



DRAFT – NOT OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY POLICY

University Policy 01-200

Academic Freedom

Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President

Responsible Office: Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Effective: July 1, 2014

Last Revised: Date

Materials linked from the June 8, 2023 Faculty Senate agenda.

1. Policy Statement

1.1. Academic freedom is essential to the mission of Oregon State University, and the university exists to serve the public good through teaching, research, and engagement. The university and its faculty jointly accept the responsibility for maintaining an atmosphere in which scholars may freely teach, conduct research, publish, engage in other scholarly activities, and speak on all matters of university governance. The university will support its faculty against any influence that would restrict the faculty member in the exercise of their academic freedom, and this support is described as follows:

1.1.1. ACADEMIC WORK. Faculty are entitled to freedom in their Academic Work. Academic work is scholarly, creative or aesthetic work developed by scholars in academic disciplines for the purpose of seeking and stating the truth as the scholar sees it. In conducting academic work, faculty continually develop their scholarly competence and expertise, practice intellectual honesty, contribute to the development of their discipline, and exercise self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge to diverse audiences on- and off-campus. This work is subject to the provisions of the faculty's position description, and they have the right to disseminate the results of that work to the university community and the public.

1.1.2. TEACHING. Faculty members have the freedom to teach and engage, both in and outside of the classroom, including the examination of controversial issues when such issues are germane to the subject matter of the course they are teaching or the educational activity in which they are engaged. This freedom includes the selection of Course Materials and course content, and the assessment of student performance, subject to established faculty oversight of curriculum and instructional materials, university policy, state law, and federal law.

1.1.3. EXTRAMURAL EXPRESSION. Faculty have the freedom to participate in public debate, both within and beyond their areas of expertise, and address

both the university community and the larger society regarding any matter of economic, social, cultural environmental, or other interest. In doing so, the university will not attempt to control the personal opinion, or the public expression of that opinion, of the faculty member. In their exercise of this freedom, faculty have the right to identify their university association or title but should not imply or claim to be acting or speaking on behalf of the university unless authorized to do so.

- a. "Extramural" expression and participation in public debate are those activities that do not conflict with the faculty member's ability to effectively carry out their university job duties.

1.1.4. POLICY AND SHARED GOVERNANCE. Faculty have freedom to address, question, or criticize any matter of institutional policy or practice, whether acting as individuals or as members of a university governance or university shared governance unit or committee.

1.2. Academic freedom is limited by the following required responsibilities of faculty to:

- 1.2.1. Express personal and professional opinion and engage in teaching, research and outreach in a professionally competent and ethical manner that complies with university policy, funding agreement restrictions, and state and federal law;
- 1.2.2. Respect and not violate the academic freedom of fellow faculty members;
- 1.2.3. Be objective in the academic assessment of the professional capabilities and performance of their colleagues; and
- 1.2.4. Differentiate carefully between activities as faculty and personal activities.

2. Reason for Policy

- 2.1. Oregon State University is committed to fostering a community where teaching, research, outreach and engagement thrive. Academic freedom is fundamental to the pursuit of this mission.
- 2.2. It is understood that Academic freedom is to be exercised through professionally competent forms of inquiry, teaching and outreach, with reference to the standards, norms and rules of the relevant scholarly disciplines at issue.
- 2.3. Academic freedom addresses rights and responsibilities for scholars engaged in teaching, learning, research and publication both in and outside the classroom. As such, academic freedom primarily extends to the work of academic faculty but can extend in some cases to the work of professional faculty, depending on whether

that work more closely aligns with Academic Work, Course Materials or Institutional Work, or is part of university shared governance or service.

3. Scope & Audience

- 3.1. This university policy applies to faculty employed by Oregon State University as defined in Art. III Sec. 1 of the *Faculty Senate Bylaws*, unless otherwise noted.
- 3.2. Academic freedom does not extend to Institutional Work.
- 3.3. Academic freedom does not extend to matters irrelevant to the subject matter of a course, scholarship or outreach activity.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Course materials:** Materials developed for use in synchronous or asynchronous credit-bearing, transcript-visible courses, including but not limited to materials used in preparing, presenting, delivering, or assessing a class.
- 4.2. **Institutional work:** Work by university employees that represents a customary and expected work product within the scope of their employment, position description, or work responsibilities. Academic work as described in Section 1.1.1 and Course Materials are excluded from this definition.

5. Responsibilities & Procedures

- 5.1. None.

6. Forms & Tools

- 6.1. None.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

- 7.1. *Question: Does academic freedom apply to the work of professional faculty?*

Answer: Academic freedom traditionally applies to academic faculty members and researchers and is the principle that grants them the freedom to pursue research, teach, and express their ideas without interference or censorship, fostering intellectual exploration and the pursuit of knowledge within educational institutions. Professional faculty have different roles typically focused on institution management, finances, and operational aspects, where their responsibilities and priorities may differ from those covered by academic freedom.

There are a few key reasons why the concept of academic freedom does not typically extend to professional faculty in the same way:

1. Roles and responsibilities: Professional faculty often have different roles and responsibilities compared to academic faculty members. Their primary focus is on managing the institution's operations, implementing policies, and ensuring the smooth functioning of various administrative tasks. Academic freedom, on the other hand, is closely tied to the pursuit of knowledge, research, and teaching, which are typically associated with academic faculty members. Professional faculty decision-making is more closely tied to administrative and managerial considerations rather than the pursuit of knowledge and intellectual inquiry, which is the core focus of academic freedom.
2. Professional expectations: Academic faculty members' professional expertise and specialized knowledge within their academic disciplines are central to the concept of academic freedom. Their research and teaching activities often involve critical analysis, debate, and exploration of controversial topics. While professional faculty may have their own areas of expertise, their roles are typically not defined by the same academic and intellectual pursuits as academic faculty members. Moreover, the university has control over the curriculum, research, speech, and approach of professional faculty when they are working within the scope of their employment, position description, or work responsibilities.
3. Legal and contractual considerations: The scope and application of academic freedom may also be influenced by legal and contractual arrangements. In many cases, academic faculty members' rights to academic freedom are protected through contractual agreements, collective bargaining, or legislation and case law specific to educational institutions. These legal protections may not extend to professional faculty members in the same way.

(It's worth noting that while academic freedom may not apply to professional faculty in the same manner, they still enjoy certain rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression and association, within the framework of their employment and applicable laws. However, these rights are typically considered in the context of their professional roles and responsibilities, rather than the broader concept of academic freedom.)

8. Related Information

- 8.1. None.

9. History

- 9.1. Adopted: Oregon State University adopted University Policy 580-022-0005 *Academic Freedom* from Oregon Administrative Rule 580-022-0005 *Academic Freedom* on July 1, 2014.
- 9.2. Revised: 580-022-0005 *Academic Freedom* was revised and renumbered as University Policy 01-200 *Academic Freedom* on XXX.
- 9.3. Next scheduled review: Month, year

10. Website

10.1. [link]

11. Contacts

Department	Phone Number	Website
Office of Faculty Affairs	541-737-0732	https://facultyaffairs.oregonstate.edu/