

# Statement On Academic Freedom

Article II in the West Valley Academic Senate

Senate  
Information

Constitution states the following regarding academic freedom:

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(The West Valley College Academic Senate voted to

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of an individual faculty, an individual department or college, or the institution as a whole.

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Gretchen Ehlers

The freedom of faculty to inquire, to teach, to speak, and to publish contributes very much more to the welfare of their fellow citizens outside the College than to their own good or the good of the campus. As a previous Chancellor of the California State University system, Glenn Dumke, said, the academic community has as one of its oldest functions to serve as "one of the consciences of society." The academic community "is a questioner, a worrier, a critic, and idealist, seeking a better way toward human aspiration and fulfillment." Academic freedom and tenure are essential for excellence in education and, moreover, exist so that society may have the benefits of objective and independent criticism, and honest answers to scientific, social and artistic questions that might otherwise be withheld for fear of offending an influential social group or transient social attitude.

On the most practical level many of the technological innovations of great material value to our society are the results of scientific research that is most effectively carried out in an atmosphere of complete academic freedom. On less tangible levels the social benefits of academic freedom are not so easily identified and accepted, but they are no less real than the material benefits. Free research, teaching, and discussion in political, social, and cultural freedom. Society is best served when the teacher and the scholar feels free to criticize and advocate change in any theories and beliefs, however widely held, and in any existing social, political, and economic institutions. It is not easy for faculty to dissent and to advocate unpopular ideas; it is almost always to their personal disadvantage to do so; but it is to the advantage of society to encourage them; only thus will society be aware of the full range of social political and cultural choices available to it; and only thus can the democratic ideal be fulfilled.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility It is recognized that faculty in the West Valley-Mission Community College District must defend and protect academic freedom - however unpleasant and costly to them personally. Earlier citizens of the State of California wisely established institutions of higher education in which the principles of academic freedom were

judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although faculty 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 assure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between faculty and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their 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. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, faculty show due respect for the opinions of others. Faculty acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Faculty accept their share of faculty 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 state 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 the 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 citizens. Faculty measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their professions, and to their institutions. When they speak or act as private persons they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, faculty have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.