

Policy 6.10 Academic Freedom, Shared Governance, and Academic Responsibility

Purpose:

Consistent with the Board of Regents, State of Iowa Policy 3.9 and with Section xx of the Faculty Handbook, this policy defines the scope and substance of protections pertaining to faculty members' academic freedom and participation in shared governance, as well as their academic and ethical responsibilities.

The basic functions of the university are the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, the development of critical intelligence, creative talent, aesthetic sensibility and moral awareness in its students, and the training of citizens and professional workers for the society of which the university is a part. The university supports the freedom of expression as well as the pursuit of truth in the exercise of a faculty member's rights and responsibilities in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and service.

The indispensable condition for the successful discharge of these functions is an atmosphere of academic freedom. Unless faculty members are free to pursue the quest for knowledge and understanding, wherever it may lead, and to report and discuss findings, whatever they may be, the university faculty member cannot perform their duties and fulfill their responsibilities. The university, therefore, must guarantee academic freedom and the pursuit of truth for its faculty. Faculty members, in turn, must uphold this freedom in all their actions and must honor their academic responsibilities.

Shared governance is an important component of academic freedom. The variety and complexity of tasks performed by the University of Northern Iowa requires interdependence among the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, administration, faculty, staff, students and the larger community. This relationship calls for adequate communication among these components and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.

Policy

As further defined below, all faculty, regardless of rank or appointment, shall be entitled to protection of their academic freedom, shall be provided the opportunity to participate in shared governance, and shall be expected to fulfill their academic and ethical responsibilities.

- I. Academic Freedom: Academic freedom is the freedom to teach both in and outside the classroom and in so doing to discuss all matters relevant to the subject matter, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression, and to speak or write without institutional discipline or restraint on matters of public concern as well as on matters related to professional duties and the functioning of the University, save in response to fundamental violations of professional ethics. Following AAUP's 1940 statement regarding academic freedom, "Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject."
- II. Shared Governance: The university, as well as individual colleges and departments, shall strive to integrate all faculty into the shared governance of the university consistent with the terms of their contract, and shall protect their academic freedom to voice dissenting opinions in these roles.
- III. Academic Responsibility:
 - A. Definition: Academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that when one is speaking personally on matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution.
 - B. Scholarly Responsibilities
 1. The faculty member's responsibilities to scholarship derive from the university's commitment to knowledge and the advancement of truth and learning. Thus the faculty member must strive to keep abreast of the research and scholarship that is being carried forward within their discipline, broadly defined, including interdisciplinary work.
 2. In their teaching, scholarship, and creative activities, faculty members have an obligation to appropriately acknowledge contributions made by students, colleagues, and others.
 3. Faculty members shall be honest in their scholarship, creative activities and teaching, taking precautions against common causes of error, and avoiding dogmatic assertion. It is inappropriate to selectively marshal evidence for a preconceived result.
 4. There are times when research must be carried on confidentially (e.g., national security or contracted research) I. In these circumstances, it is proper for the university, or for a faculty member of the university, to permit the

results of that research to be classified as secret or confidential. In all other circumstances, however, secrecy of research and classification of knowledge are incompatible with the university's commitment to the advancement of learning.

5. When seeking funding for scholarship, faculty members shall identify potential conflicts of interest in order to maintain the tradition of disinterested inquiry.

6. When the object of study is a human being, the faculty member shall take appropriate measures to protect and preserve the safety and dignity of the person or persons involved in studies conducted by the faculty member or under the faculty member's supervision. To this end, all research conducted by UNI faculty, students, and staff that involves human subjects -- questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations -- must be approved by the University Institutional Review Board before the research begins.

7. Research done using animals shall proceed in the most humane fashion possible and must be reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

C. Faculty Responsibilities to Students:

1. Faculty members have the responsibility for creating in their relations with students a climate that stimulates and encourages students to learn. Faculty members should exemplify high scholarly standards and respect and foster students' freedom to choose and pursue appropriate academic goals.
2. Students are entitled to the same intellectual freedom that faculty members enjoy. Faculty members should respect and foster that freedom, but, following AAUP guidelines, should avoid introducing into their teaching, and should limit introduction by students, controversial matter which has no relation to the subject.
3. The student's freedom to learn must be protected. Repressive or disruptive actions by some students must not be permitted to interfere with the learning activities of others.
4. Faculty members have the obligation to meet their classroom and other instructional responsibilities.
5. Faculty members have the obligation to make clear the objectives of each course or program and to establish requirements and standards of

achievement. This includes attendance, participation, and opportunities for extra credit. Faculty members should teach their courses consistent with the course description in the catalogue and the syllabus.

6. The faculty member owes to the student and the University a fair and impartial evaluation of the student's work. Evaluations should be consistent with recognized standards within the profession.
7. "For sound pedagogical reasons, a faculty member may decide to use course materials that students find objectionable.... Learning involves students in free and open discussion of all content and issues relevant to the course. While faculty shall respect reasonable decisions by students not to attend part or all of a particular class session, students are responsible for learning class material and completing course requirements, as well as required courses for the completion of the major. If a student chooses not to view the presentation(s) and the faculty member determines that alternative assignment(s) are not feasible, the student shall be permitted to drop the course without penalty (as an administrative drop) within seven calendar days of the class being so informed."(Board of Regents Policy Manual Section 3.20)
8. Faculty members are expected to hold regularly scheduled office hours and be reasonably available for appointments with students. Faculty members teaching online courses or those not located on campus may use timely electronic communications in lieu of office hours.
9. Faculty members have obligations as advisors, intellectual guides and counselors to students. They have a responsibility to be available to students for individual conferences and to take care in advising students (for example, about their academic, career and life goals).
10. Faculty members must respect appropriate confidentiality of information provided by students, except in cases where disclosure is required by law.

D. Responsibilities to Colleagues

1. The faculty member's responsibilities to colleagues derive from their common membership in the community of scholars.

2. Faculty members do not exploit, harass, or improperly discriminate against colleagues.
3. Faculty members must defend academic freedom and show respect for intellectual inquiries of colleagues. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, they show respect for the opinions of others.
4. When called upon by appropriate authority to evaluate a colleague, the faculty members should be candid. The faculty members should be careful to confine their evaluations to professionally relevant matter.

E. Responsibilities to the University

1. The faculty member's primary responsibility to the University is to be an effective scholar and teacher. In addition, the faculty member is expected to actively participate as a citizen of and accept responsibilities for the governance of the institution.
2. Faculty members who present information publicly should be careful to clarify whether they are representing official University policy.
3. In their private activities, faculty members should take care to make clear which activities are not a part of their university responsibilities and are not sponsored by the university
4. Participation by faculty members in any work or activity unrelated to their university duties should not infringe on their responsibilities to the university and the students.
5. The faculty member should insure that the regulations of the university are designed to achieve the university's goals and that they shall be in accord with the principles of academic freedom.. Faculty members maintain their right to criticize and seek revision of university policies through orderly means.

- F. Responsibility to the Community: As members of the larger community, faculty members have the rights and prerogatives, and the obligations and duties of any citizen. These include the right to join political or other associations, to convene and conduct public meetings, and to publicize opinions on political and social issues. In any public discourse, faculty members should take care to make clear

when their comments represent personal opinions and when their comments represent official University positions.