

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 the faculty in the learning process. (Title 5 Section 51023; Accreditation Standard II.A.7)

At Southwestern College 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, and any information or data should be presented fairly and objectively. 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 freedom of speech in accordance with the First Amendment. When executing their duties 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 speech 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. (AP 4030 Academic Freedom; Title 5 Section 51023, AAUP Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure)