

5.10 Academic Freedom

Last Revised: August 2022

Policy: Piedmont Community College (PCC) is committed to the principle, practice, and protection of academic freedom for faculty and as such respects the faculty member's right to teach, investigate, and publish freely in accordance with the provisions and clarifications provided in this policy.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

This policy provides faculty with academic freedom and protection from institutional censure or discipline with respect to the development and delivery of academic information to the College community. The major premise of academic freedom is the open inquiry and expression by faculty that is essential to the College's mission. Under the concept of academic freedom, discussion and expression of views relevant to the subject matter are recognized as necessary to the educational process.

Definitions

Academic Freedom—an individual's right to engage in intellectual debate, research, speech, or written or electronic correspondence, on and off campus, without fear of censorship, retaliation, or sanction. Academic freedom encompasses both the individual's and College's right to maintain academic standards and gives faculty members latitude in deciding how to teach the courses to which they are assigned; encourage intellectual integrity; sustain pedagogical approaches consistent with the discipline taught; and evaluate student work.

Faculty—the instructor of record for one or more of the College's courses; any other PCC employee who is responsible for the transfer of knowledge to individuals on behalf of the College, e.g., lab facilitators, workshop leaders, seminar presenters, club advisors.

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: Piedmont Community College's Board of Trustees has approval authority for this policy. The Vice President, Instruction has monitoring authority for this policy.

Procedures:

Section 1: College Responsibilities

- 1.1. The College will sustain an environment that allows for and protects the greatest possible freedom of expression, encourages openness and discourse, and supports rigorous inquiry within a civil and respectful environment.
- 1.2. The support of academic freedom is not intended to supersede performance issues, college policies or procedures, or municipal, state, or federal laws.
 - 1.2.1. The College will continue to evaluate the work of each faculty member on a regular basis.
- 1.3. The College provides due process for any faculty member or student who feels their academic freedom has been infringed upon.
 - 1.3.1. Faculty with a grievance should follow the process outlined in Policy 5.20 Employee Grievance.
 - 1.3.2. Students with a grievance should follow the process outlined in Policy 7.12 Student Grievance Process.

Section 2: Faculty Responsibilities

- 2.1. Faculty members are responsible for supporting the mission of the College.
- 2.2. Material presented or discussed should be related to the course's subject matter.
 - 2.2.1. Faculty are expected to present and discuss assignments and material relevant to the course outcomes.
 - 2.2.2. Faculty members should avoid expressing personal views on non-academic matters as this could negatively affect the student learning environment.
- 2.3. Faculty will carefully consider the rights and freedoms of others and ensure a safe and non-threatening environment in the classroom.
 - 2.3.1. Faculty have a responsibility to ensure students understand the rules of classroom conduct in accordance with PCC Policy 7.5 Code of Conduct.

Legal Citation: N/A

History: Effective October 1988, Revised October 2001, October 2011, January 2012, May 2021, August 2022

Cross-references PCC Policies 5.20 Employee Grievance, 7.5 Code of Conduct, and 7.12 Student Grievance Process.