

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The essential role of institutions of higher education is the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Academic freedom respects the dignity and rights of others while fostering intellectual freedom of faculty to teach, research, and publish. Responsible academic freedom enriches the contributions of higher education to society. (Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, May 2012) Hence, it is essential that the faculty member be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to voice and publish his/her conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that he/she considers relevant. He/she must be free from the corrosive fear that others, inside or outside the college community, may threaten his/her professional career or the material benefits accruing from it because their vision may differ from his/her own.

Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject which he/she teaches.

Each faculty member is also a citizen of his/her nation, state, and community and, when he/she speaks, writes, or acts as such, must be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

### **Academic Responsibility**

The concept of academic freedom must be accompanied by an equally demanding concept of responsibility, shared by governing boards, administrators, and faculty members.

The essential responsibilities of governing boards and administrators are set forth in guidelines established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

The fundamental responsibilities of a faculty member as a teacher and scholar include maintaining and demonstrating competence in his/her field of specialization.

Exercise of professional integrity by a faculty member includes recognition that the public will judge his/her profession and institution by his/her statements. Therefore, he/she should strive to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, to show respect for the opinions of others, and to avoid creating the impression that he/she speaks or acts for his/her college when he/she speaks or acts as a private person.

It is understood that a faculty member is always judicious in the use of controversial material in the classroom and introduces such material only when it has a clear relationship to his/her subject field.

Board Approval Date: March 25, 2013

Effective Date: March 26, 2013

Final Revision Date: December 3, 2012

Policy Manual Review Committee – No Changes: February 11, 2016