



Academic Freedom

1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes the expectations and responsibilities regarding academic freedom essential to the foundation of education at Northern Pennsylvania Regional College (“NPRC” or the “College”). This policy informs other NPRC policies, particularly those that guide our academic efforts, use of College technology, and interactions with each other, as well as those which publicly express ideas and opinions.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all employees and students.

3. REFERENCES

- 3.1 INDX 1310-01: Master Policy Index
- 3.2 INDX 1110-02: Document Naming Key
- 3.3 American Association of University Professors, 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.
- 3.4 CLDR-1310: Policy Review Schedule

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Academic freedom is an individual’s right to engage in intellectual inquiry, debate, speech, and in writing, on and off campus, without fear of censorship, retaliation, or sanction. It allows the exploration of significant and controversial questions as an essential component of education and provides opportunities for critical thinking and understanding of conflicting viewpoints. Academic freedom allows individuals to investigate, to form conclusions, and to express judgments and opinions without interference from special interests or conflicting public opinion. Academic freedom includes the right to constructively criticize college policies in appropriate forums as part of the governance process without fear of retribution.

5. POLICY

- 5.1 Academic freedom applies to all members of the college community. Members of the college community have a corresponding duty to exercise the responsibilities that accompany academic freedom.

- 5.2 The College shall protect the free inquiry and discussion of ideas as necessary and beneficial for the pursuit of higher education in alignment with the mission of the College.
- 5.3 NPRC encourages a scholarly atmosphere by fostering respect for new, challenging, or controversial ideas and diverse viewpoints among NPRC community members.
- 5.4 In the exercise of academic freedom, faculty members may, without limitation, discuss their own subject in the classroom.
 - 5.4.1 This freedom involves the right to introduce controversial topics if the presentation involves objective reasoning and rational discussion.
 - 5.4.2 Discussion of controversial matter which has no relation to the faculty member's subject is not protected by academic freedom.
- 5.5 Faculty and students have a responsibility to engage in teaching and learning that honors and respects divergent viewpoints that are grounded in reason, logic, evidence, and responsible scholarship.
- 5.6 Students are evaluated only on academic criteria and standards, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to those criteria and standards.
- 5.7 When employees speak or write as citizens, care should be taken to avoid the representation of any personal view as that of NPRC.
- 5.8 Consistent with the above statements, NPRC endorses the following statement from the American Association of University Professors: College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, 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 their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, 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.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINES

- 6.1 The Vice President of Academics or designee is responsible for oversight and administration of this policy.

7. REVIEW STATEMENT

Review of this policy will occur in alignment with CLDR-1310: Policy Review Schedule.

Revision Notes: Policy in Revision