

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

Southwestern Community College District recognizes that academic freedom is essential in maintaining the academic integrity of the institution and in protecting the rights of both the faculty and the students in the learning process. Each individual is obliged by scholarly ethics and academic freedom to speak openly. So too are others obliged to listen with courtesy and to respond with respect and decency to any statement made with conviction and sincerity. Responding with cordiality and respect does not deny the academic freedom of any party, but rather ensures the free and open exchange of all opinions. It is consistent with these ideals that no one may be compelled to adopt the opinions of others offered in dissension, yet all must honor the right of dissenters to bear true faith in their expressions.

Each faculty member has the right and the responsibility to introduce materials and controversial topics into classroom discussion and to provide opportunity for the expression of diverse points of view. The subject matter must be relevant to the discussion.

Members of the faculty are also private citizens and are not only entitled to express their own opinions in public but are encouraged to do so. When they speak or write as citizens, they must be free from institutional censorship and discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Hence, as scholars they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

The District recognizes the right of the faculty to privacy of communication in accordance with the First Amendment. When executing their duties in an appropriate manner, faculty must be able to communicate with their colleagues without restraint. The District further recognizes that censorship and fear of reprisal do not promote scholarly interaction.

The District honors the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and does not restrict the contents of any form of faculty expression.

[Parts of this policy are adapted from the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which has been reaffirmed annually thereafter.]

Note: An Academic Freedom policy is mandated in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, §51023(a).