
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING REGULATIONS

Subject: Academic Freedom
Number: UW Regulation 2-15



I. POLICY

Education flourishes only when academic personnel have both freedom and responsibilities in the conduct of their official duties. These duties include: teaching activities, including extension and outreach; research and other scholarly work; service; and shared governance. Adopting a system of freedoms and responsibilities helps ensure that the university can serve as a forum in which ideas may be examined openly and rigorously, without implying institutional endorsement. Although many of these freedoms are protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution, they also exist as a fundamental requirement of the mission of the university.

The university adheres to the principles of the 1940 “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure,” by the American Association of University Professors. The following expresses the meaning of that statement, updated for current values.

Academic freedom in teaching protects the rights of teachers to teach according to their expertise. Teachers are entitled to freedom in discussing their subject. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that their teaching is effective and consistent with the standards of the discipline, understanding that disciplines may have diverse points of view on any given subject. Teaching may involve controversial material; however, with academic freedom in the classroom, teachers also have the responsibility to respect others’ freedom to express disagreement and alternate opinions.

Academic freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic personnel are entitled to full freedom in research, publication of the results, and other scholarly activities that are part of their employment. Academic personnel have the responsibility to pursue research and scholarship with integrity and fidelity to their profession and the institution.

Academic freedom does not negate the rights of students and the public to disagree with academic personnel’s work, although students are expected to learn material with which they may disagree. Nor does academic freedom shield academic personnel’s work from the consequences of expert review by colleagues in their field of study, which is essential to the rigorous evaluation of teaching, research, and creative activity.

Freedom in university governance entails the rights of academic personnel to express their judgments about administrative matters that bear on the university's mission. It includes the right to express agreement or disagreement with institutional policies and the positions of others, including university officials. Academic personnel have the responsibility to participate in university governance and service for the maintenance, health and improvement of the institution.

Freedoms of academic personnel also include the ability to invite guest speakers and artists, who are afforded the same academic freedoms and responsibilities of resident academic personnel. Invitation of guest speakers and artists does not imply university approval or endorsement of the expressed views.

When academic personnel speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. They should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for others' right to disagree, and make it clear that they are not speaking for the institution.

Responsible Division/Unit: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Source: None

Links: <http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies>

Associated Regulations, Policies, and Forms: None

History:

Trustee Regulation V; adopted 7/17/2008 Board of Trustees meeting

Revisions adopted 9/17/2010 Board of Trustees meeting

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Revisions adopted 9/12/2014 Board of Trustees meeting

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Moved to new UW Regulation 2-15 on 6/12/2019 Board of Trustees (effective 7/1/2019)