Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Adopted by Humanities and Social Sciences Department Heads, August 2010

The American Association of University Professors’ 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure provided a clear and compelling explanation of academic rights and responsibilities: “Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole.  The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.  Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.”

On October 8, 1997, the North Carolina State University Commission on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities unanimously approved a document that described sets of academic rights and responsibilities for the NC State faculty.  The rights and responsibilities enumerated below are based on the NC State Commission’s report, with the rights of faculty in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences paired with the relevant responsibilities.

This document recognizes that faculty members’ work involves, in addition to classroom teaching, research, and service, supporting and advising students, advancing and protecting the integrity of the curriculum, promoting the interests of the university, and taking the lead in the development of an intellectually vibrant campus community.

1.0  Scholarly activities

Faculty have the right to conduct research and engage in creative pursuits.  They also have the right to communicate the results of that scholarship through publications and presentations of various kinds.

The responsibility of the faculty is to engage in scholarly activities in an ethical manner with intellectual honesty and professionalism. Likewise, publications and presentations based on that scholarship should be the work of the author(s) and should not plagiarize others’ work.

2.0  Discussion of ideas

Faculty have the right to discuss ideas and concepts relevant to their discipline and, as appropriate, across disciplines.  Faculty are encouraged to bring new ideas to these discussions.

The responsibility of the faculty is to discuss ideas, both traditional and new, in a professional and courteous manner that encourages the free expression of ideas by others within their discipline.

3.0  Teaching

Faculty have the right to engage in the development of academic programs, including determining the curriculum within their discipline and the content of courses that they will teach.  In addition, faculty have the right to decide how to measure knowledge and performance in their discipline and courses.

The faculty have the responsibility to maintain a high level of relevant professional knowledge, competence, and skill. In addition, faculty need to maintain a high level of teaching skill and to apply that skill on a continuing basis.  In addition, faculty should teach and assess student knowledge and performance in ways that are consistent with the best scholarship in their discipline.

4.0  Service

Faculty have the right to engage in public service within the university, the community and their discipline, especially in ways that apply their special expertise.

Faculty members have the responsibility to discriminate their duties as faculty members and representatives of the university from their personal activities or activities from which they derive special benefits.

5.0  University governance

Faculty have the right to participate in governance of the University.

Faculty who choose to participate in university governance should do so in an ethical and professional manner.

6.0  Faculty presence on campus

Faculty have freedom and flexibility to pursue their research interests in a place and time that they decide is appropriate.

However, it is expected that faculty be present on campus. The following expectations attempt to strike a balance between freedom and flexibility on the one hand, and the need to be on campus for certain functions, on the other hand:

6.1  In the absence of department head approval, faculty are required to be present for:

* their classes
* their scheduled office hours
* meetings of committees to which they belong
* department faculty meetings
* other meetings that they have agreed to attend or have been assigned to attend
* department events (e.g., department commencement ceremonies)

6.2  Faculty are expected to be present on campus for enough additional time to allow for:

* consultations with students whose commitments are not compatible with their scheduled office hours
* the advancement of cooperative projects in which they are involved
* reasonable participation in department, college, or university events or affairs

6.3  All faculty are expected to participate in department, college, or university events or affairs. It is, however, recognized that they will do so in various ways and to various degrees depending on their other professional contributions (in teaching, research, publication, public and professional service, and other fields) and also on their talents, interests, and other work responsibilities.

6.4  Department needs and priorities have priority over the preferences of individual faculty in the assignment of teaching times and courses.

6.5  Faculty may be absent from the campus during times when their presence is normally required only with the approval of their department heads. Whenever possible, this approval should be secured in advance. Otherwise, it should be secured as soon after the absence as circumstances permit.

6.6  Faculty should be aware that all days when the university is open during the nine-month contract period (August 16 – May 15) are official working days.