

Policy Title: Academic Freedom and Duties

Policy Number: BU-PP 701

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Responsible Executive: Provost

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Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Academic Freedom and Duties BU-PP 701

Policy Statement

Baylor University subscribes fully to the general principles endorsed by the Association of American Colleges in January, 1941, and by the American Association of University Professors in December, 1941, and to Standard 6.4 on Academic Freedom included in the Principles of Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Reason for the Policy

The policy articulates the University's commitment to academic freedom for faculty members, as well as expectations for the performance of their duties.

Individuals/Entities Affected by this Policy

Faculty members at Baylor University

Exclusions

NONE

Related Documents and Forms

University Policies and Documents

[BU-PP 703 Master Teachers at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 704 Policy for Tenure at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 716 Policy on Full-Time Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, and Teaching Professors at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 718 Policy on Academic Professionals at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 719 Policy on Clinical Faculty at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 720 Policy on Adjunct \(Part-Time\) Faculty at Baylor University](#)

[BU-PP 722 Policy on University Distinguished Professors at Baylor University](#)

1. Academic Freedom and Duties (BU-PP 701)

Other Documents

[AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#)
[SACSCOC Accrediting Standards](#)

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office email/web site
Adherence to Policy	Office of the Provost	254-710-3601	https://provost.web.baylor.edu
	Academic Freedom and Responsibility Committee		c/o https://universitycommittees.web.baylor.edu/committee-directory/academic-freedom-and-responsibility-committee

Principles

I. DUTIES

Faculty members at Baylor are expected to perform their teaching, research, and other duties well and to be loyal to Baylor University and its purposes. To fulfill University purposes in the development of the whole person, faculty members are expected to advise and mentor students and should maintain regular office hours each week at least equivalent to the number of teaching hours the faculty member is assigned. Faculty members are also expected to make reports to University offices as may be requested, to turn in periodic and final semester grade reports in a timely fashion, and to attend meetings called by the President, Provost, deans of their schools, and departmental chairs.

II. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Baylor University subscribes fully to the general principles endorsed by the Association of American Colleges in January, 1941, and by the American Association of University Professors in December, 1941, and to Standard 6.4 on Academic Freedom included in the Principles of Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

The statement of principles endorsed by both the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors affirms that:

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

2. Academic Freedom and Duties (BU-PP 701)

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

Characterizing the rights that the instructor enjoys and the duties incumbent upon the instructor in virtue of these rights, the statement of principles makes explicit that (and here we quote):

1. The teacher is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
2. The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject matter of the course but shall be careful not to introduce into the classroom controversial matter that has no relation to the subject. Limitation of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
3. The college or university teacher is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When speaking or writing as citizens, teachers should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As persons of learning and educational officers, teachers should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institutions by their utterances. Hence, 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 institutional spokespersons.

In responding to inquiries that are made to a faculty member of Baylor University, discretion should be used with regard to the use of University letterhead and/or email or other University IT platforms (e.g., @Baylor.edu), particularly in controversial matters. It is important that those receiving a reply do not interpret a response as being the position of the total University community, and it is essential that one employ civil and courteous language even when the inquiry may be critical or sharp in tone. The entire University is often judged by correspondence exchanges.

Faculty members are permitted to engage in partisan politics on an individual basis. In all correspondence, public statements, and other communications, faculty members should use home addresses, personal stationery, personal email account or other personal IT forum that does not identify Baylor and make no reference to their University affiliation. No member of the University community speaks for any other member in partisan political

matters, and the University as an entity must avoid partisan politics to maintain its tax-exempt charitable status.

Baylor University is an institution of higher education governed by a Board of Regents. The University was founded by the Texas Baptist Education Society, is controlled by a predominantly Baptist Board of Regents, and is operated within the Christian-oriented aims and ideals of Baptists. Baylor is also affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, a cooperative association of autonomous Texas Baptist churches. As a religiously-controlled institution of higher education, it expects each member of its faculty to be in sympathy with the University's primary objective - to educate its students within the framework of a Christian culture. The rights and privileges of the instructor should, therefore, be exercised with discretion and a sense of loyalty to the supporting institution.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas is likewise committed to a view that honors individual freedom and accountability.¹ Freedom to inquire and freedom to report the conclusions resulting from inquiry constitute the élan vital of a university. The quest for truth should be unhampered and conducted in an atmosphere that is free. "Liberty may sometimes lead to folly; yet it is better that some should be tolerated than that all should think and speak under the deadening influence of repression."²

The right of dissent is a correlative of the right of assent. Any undue restriction upon an instructor in the exercise of this function would foster a suspicion of intolerance, degrade the University, and set the supporting denomination in a false light before the world.

¹ Texas Baptists, Beliefs, "Priesthood of Believers" available at <https://www.texasbaptists.org/about/beliefs/priesthood-of-believers>.

² *Academic Freedom and Tenure: Report of Committee A for 1949*, published in Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors, Vol.36, No. 1 p 37. Quoting from a board of trustees from a small college at the turn of the 20th century.