

Coast Community College District
BOARD POLICY
Chapter 4
Academic Affairs

BP 4030 Academic Freedom

References:

Title 5 Section 51023;

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Eligibility Requirements 13 and 20;

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Standard 4.1;

District's Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Coast Federation of Educators ("CFE") and the Coast Community College Association ("CCA")

Recognizing that the free search for truth and the expression of diverse opinions are essential to a democratic society, the District, in collaboration with CFE and CCA, supports the principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry, with the understanding that

(a) Academic freedom encompasses the right of faculty to express or discuss in their classrooms and throughout the District challenging ideas and topics related to courses they teach and to their own academic, professional expertise. Their primary responsibility, though, is to achieve the objectives of the course outline of record. This does not preclude faculty members from using their professional judgment in discussing other topics with their students when aimed at enhancing student learning. The expression of this right is guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of students and the advancement of their knowledge.

(b) Academic freedom and freedom of inquiry include the right of faculty to pursue knowledge, and to create and to use instructional materials that may be thought-provoking or controversial, and which are relevant to the courses they teach to enhance student learning. These rights notwithstanding, academic freedom is to be practiced within the parameters of commonly recognized standards of teaching, professional conduct, and applicable policies and laws.

(c) Faculty members recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. These responsibilities include the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and sound judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. In the conduct of their teaching and professional lives, faculty members demonstrate intellectual honesty and devotion to continual improvement of scholarly competence.

With the shared understanding of the rights and responsibilities, academic freedom will be promoted and protected.

A faculty member's exercising of their right of academic freedom as delineated below shall not be subject to any adverse action affecting the faculty member's employment status with the District:

- (a) For the development and publication of instructional materials, as well as the interpretation of course content and adoption of innovative instructional methods compatible with the course outline of record and standards accepted within the academic community;
- (b) For exercising freedom to examine or endorse unpopular or controversial ideas within their fields of professional expertise as appropriate to course content, discussions with students, or academic research or publication. In so doing, the faculty member shall attempt to be accurate, fair, objective, and show respect for diverse opinions;
- (c) For using or recommending, within the parameters of (a) above, instructional materials which may challenge prevailing social attitudes, or contain unpopular or controversial ideas;
- (d) For presenting all points of view in teaching and discussing controversial ideas or content in their courses and for including reference materials of broad and diverse interest, information and enlightenment without prejudice in regards to the race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, social, political, or religious views of the authors;
- (e) For expressing in an appropriate forum the faculty member's viewpoint on matters of Board Policy.
- (f) In collegial life, for participation in the governance of their colleges, and for engaging in the collegial expression of opinions in their department, College, and/or District meetings.

Political activities on College campuses shall be governed by Board Policies and Administrative Procedures which shall be in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

The District shall respect the faculty member's right in public life to exercise freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of union activity, and freedom to express expert opinions in a public forum provided that it is clear that the faculty member is not speaking or acting on behalf of the District.

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