and larger community, without institutional discipline or restraint.
- Participatory Governance
 - Freedom to participate effectively in collegial and divisional governance.
 - Freedom to question and challenge, without fear of censorship or discipline, actions and ideas originating from within the institution.
- Public Speech and Membership in Organizations
 - Freedom to speak or write publicly — free of censorship or subsequent discipline by the college — as a citizen on matters of public concern.
 - Freedom to associate with individuals or groups of one's choice without fear of censorship or discipline.
- Technology
 - Freedom to elect to what extent technology will be used to support achievement of course objectives.
- Intellectual Property
 - Freedom to maintain ownership over creative, artistic, and research works, including, but not limited to, written, graphic, photographic, video, and musical pieces, among others, even those produced or maintained on District equipment, unless the District has commissioned a faculty member or members to produce a work for which said faculty specifically agree to relinquish intellectual property rights.

- Freedom to maintain ownership over all academic work, including, but not limited to, items such as syllabi, assignments, exams, lectures, and content within learning management systems, unless the District has commissioned a faculty member or members to produce a work for which said faculty specifically agree to relinquish intellectual property rights.

Nota bene: Faculty in non-instructional positions have the same rights of academic freedom as instructional faculty.

III. Specific Support of Students' Academic Freedom

The District shall support and protect every student's academic freedom from any adverse action or censorship. The District shall support and protect each student's academic freedom within, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Academic Ideas and Practices
 - Freedom to explore all relevant avenues of scholarship, research, publication, and academic and/or creative expression within classes, the college, and larger community, without institutional discipline or restraint, as long as the exploration of said academic ideas and practices does not violate the District's Standards of Conduct.
- Grades
 - Freedom to exercise the right to be graded fairly and have a clear pathway toward a grade appeal.
- Public Speech and Membership in Organizations
 - Freedom to speak or write publicly—free of censorship or subsequent discipline by the college—as a citizen on matters of public concern.
 - Freedom to associate with individuals or groups of one's choice without fear of censorship or discipline.
 - Freedom to participate effectively in student leadership.
 - Freedom to question and challenge, without fear of censorship or discipline, actions and ideas originating from within the institution.
- Intellectual Property
 - Freedom to maintain ownership over creative, artistic, research, and academic works, including, but not limited to, written, graphic, photographic, video, and musical pieces, among others, unless the District has commissioned a student or students to produce a work for which said student or students specifically agree to relinquish intellectual property rights.

Approved: