

Chapter 2

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2.1 ACADEMIC FREEDOM

2.1.1 ACADEMIC FREEDOM¹

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 RESPONSIBILITIES⁶

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

⁶ Revised 06/2023; 05/2024

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

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 also have a responsibility for scholarship/creative activities, university/professional service, and/or administrative duties. Other faculty responsibilities include academic advisement and/or mentoring of students; participation in department, college, and university governance; student recruitment and retention; and community engagement. A faculty member shall be responsible for carrying out assigned duties satisfactorily. The responsibility to spend time to improve one's teaching, keep current in one's field, to seek professional achievement in one's academic discipline, and to be collegial in one's relationships shall also be an obligation of faculty members.

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 faculty. The obligations incumbent on faculty members at Jacksonville State University are outlined below in a general way.

2.2.1 ADHERENCE TO UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS⁷

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 STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS⁸

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.

⁷ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

⁸ AAUP "Statement on Professional Ethics" 2009; Revised 05/2025

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.

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.

2.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACULTY RIGHTS⁹

All faculty members have the right to:

- enjoy academic freedom as defined in the Faculty Handbook (Section 2.1).
- determine their research pursuits, creative works, or other scholarly activities within the mission of their academic unit and area of expertise.
- propose new curriculum, programs, initiatives, or revisions to existing curriculum, programs, and initiatives
- be involved in determining their professional, university, and public service activities.

⁹ Revised 12/2025

- have a reasonable period of time to review and respond to proposed policy changes impacting the professional and academic duties of faculty.
- have easy access to a complete and current set of policies and procedures, including a current version of the Faculty Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual.
- receive consistent and impartial implementation of institutional policies and procedures at all levels.
- receive protection as a whistleblower, as outlined in the Code of Conduct and Ethics.¹⁰
- receive due process, if provided in Chapters 5 and 6

2.2.4 RIGHTS OF THE FACULTY AS A WHOLE¹¹

Faculty members have a right, through their representatives on committees or on Faculty Senate, to:

- participate in shared governance at the university, college, and school/ departmental levels as described in the Faculty Handbook (Section 1.4).
- propose new academic programs and curricula, as necessary.
- initiate, review, revise, and approve changes to academic programs and curricula, as necessary.
- make recommendations in the hiring, tenure, and promotion of faculty members as defined by university, college, school, and departmental policies and procedures.
- participate in the process of searching for academic administrators, such as department heads, deans, and Provost/EVPAA, as well as administrators who can influence academics or faculty welfare, such as the Chief Financial Officer and President as described in the Faculty Handbook (Section 3.1.3).
- determine the operations of the Faculty Senate and other areas of faculty governance.
- influence institutional priorities, such as having input into the creation of the strategic plan and campus master plan.
- have a voice in making major decisions regarding academic affairs, such as the selection of the quality enhancement plan (and student affairs, where appropriate).
- be involved in the review, revision, and approval of institutional policies and procedures pertaining to academic affairs, student affairs (where appropriate), faculty welfare, financial exigency, and other areas that impact faculty. This includes a timely review of the final version of a document before or during the vetting and approval process.
- propose new institutional policies and procedures or call for their review via the Faculty Senate.
- be included in budget discussions through participation on the Budget Committee.
- receive information in a timely manner before being asked to provide feedback or take action on that issue.

2.2.5 RIGHT TO NON-RETALIATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SHARED GOVERNANCE¹²

¹⁰ [Policy I:05:04 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)

¹¹ Revised 12/2025

¹² Revised 01/2026

Shared governance is predicated on faculty participation at all levels—department, college, university. While participating in these roles, faculty have the right to offer candid feedback on issues of concern, register opposition to proposed changes, speak out about ethical concerns, and vote (or abstain from voting) on issues in a manner consistent with their conscience without fear of retaliation, coercion, or administrative pressure. For purposes of this section, prohibited retaliation is adverse action by the University due to a faculty member's participation in governance matters including:

- adverse employment actions related to work assignments, salary, annual leave, or other leaves or benefits;
- termination/dismissal of employment or non-renewal of contract;
- unlawful discrimination or the instigation or perpetuation of a hostile work environment; and
- intimidation or threats of any of the above.

Actions taken based solely on conduct or performance, and not connected in any way to shared governance participation, are not grievable under this section and do not violate it.

2.2.6 INDIVIDUAL FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES¹³

All faculty members have the responsibility to:

- fulfill their job requirements as outlined in faculty workload policy in the Faculty Handbook (Section 7.3) and their individual workload agreements.
- actively participate in the governance of the University, including serving on committees.
- be engaged in and provide feedback on major issues that impact the academic mission of the University.
- clearly articulate issues and concerns in a timely, accurate, informed, and consistent manner to their department heads, Faculty Senate, or other appropriate administrators.
- adhere to institutional policies and procedures, as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual,¹⁴ including the Code of Conduct and Ethics.¹⁵
- follow academic policies and procedures as outlined in the Faculty Handbook and the JSU Catalogs.
- comply with directives from their immediate supervisors and other University administrators.
- meet appropriate deadlines established by the department head, dean, Registrar, Provost/EVPAA, campus bookstore, and other University administrators.
- follow appropriate protocols and due process procedures.
- have the highest standards for ethical conduct regarding research, scholarly, and creative endeavors.
- dress and present themselves in a manner appropriate to their position.
- know and observe the laws concerning copyrighted material.

¹³ Revised 12/2025

¹⁴ [JSU Policies and Procedures Manual](#)

¹⁵ [Policy I:05:04 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)

2.2.7 EXPECTATION OF CIVILITY¹⁶

In order for shared governance to work, there is also the expectation of civility in behavior and discourse within the University setting.

- All faculty members have the right to be treated with respect and have others behave in a professional manner toward them.
- All faculty members are expected to behave in a civil manner, in word and deed, toward other individuals.
- All faculty members will have the opportunity to have their concerns heard by the appropriate administrative official.
- All faculty members have the right to lodge a formal grievance against another individual at the University in accordance with the Faculty Handbook (Section 6.4).
- Lack of civility to the level of bullying or harassment may lead to a grievance being filed and/or a department head or other administrator initiating disciplinary actions.

2.2.8 ETHICAL TREATMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS¹⁷

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.¹⁸ Consult the Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy II:08:01)¹⁹ 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.²⁰ Consult the Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy II:08:02)²¹ for additional details on research, teaching, or testing using animal subjects.

2.2.9 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY²²

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.²³

2.2.10 USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL²⁴

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,

¹⁶ Revised 04/2025

¹⁷ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

¹⁸ [Institutional Review Board - Academic Affairs \(jsu.edu\)](#)

¹⁹ [Policy II:08:01 Research Using Human Subjects](#)

²⁰ [Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee \(IACUC\) - Academic Affairs \(jsu.edu\)](#)

²¹ [Policy II:08:02 Research, Teaching, or Testing Using Animal Subjects](#)

²² Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

²³ [Policy I:02:05 Sexual Harassment](#)

²⁴ Revised 06/2023

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.

2.2.11 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS²⁵

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.

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).²⁶

2.3 CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFLICT OF COMMITMENT

2.3.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN TEACHING²⁷

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.

2.3.2 CONSENSUAL RELATIONS POLICY²⁸

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

²⁵ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

²⁶ [Policy II:05:03 Intellectual Property](#)

²⁷ Revised 06/2023; 12/2025

²⁸ Revised 06/2023; 12/2025

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.

2.3.4 NEPOTISM/EMPLOYMENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST²⁹

It shall be considered a conflict of interest in employment for an employee to serve in a direct supervisory capacity over a relative.³⁰ This may include (but is not limited to) the following: spouse, sibling, descendant (child, grandchild, great-grandchild), ancestor (parent, grandparent), stepchild, in-law.

2.3.5 PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION³¹

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 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.³²

²⁹ Revised 06/2023; 07/2024

³⁰ [Policy I:02:23 Nepotism](#)

³¹ Revised 06/2023; 05/2025

³² [Policy I:05:04 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)