

SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**SUBJECT:** Academic Freedom and Responsibilities**EFFECTIVE DATE:** March 1, 2004; Revised May 1, 2023**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines regarding academic freedom for the faculty members of Southwest Tennessee Community College (“Southwest” or “the College”).

Definitions

Academic Freedom- Authority granted to faculty members to discuss their specific subject matter, being careful not to introduce into teaching unrelated subject matters; authority in research and in the publication of the results; and faculty participation in College governance.

Academic Responsibility- Obligation for the development and delivery of educational programs and services to students; obligation to participate in tenure and promotion review of colleagues as specified in policy; and obligation to take appropriate professional action against faculty members who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities.

Policy**I. Introduction**

Pursuant to TBR policy [5.02.03.30](#), Southwest is required to:

- Publish this policy regarding Academic Freedom;
- Cite the TBR requirement in this policy;
- Specifically acknowledge compliance with the TBR policy; and
- Ensure that this policy embodies and communicates the provisions, definitions, and stipulations in required by TBR.

II. Academic Freedom and Responsibilities

- A. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, being careful not to introduce into the teaching unrelated subject matters.

- 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, including and consistent with any and all policies pertaining to clinical and research practices. Research for financial gain must be based upon an understanding with the authorities of Southwest, which is documented and signed by the faculty member and the appropriate academic officer(s).
- C. Southwest faculty members are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of the College. When they speak or write as a citizen, they should be free from College censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers of Southwest, they should remember that the public could judge the profession and Southwest by their utterances. Hence, faculty members should at all times:
1. Be accurate;
 2. Exercise appropriate restraint;
 3. Show respect for the opinions of others; and
 4. Make every effort to indicate that they do not speak for the College.
- D. Academic freedom is essential to fulfill the ultimate objectives of the College- the free search for and exposition of truth - and applies to teaching, research, and faculty participation in Southwest governance. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth, and academic freedom in teaching is fundamental for the protection of the rights of faculty members in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. Faculty participation in Southwest governance is fundamental to the development and maintenance of effective academic policies, national and regional accreditation, and shared responsibility for the delivery of educational programs and services to students.
- Implicit in the principle of academic freedom are the corollary responsibilities of faculty members who enjoy that freedom. Incompetence, indolence, intellectual dishonesty, failure to carry out assigned duties, serious moral dereliction, arbitrary and capricious disregard of standards of professional conduct- these and other grounds as set forth in TBR policy [5.02.03.70](#) can constitute adequate cause for dismissal or other disciplinary sanctions against faculty members.
- E. The right to academic freedom imposes upon faculty an equal obligation to take appropriate professional action regarding faculty members who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities. Faculty members have an obligation to participate in tenure and promotion review of colleagues as specified in Southwest policy [5:00:00:00/41, Code of Conduct](#). Thus, academic freedom and academic responsibility are interdependent, and academic tenure is adopted as a means to protect the former while promoting the latter.

- Information regarding faculty who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities is to be given to relevant Chairpersons, Deans, and Human Resources personnel.
- F. While academic tenure is essential for the protection of academic freedom, the full benefits and responsibilities of academic freedom extend to all individuals teaching at Southwest, whether or not they are eligible for tenure.

Responsible

Source of Policy: N/A

Administrator: AVP of HR

Related Policy: 5:00:00:00/41

TBR Policy Reference: 5.02.03.30; 5.02.03.70

Approved: _____

President

Date: May 1, 2023