
**Allan Hancock Joint Community College District
Board Policy
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs**

BP 4030 ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The District is committed to the principle that academic freedom is essential to the education of its students. Academic freedom is fundamental to protecting the rights of the instructor to teach and of the student to learn.

Academic freedom is the right to engage in scholarship, research, or other creative work in order to seek truth and expand knowledge, in an atmosphere of unfettered free inquiry. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in creative endeavors and research and in the performance and/or publication of such work.

Faculty members and their students are entitled to freedom in the classroom and/or other teaching environments in discussing their subject matter. Controversy and debate are necessary aspects of critical inquiry, but the freedom to teach and learn must be joined by a sustained effort to distinguish between knowledge and belief. To ensure the freedom to seek and profess truth and knowledge, the faculty member shall not be subjected to censorship or discipline by the college on grounds that the faculty member has expressed opinions or views, or provided access to materials, or guest speakers, which are controversial, unpopular, or contrary to the attitudes of the community or institution. Faculty members should encourage the expression of differing points of view, while being careful to avoid the repeated and excessive intrusion of material that has no relation to their subject matter. Students have the same freedom in discussing the subject matter in the classroom, and the same responsibility to respect the rights and opinions of others.

Faculty members have the right and responsibility to select textbooks, course materials, and methods of assessment that they deem appropriate to meet the stated learning outcomes for their courses, consistent with the approved Course Outlines of Record and, as appropriate, in consultation with their department, program, or disciplinary colleagues. Faculty are entitled to freedom in their use of online sources and internet sites and may arrange for classroom lecturers or speakers to make presentations in regularly scheduled classes or groups of classes when the use of these resources are relevant to the subject matter and help achieve stated learning outcomes of the course.

Faculty members are both members of the community and representatives of an educational institution. When they speak or write as community members, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, they should make every effort to

indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. When they speak or write as representatives of an educational institution, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times strive to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, and to show respect for the opinions of others.

Academic freedom should be limited to no greater degree in electronic format than in printed or oral communication. While expression in an electronic format is obviously different in important ways from print or oral expression – for example, in the far greater speed of communication, and in the capacity to convey messages to far wider audiences – such factors do not justify alteration or dilution of basic principles of academic freedom and free inquiry within the academic community. The district shall make every effort to balance the need for security of the electronic communications network with these fundamental principles of open scholarly communication and research.

The right to academic freedom shall be protected and supported through the establishment and use, when necessary, of appropriate due process procedures.

Excerpted and modified from *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* with 1970 interpretative comments, AAUP (paragraphs 2, 3, and 4); *Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications*, AAUP, 2014; Policy Statement on “Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics,” Pasadena Community College, 2001; and Faculty Handbook, Boston University, 1987.

See AP 3430 Prohibition of Harassment
BP/AP 3720 Computer and Network Use

References: Title 5 Section 51023;
ACCJC Accreditation Eligibility Requirements 13 and 20;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard I.C.4.1;
1940 AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure

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