

University of St. Thomas Policies

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Policy Number: F.06.01

Scope: All Faculty

Purpose: To articulate the University of St. Thomas academic freedom policies

POLICY FOUNDATION

Academic freedom refers to a scholar's freedom to express ideas without risk of official interference or professional disadvantage or retaliation. The commitment of the University of St. Thomas to academic freedom is framed first by the *Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities* (1990), referred to as *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and the subsequent description of its application to universities in the United States, *The Application for Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States* (2000).

Guided by these resources, the University of St. Thomas embraces the free search for the whole truth about nature, the human person and God. It proclaims the meaning of truth, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished. The University is dedicated to research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with the supreme truth, who is God (see *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 4).

Academic freedom promotes discovery, intellectual honesty and requires respect for, and a willingness to protect, the academic rights of others. The Catholic identity of the University of St. Thomas is expressed in our choices of educational programs and curricula, our sponsorship of projects and initiatives that cultivate the religious character of our academic community and students, and our support of Catholic beliefs and values.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The University recognizes and respects freedom in research and teaching “according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good” (see *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 5). Research for pecuniary return should be based on an understanding of the University of St. Thomas’ mission and policies.
2. Academic Freedom is essential to the life of the University of St. Thomas. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. All faculty are expected to reflect a respectful attitude toward the teachings of the Catholic Church and to carry out their responsibilities with fidelity to the mission of the University of St. Thomas.
3. In a general sense, academic freedom includes the right to study, investigate, teach and publish. This freedom is fundamental to the rights of the faculty in teaching and of students to freedom in learning. It includes the freedom to perform one’s professional duties and to present differing and sometimes controversial points of view clearly related to the subject, free from reprisal, and to present various scholarly views on matters appropriate to the

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subject being taught. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to freedom in research and publication of the results.

4. Freedom is never an absolute, however, and must be accompanied by an equally demanding understanding of responsibility reflected in word and action. The University will not condone attempts to undermine its stated mission or the teachings of the Catholic Church. The University affirms the concept of academic freedom stated in the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and in the American Bishops' application of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to Catholic colleges and universities in the United States.
5. When faculty members speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community as faculty of the University of St. Thomas, a Catholic institution of higher learning, imposes special obligations. As scholars and as educators, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Thus, they must at all times be accurate, exercise restraint, show respect for others and others' opinions, and indicate that they are not speaking for the University.
6. This policy, which describes a central valued right of faculty members, is counterbalanced by Policy F.07.04 Professional Ethical Conduct for Faculty, which describes a central valued responsibility of faculty members.

APPROVED: Board of Directors

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