

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. (**Academic Freedom**)

Judgment of Compliance

Compliance

Narrative

Albany State University (ASU) is committed to the principle of academic freedom and considers it an indispensable quality for progressive and dynamic institutions of higher education. The University demonstrates its commitment to academic freedom through the policies [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) and procedures it has adopted and implemented for the safeguard and protection of academic freedom.

Commitment to Academic Freedom

Because ASU acknowledges the integral importance of academic freedom to the attainment of its mission of teaching, research and service, the University maintains, publishes and disseminates a broad and liberal policy on academic freedom to its constituents. The academic freedom policy is stated in the Faculty Senate constitution and restated in the faculty Handbook.

The Faculty Senate Constitution addresses academic freedom and provides that every faculty member is entitled to “the right ...to search for truth and knowledge without obstruction or restraint” and “the right ...to form judgments based on full and free exploration, exposition, and discussion without reprisal from any individual, office or agency” [\[2\]](#). Additionally, the Faculty Senate Constitution includes an “Academic Freedom Affirmation” Statement which recognizes the importance of academic freedom to “the true advancement of knowledge” which in turn “advances a free society” [\[2\]](#). These policies are restated in the Faculty Handbook [\[3\]](#), a copy of which is distributed to each new faculty member and housed in each academic department in the University.

The Statutes of ASU also obligate the University to adhere to the principles of academic freedom. Article VII, Section 4 (Faculty Rights and Responsibilities) requires the University to abide by the principles of academic freedom so as to promote the “common good” and the “free search for truth and its free exposition” [\[1\]](#). Article VII, Section 4 (a) provides further:

“Academic freedom is essential to [the common good] and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom...is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the students to freedom of learning...The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his subject...When the teacher speaks or writes as a citizen, he should be free from institutional censorship or discipline...”[\[1\]](#).

These University policies are consistent with the academic freedom policy endorsed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in the AAUP *Policy Documents and Reports* [\[4\]](#). ASU has an AAUP Chapter on its campus [\[5\]](#) of which faculty members are encouraged to hold active membership [\[6\]](#). Both the University’s

Academic Freedom policy and the AAUP policy promote the corresponding duty and responsibility of faculty to be accurate...and to exercise appropriate judgment [\[2\]](#) [\[4\]](#).

Safeguard and Protection of Academic Freedom

Albany State University strives to promote the principle of academic freedom through its faithful adherence to the above policies. In the event, however, that there are grievances brought to address violations of the policy, the University's statutes provide for a Faculty Grievance procedure to conduct inquiries into faculty complaints. Article V, Section 11 of the ASU Statutes creates a Faculty Grievance Committee [\[7\]](#) to consider the complaint after the aggrieved party has attempted to resolve the complaint before their immediate supervisor and up through the administrative chain including the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If no resolution has been reached, the aggrieved party may appeal to the Board of Regents, as acknowledged in ASU Statutes, Article VII, Section 4(b) [\[8\]](#) and as provided in Article IX of the Board of Regents Bylaws [\[9\]](#) and the Policy Manual for the Board [\[10\]](#).

The University has also created a Conflict Resolution (CRP) program and The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process for mediation of claims by faculty who believe that their rights have been violated [\[11\]](#).

Albany State University further safeguards and promotes the principle of academic freedom by embracing the concepts of "faculty governance" and "shared governance" as provided for in the Faculty Senate Constitution [\[12\]](#) stated in the Faculty Handbook [\[13\]](#). Meaningful faculty involvement in decision-making and participation in policy issues that affect the operation of the University are encouraged by the University and support the ideals of academic freedom and democratic practices.

Supporting Documentation

- [1] [Albany State University Statutes, Article VII, Section 4](#)
- [2] [Faculty Senate Constitution and By-Laws \(Article II, Sections A, B, and C\)](#)
- [3] [Faculty Handbook, Section 320.02](#)
- [4] [AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 9th edition](#)
- [5] [American Association of University Professors \(AAUP\) Constitution](#)
- [6] [American Association of University Professors \(AAUP\) Agenda](#)
- [7] [Albany State University Statutes, Article V, Section 11](#)
- [8] [Albany State University Statutes, Article VII, Section 4\(b\)](#)
- [9] [BOR Bylaws, Article IX](#)
- [10] [BOR Policy Manual, Section 803.11 through 803.1104](#)
- [11] [Albany State University Status Report on Conflict Management System](#)

[12] [Faculty Senate Constitution and By-Laws \(Article I, Sections B and C\)](#)

[13] [Faculty Handbook, Section 320.01](#)