

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY NO: _____

DATED: _____

SUPERSEDES POLICY NO: II:01:05A:I

DATED: August 1, 1999

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

I. Introduction

This policy is in compliance with Tennessee Board of Regents Policy No. 5:02:03:30 and in the case of any conflict later discovered is subordinate to that particular policy.

II. Academic Freedom and Responsibility

- A. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, being careful to avoid the persistent intrusion of matter, controversial or not, that has no bearing on the subject of instruction.
- B. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties. Research for financial gain must be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the university, which is documented in writing and signed by the faculty member and the appropriate academic officer(s).
- C. Faculty are members of a civic community, a learned profession, and an educational institution. When faculty members speak or write as members of a civic community, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Faculty should remember that the public may judge the profession and the institution by their utterances. Hence, they should be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they do not represent the university when speaking as members of a civic community.
- D. Academic freedom is essential to fulfill the ultimate objectives of an educational institution – the free search for and exposition of truth – and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth, and academic freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty member in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. Implicit in the principle of academic freedom are the corollary responsibilities of the faculty who enjoy that freedom. Incompetence, indolence, intellectual dishonesty, failure to carry out assigned duties, serious moral dereliction, arbitrary and capricious disregard of standard of professional conduct – these and other grounds as set forth in TBR Policy, “Policy on Academic Tenure at Tennessee Board of Regents’ Universities,” Section P., may constitute adequate cause for dismissal or other disciplinary sanctions against faculty members subjects to the Provisions of Article III.
- E. Academic freedom and academic responsibility are interdependent, and academic tenure is adopted as a means to protect the former while promoting the latter. The right to academic freedom imposes upon the faculty an equal responsibility to be involved in the process of review and recommendation in matters that pertain to tenure and promotion as specified in university policy. The right to academic freedom also imposes upon the faculty an equal responsibility to take appropriate professional action against faculty members who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities.
- F. While academic tenure is essential for the protection of academic freedom, all faculty members, tenured or non-tenured, have an equal right to academic freedom and bear the same academic responsibilities implicit in that freedom.