

Policy Title: Academic Freedom

Policy Administrator:

Provost and Vice Provost, Research and Graduate Studies

Approving Body:

Senate

Approval History:

October 2, 2018; Senate Motion #2018/19-008

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To safeguard academic freedom at Trinity Western University
- To identify a process for dealing with complaints from faculty, staff or students that their academic freedom has been violated

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to all members of the Trinity Western University Community.

Policy Statement:

Academic Freedom statement

With our charter, mission, and identity as a Christian university, Trinity Western University is committed to academic freedom, affirming and supporting academic freedom as defined and described in the statements of Universities Canada¹ and the Tri-agencies².

Responsibilities

The Research and Academic Support Sub-Committee (RAS) will monitor the Universities Canada and Tri-agency statements annually and notify Senate of any changes.

The Board of Governors will ensure that all members of the board are familiar with the Universities Canada and Tri-agency Academic Freedom statements, and are familiar with this policy such that board members will uphold academic freedom at Trinity Western University.

The University Administration will ensure that students, faculty, staff and the board are provided with orientation and professional development training regarding academic freedom, to varying degrees as commensurate with their role at the university.

Professors bear the responsibility to ensure that students know about academic freedom, and to create a climate of openness, welcoming a diversity of academic perspectives both in class discussion and submitted course work. At the same time, hate speech is not to be tolerated, and professors should help students understand the difference between academic freedom and hate speech. All syllabi must contain a statement ensuring that faculty and student academic freedom will be respected and include a link to the Academic Freedom statements that TWU has adopted.

Complaints

Complaints involving academic freedom originating from faculty or staff will follow the process outlined in the Dispute Resolution Policy. Graduate students will be directed to address concerns about academic freedom to the Vice Provost Research & Graduate Studies, accompanied by an advocate of their choice. In cases where an undergraduate student feels that there has been infringement of their academic freedom, they may either approach the TWUSA Vice President of Student Relations, or the Director of Community Life who in turn will meet with the Provost to ascertain how to proceed with the matter.

References:

¹ Universities Canada Statement on Academic Freedom, 2011

² Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2), 2014

Definitions:

RAS: University Senate Research and Academic Support Sub-Committee

Academic Freedom: As defined by the Universities Canada (2011) and Tri-agency (2014) statements.

Hate speech: Abusive or threatening speech or writing that seeks to undermine or cause harm to an individual or group (see also Section 319 of the *Criminal Code* of Canada)

Tri-Agency: Refers to the following research entities: Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada; Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; and Canadian Institutes of Health Research

VPRGS: Vice Provost, Research and Graduate Studies

Monitoring Data:

The Provost and VPRGS will report to RAS compliance with the policy.