



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Faculty Affairs

Preliminary Progress
Task Force on Academic Freedom & Faculty
Protection

The **Task Force on Academic Freedom & Faculty Protection** is charged

- Develop recommendations for university procedures that protect our faculty
 - And their academic freedom
 - In pursuing knowledge, educating students, and reinforcing our aggie core values
 - Members
 - Faculty Senate: Dale Rice & Andrew Klein
 - Senior advisory group: Catherine Eckel
 - CAFRT: Thomas McDonald; UGC: Malinda Seymore
 - DH Council Steering Committee: Claire Katz
 - Council of Deans: Mark Zoran
 - Faculty Affairs: Heather Lench; Provost: Michael Johnson; OREC: Kevin McGinnis
 - Students: Ellie Richter
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- Statement for academic freedom available for syllabi

Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject which the faculty member teaches, but should not introduce controversial matter which has no relation to the classroom subject.

*TO: "Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject which the faculty teaches. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure that topics discussed are related to the classroom subject."

*Texas A&M will not penalize or discipline faculty because of their exercise of academic freedom

*It is not the proper role of the university or any outside agency to attempt to shield individuals from ideas or opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive

*Engaging with new ideas and perspectives helps students grow intellectually and is beneficial to the educational process

- Administrative leave procedures for Rule 12.01.99.M1
 - Leave recommended by department head, issues from dean, with concurrence of SAVP Faculty Affairs during investigation of allegations of serious misconduct related to job performance
 - Serious misconduct that warrants leave = if true, place faculty staff or students in danger, lead to destruction of property, or result in breaches of confidentiality that disrupt educational or work environment
 - Speech alone rarely merits administrative leave
 - Reason for leave must be in writing with all terms and opportunity for appeal
 - Can appeal to UGC

 - Draft on website, posted to intranet soon
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- Develop near-term recommendations for how to address complaints against faculty
 - Previous process
 - Complaints from many directions & many mechanisms
 - Recommended process
 - Faculty related complaints to one point, in faculty affairs
 - Offer information and support to faculty respondent
 - Direct to investigatory offices as appropriate
 - Offer information and support to administrators as appropriate
 - Track complaints over time

 - DETAILS CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION
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- Recommendations for TAMUS 12.01 (in progress)
 - Written guidance and support for faculty who encounter threatening or harassing situations (in progress)
 - Academic freedom statement and resources for website (in progress)
 - Updates to university rules to be consistent with recommendations to the system regulation
 - Specific expectations and procedures around faculty-related complaints (in progress)
 - Faculty code of conduct that relates to professional behavior (update)
 - Guidance for administrators attempting to resolve unprofessional behavior (update)
 - Broader recommendations to structure communications, campus engagement, and student opportunities that convey the value of intellectual discussion and debate
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