

AP 4030 - Academic Freedom

Approved by Leadership: February 2014

References: Title 5 Section 51023

Accreditation Standard II.A.7

It is the responsibility of the Butte-Glenn Community College District to provide an institutional environment that is dedicated to academic freedom and instills respect and commitment to the obligations required to maintain these freedoms.

Academic freedom represents the continual search for truth, and it includes protection for the teacher to teach and for the student to learn without coercion, censorship, or other forms of restrictive interference.

Academic freedom recognizes that freedom to teach and freedom to learn imply both rights and responsibilities within the framework of the law. Free discussion and free access to information, therefore, are the heart of the continuing search for truth.

Academic freedom is the freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression. It is also the freedom to speak or write outside of the classroom without institutional discipline or restraint on matters of public concern as well as on matters related to professional duties and the functioning of the College.

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.

Suggested new language (since the above, original language is merely a verbatim restatement of Board Policy 4030):

As stated in Board Policy 4030, the Butte-Glenn Community College District is committed to preserving academic freedom, which includes protection for the teacher to teach and for the student to learn without unlawful coercion, censorship, or other forms of restrictive interference by the District.

Academic freedom recognizes that freedom to teach and freedom to learn imply both rights and responsibilities.

Faculty Academic Freedom Rights and Responsibilities

Academic freedom encompasses the right of faculty to discuss in the classroom pertinent subjects within their field of professional competency and consistent with course objectives, and for counselors, librarians and other academic employees to provide appropriate student services within their fields of professional competency and consistent with sound educational principles.

Academic freedom grants to faculty the right to engage in the following conduct without unlawful coercion, censorship or other restriction:

1. Determine the course content, instructional materials, pedagogical methods and student assessment methods for the courses taught, consistent with disciplinary standards and the course outline of record;
2. Discuss the subject matter of the course as appropriate to disciplinary standards and the course outline of record, even when the subject is controversial;
3. Develop assignments and instructional activities appropriate to the subject, disciplinary standards and the course outline of record;
4. Evaluate students' work based on the academic merit of their performance;
5. Demonstrate, teach and require critical thinking, including sound reasoning, evidence-based argumentation and intellectual honesty;
6. Manage the classroom environment in a way that ensures appropriate consideration of and progress through the course material;
7. Express differences of opinion with and among students, faculty, staff, and administration on academic matters, even when the subject is controversial or uncomfortable;
8. Maintain a classroom environment in which students are free to express relevant ideas and viewpoints as long as doing so does not constitute discrimination, harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct toward a fellow student or a faculty member;
9. Choose research topics and methods of investigation and publish their work;
10. Speak as private citizens on matters of public concern, which includes any matter of political, social, or other concern to the community;
11. Engage with colleagues as a collective body in approving curriculum;
12. Determine the extent to which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is incorporated into their teaching and assessment, ensuring alignment with disciplinary standards and the course outline of record.

A faculty member's academic freedom also entails responsibilities, including the responsibility to:

1. Exercise the above freedoms within the bounds of established disciplinary standards, the course outline of record, and relevant laws, regulations, and District policies and procedures;
2. Avoid interfering with the First Amendment freedoms of others;
3. Make it clear, when speaking as a private citizen on a matter of public concern, that they do not speak for the institution and are not speaking in their professional capacity.

Student Academic Freedom Rights and Responsibilities

Academic study within the District places students in an environment designed to present students with a full, open and thoughtful range of ideas, perspectives, research methods and research results. As a result, students are likely to encounter conflicting and controversial views. Successfully navigating this environment helps students to develop the critical inquiry and thought required for professional and personal success.

Academic freedom protects a student's freedom to learn, which includes the right to:

1. Engage in full, open and thoughtful discussion, inquiry and expression about course content within the classroom;
2. Take reasoned, evidence-based exception to the concepts, data, theoretical frameworks, research findings and perspectives offered in any course of study, when appropriate to the instructional method at hand and consistent with the District's Student Code of Conduct;
3. Be evaluated solely on an academic basis and not on opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards.

As with faculty, student academic freedom entails responsibilities, including the responsibility to:

1. Learn the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled;
2. Adhere to the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled;
3. Respect the right of faculty to determine the curriculum and pedagogy for the course, consistent with disciplinary standards and the course outline of record;
4. Exercise the above freedoms within the bounds of relevant laws, regulations, and District policies and procedures, including the Student Code of Conduct;
5. Avoid disrupting the learning environment for the instructor or for other students;
6. Recognize that discomfort is often part of the learning process.

Limitations on Academic Freedom

Academic freedom does not permit discrimination, harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct against faculty or students, nor does academic freedom excuse the

perpetuation of racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry and hate that interfere with maintaining an equitable and inclusive learning environment.