



Reference: *Title 5, Section 51023;*
Accreditation Eligibility Requirement 20;
Accreditation Standard I.C.7

The West Hills Community College District is committed to the principles of academic freedom as core values that underlie teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and service to the public, our community, and the larger scholarly community. The principles of academic freedom are part of the broader protections of freedom of expression, guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies both to teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher to teach and of the student in the freedom to learn. Academic freedom carries with it duties correlative with rights.

The right to exercise any liberty implies a duty to use it responsibly. As a right, it guarantees the instructor freedom to express and explore diverse and competing viewpoints, interpret personal findings, and communicate the conclusions without being subjected to interference, molestation, or penalty because the conclusions are at variance with those of other persons. As a responsibility, it carries the obligation to study, to investigate, to present, to discuss, and to interpret, fairly and objectively, facts and ideas related to the instructor's assignments and to avoid teaching material which has no relation to the subject or is inconsistent with course objectives.

When faculty speak or write as citizens they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times abide by standards of professional ethics, be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinion of others, and avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for the district.

The West Hills Community College District seeks to develop in its students a sense of thoughtful independence. To do so, students and faculty must be free within the classroom and through scholarly research, creative activity, and community service to explore the widest possible range of viewpoints. The District specifically endorses the following portion of the American Council on Education's Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities:

"The validity of academic ideas, theories, arguments and views should be measured against the intellectual standards of relevant academic and professional disciplines. Application of these intellectual standards does not mean that all ideas have equal merit. The responsibility to judge the

merit of competing academic ideas rests with colleges and universities and is determined by reference to the standards of the academic profession.”

The West Hills Community College District considers academic freedom defined by its attendant rights and responsibilities as a vital, primary force in the achievement of the goals and objectives of our colleges and the communities we serve.

See Administrative Procedure 4030

Board approval date: 6/16/98
Reviewed/Revised: 8/28/12; 10/20/2020