

Chapter 2

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2.1 ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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The university affirms and follows the idea that all members of the faculty are entitled to academic freedom, as defined in the following statements:

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its expression.

Academic freedom is essential to this purpose and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental to the protection of the rights of the faculty member in teaching and to the student to freedom in learning. It carries duties along with rights.

The faculty member is entitled to full freedom in research and in publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties, but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding and approval with the administration of the institution.

The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject.

The faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a representative of an educational institution. When they speak or write as a citizen, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educational representative, they should remember that the public may judge their profession by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not an institutional spokesperson.

2.1.4 STATEMENT OF FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY²

Membership in the academic community imposes on students, faculty members, administrators, and trustees an obligation to respect the dignity of others, to acknowledge their right to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off the campus. The expression of dissent and the attempt to produce change, therefore, may not be carried out in ways that injure individuals, damage institutional facilities, or disrupt the classes of one's teachers or colleagues. Speakers on campus must not only be protected from violence but also be given an opportunity

¹ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

² AAUP "A Statement of the Association's Council: Freedom and Responsibility" 1990; Revised 05/2025

to be heard. Those who seek to call attention to grievances must not do so in ways that significantly impede the functions of the institution.^{3, 4}

Students are entitled to an atmosphere conducive to learning and to even-handed treatment in all aspects of the teacher-student relationship. Faculty members may not refuse to enroll or teach students on the grounds of their beliefs or the possible ways in which they may put that knowledge to use. Students should not be forced by the authority inherent in the instructional role to make particular personal choices as to political action or their own social behavior. Evaluation of students and the awarding of credit must be based on academic performance professionally judged and not on matters irrelevant to that performance, whether personality, race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, religion, degree of political activism, or personal beliefs.

It is the mastery teachers have of their subjects and their own scholarship that entitles them to their classrooms and to freedom in the presentation of their subjects. Thus, it is improper for an instructor to intrude material persistently that has no relation to the subject, or to fail to present the subject matter of the course as announced to the students and as approved by the faculty in their collective responsibility for the curriculum.

Because academic freedom has traditionally included the faculty's full freedom as a private individual, most faculty members face no insoluble conflicts between the claims of politics, social action, and conscience, on the one hand, and the claims and expectations of their students, colleagues, and institutions, on the other. If such conflicts preclude an instructor from fulfilling substantial academic obligations, then the instructor should either request a leave of absence or resign their academic position.

2.1.5 VIOLATIONS OF FACULTY RIGHTS, ACADEMIC FREEDOM, AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY⁵

While affirming academic freedom as a right, the university recognizes that, in some circumstances, academic freedom becomes enmeshed in questions of professional incompetence or irresponsibility. In the effort to distinguish between these two issues, the guiding principle is that charges of professional incompetence or irresponsibility shall not be used to limit academic freedom, nor shall appeals to academic freedom be automatically accepted as a shield for professional incompetence or irresponsibility.

2.2 FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Membership in the academic profession carries with it responsibility for the stimulation of students' intellectual growth, the advancement of knowledge, and the improvement of society.

³ [Policy I:07 Campus Use and Protection of Free Speech](#)

⁴ [Policy I:07:03 Non-Campus Community Expressive Conduct Policy](#)

⁵ Revised 06/2023

Faculty must order and evaluate their activities in terms of their commitment to these goals, as well as in terms of their own personal and professional development.

Moreover, the faculty has a special obligation to understand the nature of Jacksonville State University and to appreciate its unique characteristics, its philosophy, and objectives. The faculty should strive to improve the intellectual and practical effectiveness of the university. While teaching shall normally be a faculty member's primary responsibility, faculty are also responsible for scholarship, which sustains and enriches teaching, research, publication, and service. In the arts, faculty are responsible for such evidence of creativity as exhibits, performances, and publication. Other faculty responsibilities are academic advisement; participation in department, school, and university governance; student recruitment; and community service. A faculty member shall be responsible for carrying out assigned duties satisfactorily. The responsibility to give time and talents to improve one's education and teaching, to seek professional achievement in one's academic discipline, and to support a general education shall also be an obligation of faculty members. During the term of, or upon the renewal of, the faculty member's appointment, the university reserves the right to change the faculty member's duties and responsibilities or to reassign the faculty member to another position, including one in a different academic department consistent with the needs of the university, so long as such change or reassignment take into consideration the faculty member's education and training.

The university does not wish to impose a rigid body of codified rules upon the members of its faculty. The university does, however, have certain legitimate expectations concerning the conduct of professional academics. The obligations incumbent on faculty members at Jacksonville State University are outlined below in a general way.

2.2.1 ADHERENCE TO UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS⁶

An organization can operate effectively and consistently only if it has policies, guidelines, and rules to guide it and its members. Each faculty member has a responsibility to know these regulations and to adhere to them. If questions of interpretation arise, clarification should be sought from the department head, dean, Provost/EVPAA, or the President. Any exceptions mutually agreed to by the University's administration and a faculty member must be in writing and signed by the faculty member and the appropriate university officials.

2.2.2 PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION⁷

A faculty member is appointed with the expectation that they shall be principally occupied with the academic growth and development of Jacksonville State University's students. The faculty member is required to devote their full effort to teaching, scholarly activity, and service at Jacksonville State University, unless an exception has been granted to the faculty member by the University. Participation in individual learning/development projects (e.g., faculty development activities, research, grants, contracts, etc.) is encouraged. The University expects

⁶ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

⁷ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

that all faculty members will avoid activities that create a conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as faculty members. The University also expects that faculty members will observe the highest moral and ethical standards in any dealings in which they represent the University.⁸

2.2.3 STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS⁹

Faculty, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end faculty devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although faculty members may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

As teachers, faculty encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Faculty demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Faculty make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between faculty member and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from their students. They protect their students' academic freedom.

As colleagues, faculty have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Faculty do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates, even when it leads to findings and conclusions that differ from their own. Faculty acknowledge academic debts and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Faculty accept their share of responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

As members of an academic institution, faculty seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although faculty observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Faculty give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, faculty recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

⁸ [Policy I:05:04 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)

⁹ AAUP "Statement on Professional Ethics" 2009; Revised 05/2025

As members of their community, faculty have the rights and obligations of other private individuals. Faculty measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As people engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

2.2.9 CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN TEACHING¹⁰

Although faculty members strive to exercise objectivity and avoid biased or preferential treatment of any student, when the student is a relative/dependent, other students are likely to perceive favoritism at their expense. Because the faculty member's credibility among students may suffer, students should be discouraged from registering in a class taught by a relative or by someone to whom they are a dependent. If a student enrolls in a course taught by a relative/dependent, the department head must be informed of this enrollment, and mutually agreed upon steps for grade determination should be made. If the department head is the faculty member teaching the class, then they should inform their dean.

2.2.10 CONSENSUAL RELATIONS POLICY¹¹

Faculty members, or students with teaching or teaching assistant responsibilities, are strictly prohibited from having a romantic or sexual relationship with a student enrolled in their course, or any student over whom they have a supervisory or evaluative role (e.g., thesis supervisor, comprehensive exam evaluator, research supervisor, practicum supervisor, etc.). Faculty members who violate this policy may be subject to dismissal or termination.

Personal relationships between faculty and students (other than romantic or sexual relationships which are strictly prohibited) occurring outside the instructional context may also lead to difficulties, so faculty should be careful to avoid any decisions that may reward or penalize the student involved and avoid possible conflicts of interest.

2.2.11 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS¹²

Consistent with the University's objectives of supporting faculty research and maintaining a reputable academic standing, faculty members are encouraged to engage in scholarly activities that may result in the creation of patents and copyrights. Faculty members shall retain ownership of copyrights and patent rights from individual creative works, if no substantial aid from the University or from an outside agency operating through official University channels is received.

¹⁰ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

¹¹ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

¹² Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

Rights pertaining to materials that result from university-assisted efforts, externally sponsored efforts, and university-assigned efforts shall be determined in accordance with the terms of the Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy II:05:03).¹³

2.2.12 ETHICAL TREATMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS¹⁴

All research involving human subjects conducted at the University or under the aegis of the University must be approved in advance by the Institutional Review Board.¹⁵ Consult the Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy II:08:01)¹⁶ for additional details about research using human subjects.

All research involving animal subjects conducted at the University or under the aegis of the University must be approved in advance by the Animal Care and Use Committee.¹⁷ Consult the Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy II:08:02)¹⁸ for additional details on research, teaching, or testing using animal subjects.

2.2.13 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY¹⁹

It is the established policy of Jacksonville State University to provide a work and study environment for faculty, staff and students that is free from all forms of sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, and exploitation. Jacksonville State University condemns such behavior and will review all claims of sexual harassment. See the JSU Sexual Harassment policy for procedures for initiating a complaint of sexual harassment.²⁰

2.2.14 APPROPRIATE DRESS²¹

As representatives of the university, faculty members should present themselves in a manner appropriate to their position.

2.2.15 USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL²²

Faculty are responsible for knowing and observing the laws concerning copyrighted material. University employees who wish to use copies of material created by others (printed material, videotape, computer software, or other materials related to electronic media) are responsible for determining its copyright status and should obtain written permission from the copyright owner before using the material except when the "fair use" criteria have been met.

2.2.16 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT²³

¹³ [Policy II:05:03 Intellectual Property](#)

¹⁴ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

¹⁵ [Institutional Review Board - Academic Affairs \(jsu.edu\)](#)

¹⁶ [Policy II:08:01 Research Using Human Subjects](#)

¹⁷ [Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee \(IACUC\) - Academic Affairs \(jsu.edu\)](#)

¹⁸ [Policy II:08:02 Research, Teaching, or Testing Using Animal Subjects](#)

¹⁹ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

²⁰ [Policy I:02:05 Sexual Harassment](#)

²¹ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

²² Revised 06/2023

²³ Revised 06/2023

Jacksonville State University is an equal opportunity employer and educational provider that is dedicated to non-discrimination of any member of the university's community on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veterans' status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other legally protected group status. This policy applies to faculty, staff, students, visitors, applicants, and contractors in a manner consistent with applicable laws, regulations, ordinances, orders, and university policies, procedures, and processes.

The university will consider through appropriate and designated procedures the complaint or grievance of any individual who has reason to feel he or she has been affected by discrimination because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

As an institution of higher education, and in keeping with its policy of equal employment opportunity, the university hereby declares its policy of equal educational opportunity. All applicants for admission will be considered solely upon the basis of individual qualifications. All available student job opportunities will be distributed without regard to an applicant's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. This policy will be noted in all student handbooks, and the complaint or grievance of any student or prospective student who has reason to feel he or she has been affected by discrimination will be considered through appropriate procedures.

A representative has been appointed as equal opportunity officer for the university. The equal opportunity office serves as an extension of the president's office and is directly responsible for the administration of the affirmative action plan of the university.

Notification of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex and Grievance Procedures²⁴

JSU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities that it operates. JSU is required, by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Department of Education regulations to implement Title IX, not to discriminate in such a manner. This requirement to not discriminate in educational programs and activities extends to employment by the university and to admission thereto. Questions regarding Title IX and the implementing regulations should be referred to JSU's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights, or to both. For more information about the Title IX grievance procedure, including how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment and how JSU will respond to such complaints, please visit our Title IX website²⁵ or contact our Title IX Coordinator: Title IX Coordinator Angle Hall, Suite 301-A (256) 782-5769, titleix@jsu.edu.

²⁴ Revised 06/2023

²⁵ [Title IX - Title IX Overview \(jsu.edu\)](#)