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SECTION: Curriculum and Instruction

POLICY TOPIC: Academic Freedom

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I. Introduction

Academic freedom is a right protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

II. Academic Freedom

A society, to remain free, requires citizens to be well-schooled in traditional knowledge and capable of critical evaluation of both new and old ideas. An institution of higher education can best foster growth in a democratic society when both student and instructor can freely participate in the process of sifting and weighing traditional approaches and creating and evaluating new ones. Through the community and the community college, society should provide an academic atmosphere in which questioning is encouraged, where alternatives can be explored, and where one may follow where an inquiry leads. It is, therefore, imperative that San Juan College faculty and students enjoy full freedom in the discussion of their subject and related matters, both in and beyond the classroom; the ultimate purpose of such freedom being pursuit of truth.

In their work, faculty are governed by the policy statements of the college. They are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but an instructor should be careful not to introduce controversial matter into their teaching that has no relation to one's subject.

As a citizen, an instructor is governed by civil law. Faculty are entitled to all the personal and civil liberties pertaining to citizenship, and the legal exercise of these privileges should in no way endanger one's position as a member of the college's instructional staff.

An instructor's right to express themselves on matters of college policy and procedure shall not be denied or abridged, nor should such an expression jeopardize one's academic position as long as the faculty member expresses themselves in a professional and ethical manner. An instructor who speaks or writes as a citizen, should be entirely free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community obliges them to remember that the public may judge one's profession and institution by the validity of one's opinions and the manner in which they are expressed. When speaking or writing as a citizen, an instructor should indicate that they are not an institutional spokesperson.

When an instructor speaks or writes as a citizen or as a faculty member, they should strive to be scrupulously accurate and objective, to maintain a professional demeanor, and to show respect for the convictions of others.

Academic Freedom does not protect instructors from the consequences of dishonesty, libel, slander, plagiarism, or intentional misrepresentation.