

Academic Freedom

Like most democratic concepts, academic freedom is difficult to define precisely and unambiguously. It is a guarantee of the right of a special kind of free speech in a special kind of community—that of a college or university. Ideally, academic freedom is a privileged responsibility that attempts to ensure free inquiry and free expression for members of the Faculty and for students, without fear of restraint, sanction, interference, intimidation, or reprisal from within or without the institution. Procedures for grievance and for adjudication of possible violations of academic freedom are provided in Review Board.

The policy of Centre College regarding academic freedom is defined in the following four points.

1. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom in research, contingent upon its ethical conduct, and in the publication of results, subject to the adequate performance of his or her other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based on an understanding with the authorities of the College.
2. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing subject material, but this person should be careful to avoid persistently introducing material that has no relation to the subject.
3. Each faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a teacher at an educational institution. When one speaks or writes, the faculty member should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and as a teacher, one should remember that the public may judge the academic profession and the College by one's utterances. Hence, one should at all times strive to be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the College.
4. Each faculty member also is entitled to the free search for truth and its free expression in the faculty member's various non-teaching duties in the life of the academic community. However, the faculty member is always obliged to speak and act responsibly, with honest care for the common good; to respect and defend free inquiry; to follow the principles of the Statement of community and, in the exchange of criticism and ideas, to show due respect for the opinions of others.