

The University of Tennessee System

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND STUDENT RIGHTS

Intellectual pluralism and academic freedom are central principles of American higher education. The responsibility to safeguard both faculty academic freedom and student rights is shared by all members of the academic community. Underlying UT's policies and procedures are the following principles.

The Academic Community:

1. The University of Tennessee values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity.
2. The University welcomes and honors all people—of every race, sex, color, religion, age, national origin, veterans' status, disability, and political belief.
3. Students, faculty and staff are expected to conduct themselves in the context of mutual regard for the rights and privileges of others.

Faculty:

1. The primary responsibility of faculty members is to use the freedom of their office in an honest, courageous, and persistent effort to search out and communicate the truth that lies in the area of their competence.
2. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject, but should use care in expressing personal views in the classroom and should be careful not to introduce controversial matters that have no relation to the subject taught, and especially matters in which they have no special competence or training and in which, therefore, the faculty members' views cannot claim the authority accorded their professional statements.
3. When, as a citizen, faculty members speak outside the classroom or write for publication, they should be free, as citizens, to express their opinions.
4. Faculty members should conduct themselves professionally, should be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make clear that they speak for themselves and not for The University.

Students:

1. Students are expected to abide by the Student Honor Code and by general Standards of Conduct developed by each campus.
2. Any student accused of violating the Honor Code or the Standards of Conduct is entitled to due process, including the right to a public hearing and the right of appeal to the next higher level of authority (including procedures set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act).
3. Students have the right to participate fully in political activity, so long as the activity is within the constraints of University regulations and local, state and federal laws.
4. Students have the right of peaceable assembly to express their views for or against actions and opinions with which they agree or disagree, so long as such discussion is accompanied by methods and conditions consistent with the scholarly nature of an academic community. The distribution of leaflets and handbills and the circulation of petitions on campus is free and unhindered, so long as such material is in accordance with the applicable local, state, and federal laws.
5. Registered campus student organizations may freely select, without prior restraints, persons they wish to invite as guest speakers. There are no restrictions to control the point of view expressed by speakers other than those imposed by local, state and federal laws. This openness of forum does not countenance disruption of the University, injury to persons or property, obscene or indecent behavior or incitement to riot.
6. Students have the right to be free from hazing of any type; to be free from sexual harassment; to have access to their educational records in compliance with state and federal (FERPA) laws; and to be made aware of the incidence of crime on campus.