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ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

November 22, 2013

TO: Leslie E. Wong, President
San Francisco State University

FROM: Lawrence F. Hanley, Chair 
Academic Senate

RE: Academic Freedom Principles Policy, #F13-267

SOURCE COMMITTEE:

Academic Policies Committee

SENATE ACTION:

At its meeting on November 12, 2013 the Academic Senate approved the new Policy on Academic Freedom Principles, #F13-267.
We solicit your concurrence.
Thank you.

cc: Sue V. Rosser, University Provost
Patricia Bartscher, University Counsel

ec: All Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

APPROVED: _____



Date: _____

1-13-14



**ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
#F13-267**

RATIONALE: The people of the State of California, establishing a system of higher education under the Constitution of the State of California, acted with intent in creating an academic community enjoying full freedom of inquiry insulated from political influence¹. San Francisco State University is committed to upholding and protecting the principles of academic freedom and responsibility, which both reflect and enable the University's core mission and values². Academic freedom entails freedom of scholarly inquiry, research, teaching, expression and debate in university and public life, and the protection of such rights and freedoms of expression are necessary prerequisites for the effective generation, advancement, and dissemination of knowledge within academic disciplines, among students, and to the public³: to engage in independent and creative thinking, faculty and students must be able to express, share, and examine the widest spectrum of viewpoints, values, knowledge, in an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom and on campus. In order to do so, faculty and students must be free to share their thoughts and work in public using any means of communication. The exercise of such freedoms entails corresponding responsibilities as participants in a community dedicated to standards of scholarship, teaching, and professional ethics⁴. The Academic Senate therefore adopts the following principles of academic freedom for faculty and staff serving in instructional roles at San Francisco State University recognizing that student bodies will adopt appropriate principles for their own constituencies:

I. Fundamental Principles of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom allows the discussion of all relevant matters in the classroom, explores all avenues of scholarship, research and creative expression, and speaks freely on all matters of university governance and public concern, without restraint, prejudice, or fear of reprisal. Further freedom of expression which is critical of conventional thought, or challenges established interests is vital to the University.

It is the responsibility of the entire campus community to maintain, encourage, promote and protect academic freedom, and to ensure that it is not compromised by censorship, fear of reprisal, institutional discipline, or interference from the public or government. It is the responsibility of the entire campus community, including the administration and Academic

¹ Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA), Article 1, 3560 (c).

² San Francisco State University Mission Statement, <http://www.sfsu.edu/~puboff/mission.html>, as consulted on August 16, 2011.

³ AAUP 1970 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedoms and Tenure (with 1970 Interpretive Comments): see appendix.

⁴ Code of Faculty Conduct, Senate Document, 1974. University Code of Conduct for Sponsored Programs, Implemented March, 2007.

Senate, to actively sustain and defend academic freedom in the domains of teaching, research and service, and in all aspects of shared governance.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “faculty member” shall refer in the first instance to any individual member of the faculty (including all holders of instructional or any other faculty appointments). It shall also be deemed to include faculty members currently holding administrative positions, including, but not limited to, academic chairs, directors, and program coordinators.

II. Academic Freedom in Teaching and Instruction

Faculty members, as subject matter experts in their fields, have control over the content, design, grading and assessment of their courses (and instructional assistants), without interference.

Specifically:

1. Faculty members are free to present and express professional opinions in their courses without interference.
2. Faculty members are free to decide how best to teach their courses, in keeping with their professional judgment, without interference. This includes, but is not limited to, choice of course content, materials, teaching methods, technologies, and modes of delivery for specific course content and for any course as a whole (e.g., the choice of face-to-face, hybrid, or online instruction).

Exceptions shall be permitted to the above policies, as regards to selection of course materials, course design in general, and specific matters including, but not limited to, evaluations, objectives and assessments, and modes of delivery for specific course content and for any course as a whole (e.g., the choice of face-to-face, hybrid, or online instruction), only when departmental guidelines have been established via legitimate shared governance procedures (e.g. departmental and/or college curriculum committees) and made available to all concerned faculty in writing (e.g., meeting minutes, course outlines) before coming into effect. Such guidelines must include curricular goals that the limitations aim to achieve in the specific course or the broader context of programs in which the course resides.

3. Faculty members are free to choose ways to relate the subject matter of their courses to matters they themselves deem relevant, including, but not limited to, public affairs, current events and community issues.
4. Faculty members are free to present and discuss in formal and informal instructional settings all aspects of any academic subject, including controversial material, insofar as such material is relevant to the topic of instruction.

5. Faculty members are free to evaluate student performance in their courses and to assign grades based on stated course requirements and student learning outcomes.

III. Academic Freedom in Research and Creative Expression

Faculty members, as subject matter experts in their fields, are expected and entitled to pursue freely, research and creative expression. Specifically:

1. Faculty members are free to pursue any avenue of research or creative expression without interference.
2. Faculty members are free to publish, present research findings, and produce creative works without interference.

IV. Academic Freedom in University Governance and Public Expression

Faculty members, as full and equal participants in shared governance, are expected and entitled to express freely their views on aspects of University policy and administration, whether in the context of established structures of shared governance or otherwise.

Furthermore, they are free to express their views on issues of public concern. Academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that when one is speaking on matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution. When speaking on matters of public concern, faculty members enjoy the full protections of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California, without limitation respecting their employment by the State of California.

*****Approved by the Academic Senate at its meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2013*****