

**MOUNTWEST COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE
INSTITUTIONAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

POLICY # H-20 - Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility

SECTION 3.1. GENERAL AUTHORITY

- 3.1.a. This policy defines the principle of academic freedom as established by the Legislature for those public institutions of higher education in West Virginia under the jurisdiction of the Council on Community and Technical College Education and Higher Education Policy Commission.
- 3.1.b. **AUTHORITY:**
TITLE 131: Procedural Rules State College System of West Virginia Board of Directors; Series 36: Academic Freedom Professional Responsibility, Promotion, and Tenure. July 30, 1997.
- 3.1.c. **Effective Date:** May 2005
Supersedes: Internal Documents based on Title 131 and Series 36

SECTION 3.2. DEFINITIONS AND POLICY STATEMENTS

3.2.a.i. “Academic Freedom: Necessity”: Academic freedom at public institutions of higher education in West Virginia under the jurisdiction of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education and Higher Education Policy Commission is necessary to enable the institutions to perform their societal obligation as established by the Legislature. The Council and Commission recognize that the vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the institutions under their jurisdiction. Faculty members and students must always remain free to inquire, study, and evaluate.

3.2.a.ii. “Academic Freedom: Responsibility to Institution”: Through the exercise of academic freedom, members of the academic community freely study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish depending upon their particular role at the institution. To all of those members of the academic community who enjoy academic freedom, there are, commensurate with such freedom, certain responsibilities. All faculty members shall be entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results of such research, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties, which may include designated instruction, research, extension service, and other professional duties. Activity for pecuniary return that interferes with one’s obligations to the institution should be based upon an understanding, reached before the work is performed, with the authorities of the institution. Further, each faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject taught. In addition, when faculty members speak or write as citizens outside the institution, they shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

3.2.b.i “Responsibility: Academic Responsibility”: The concept of academic freedom is accompanied by an equally important concept of academic responsibility. The faculty member

at a public institution of higher education in West Virginia is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a representative of an educational institution. As such, a faculty member, together with all other members of the academic community, has the responsibility for protecting, defending, and promoting individual academic freedom for all members of the community. The faculty member has the responsibility of contributing to institutional and departmental missions in teaching, researcher/professional growth, and service as defined by the institution. The faculty member is responsible as a teacher for striving to speak with accuracy and with respect for the similar rights and responsibilities of others. In speaking only as an individual or for a limited group, the faculty member should not imply or claim to be a spokesperson for the institution in which he or she holds an appointment.

3.2.b.ii “Responsibility: Professional Responsibility”: Faculty interests and skills change, disciplines evolve, and new professions or fields of study emerge. All faculty members are responsible for remaining current in their disciplines. All are encouraged to explore opportunities for further developing a versatile range of knowledge and skills that are important to the institution. Through individual initiative and faculty development programs, faculty members are encouraged to grow in competency in their own disciplines and strengthen their interests in related fields. As members of an academic community, faculty members are also expected to participate in decisions concerning programs and in program review processes.

3.2.c. “Common Goal of Quality”: In addition to meeting the primary responsibilities of addressing institutional missions in teaching, research/professional growth, and service as defined by the institution, all faculty have an obligation to foster the quality, viability, and necessity of their programs. The financial stability of a program and recruitment of an adequate number of students depend in part on the faculty. The common goal of quality must be nurtured and responsibility for it shared by all. Integrity, objectivity, and service to the purposes and missions of the institution are expected.

Revised:

Approved: May 2005