



Academic Policy

Policy Title:	Academic Freedom
Policy Number:	AC-1037
Date Adopted:	5/9/2014
Version:	8.0
Review Cycle:	Biannual
Date Last Reviewed:	11/25/2024
Office Responsible:	Academic Deans
Reviewing Committee:	Academic Council
Related Policies:	NA
Related Laws:	NA

Policy Summary: It is the policy of Jackson College (JC) that academic freedom is fundamental to the advancement of knowledge and the arts. Faculty and students have the academic freedom to pursue scholarly inquiry, discussion, research, publication and artistic creation subject to the responsibilities that accompany this right.

NOTE: These policy points are adapted from policy documents and reports from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), a primary source of thought on faculty rights and responsibilities, as well as student rights. See [Cary Nelson's Inside Higher Ed article](#) for more information.

Scope: This policy statement is designed to help clarify both what academic freedom does and doesn't do and applies to the college, courses, faculty and students.

Policy Statement: The policy is broken into two parts; what academic freedom does, and what it does *not* do. While the list is intended to provide guidance to Jackson College employees, it is not intended to be an exhaustive description of academic freedom.

PART 1: What Academic Freedom Does

1. Academic freedom means that both faculty members and students can engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship or retaliation.
2. Academic freedom establishes a faculty member's right to remain true to his or her pedagogical and andragogical philosophy and intellectual commitments. It preserves the intellectual integrity of our educational system and thus serves the public good.
3. Academic freedom in teaching means that both faculty members and students can make comparisons and contrasts between subjects taught in a course and any field of human knowledge or period of history.
4. Academic freedom gives both students and faculty the right to express their views — in speech, writing, artistic creation, and through electronic means, both on and off campus — without fear of sanction, unless the manner of expression substantially impairs the rights of others or, in the case of faculty members, those views demonstrate that they are professionally ignorant, incompetent, or dishonest with regard to their discipline or fields of expertise.
5. Academic freedom gives both students and faculty the right to study and do research on the topics they choose and to draw what conclusions they find consistent with their research, though it does not prevent others from judging whether their work is valuable and their conclusions sound. To protect academic freedom, the College will oppose efforts by corporate or government sponsors to block dissemination of any research findings.



6. Academic freedom means that the political, religious, or philosophical beliefs of politicians, administrators, and members of the public cannot be imposed on students or faculty.
7. Academic freedom gives faculty members and students the right to seek redress (e.g., grievance process for full-time faculty, academic complaint process for students) if they believe their rights have been violated.
8. Academic freedom protects faculty members and students from reprisals for disagreeing with administrative policies or proposals.
9. Academic freedom protects a faculty member's authority to assign grades to students, so long as the grades are not arbitrary or capricious. More broadly, academic freedom encompasses both the individual and institutional right to maintain academic standards.
10. Academic freedom gives faculty members substantial latitude in deciding how to teach the courses for which they are responsible.

PART 2: What Academic Freedom Does Not Do

1. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matters which have no relation to their subject. This consideration is not intended to discourage what is "controversial," but rather to underscore the need for instructors to avoid persistently introducing such material if it has no relation to their subject.
2. Academic freedom does not mean a faculty member can harass, threaten, intimidate, ridicule, or impose his or her views on students or colleagues.
3. Student academic freedom does not deny faculty members the right to require students to master course material and the fundamentals of the disciplines that faculty teach.
4. Academic freedom does not protect faculty members from colleague or student disagreement with, or challenges to, their educational philosophy and practices.
5. Though briefly interrupting a College gathering (meeting, class, performance, speaker etc.) may be compatible with academic freedom, actually preventing said gathering from continuing is not.
6. Academic freedom does not protect faculty members from legal penalties if they break the law.
7. Academic freedom does not give students or faculty the right to ignore College regulations, though it does give faculty and students the right to criticize regulations they believe are unfair.
8. Academic freedom does not protect students or faculty from disciplinary action, but it does require that they receive fair treatment and due process.
9. Academic freedom does not protect a faculty member from investigations into allegations of intellectual or academic misconduct or violations of sound College policies, nor from appropriate penalties should such charges be substantiated via due process.
10. Academic freedom does not protect a faculty member from sanctions for professional misconduct; though such sanctions require clear proof established through due process and are regulated by the Faculty Association Agreement.



Change Log:

<u>Date Of Change</u>	<u>Description of Change</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
10/4/13	Initial Release	C. DeGroot
05/07/13	Approved by Academic Council	Woods/J. Frew
05/09/2014	Annual Review and updates	R. Woods
10/4/16	Regular review and update	R. Woods
10/10/16	Reviewed by Academic Council	R. Woods
12/14/2020	Reviewed by Academic Council	J. Frew/A. Tuckey
07/11/2022	Reviewed by Academic Council	J.Frew/A. Tuckey
11/25/2024	Reviewed and Approved	Academic Council