

## **II:01:06 Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The following policy of Volunteer State Community College on academic freedom and responsibility specifically acknowledges compliance with the Tennessee Board of Regents Policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (5.02.03.30). For the purpose of this policy, and in accordance with TBR policy, academic freedom and academic responsibility are defined as follows:

**Academic Freedom** – freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, being careful not to introduce into the teaching unrelated subject matter, freedom in research and in the publication of the results, and faculty participation in institutional governance.

**Academic Responsibility** – responsibility 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.

### **II. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The College recognizes the principles of academic freedom pursuant to which:

- A. The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, being careful not to introduce into the teaching unrelated subject matter.
- B. The faculty member is 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 the College, which is documented, and signed by the faculty member and the appropriate academic officer(s).
- C. The faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When the faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge the profession and the College by the faculty member's utterances. Hence, a faculty member 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 do not speak for the College.
- 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 teaching, research, and faculty participation in institutional 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 the faculty member in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. Faculty participation in institutional 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 the faculty 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 VSCC Policy on Academic Tenure (II:01:00 – VI. G.), may constitute adequate cause for dismissal or other disciplinary sanctions against faculty members subject to the provisions of Article VI.

- E. The right to academic freedom imposes upon the faculty an equal obligation to take appropriate professional action against faculty members who are derelict in discharging their professional responsibilities. The faculty member has an obligation to participate in tenure and promotion review of colleagues as specified in College policy. Thus, academic freedom and academic responsibility are interdependent, and academic tenure is adopted as a means to protect the former while promoting the latter. While academic tenure is essential for the protection of academic freedom, the full benefits and responsibilities of academic freedom extend to all individuals teaching in the TBR System, whether or not they are eligible for tenure.

TBR Source: TBR Meeting, April 2, 2004; December 13, 2012; September 20, 2013; September 20, 2019

VSCC Source: Former II:01:00, April 7, 1994, President; June 1, 2004, President; Sept. 11, 2008, President (reviewed); January 23, 2013, President; October 10, 2013, President; October 21, 2019, President's Cabinet