

TITLE: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

POLICY STATEMENT:

Red Deer College values and protects the principles of academic freedom, including freedom of inquiry, discourse, teaching, scholarly activity, and publication.

PURPOSE:

The existence of academic freedom creates and maintains protected arenas for critical thought and open discussion vital to the social health of humanity. Red Deer College must ensure that it maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists so that a high degree of intellectual independence can be expected of its academic staff. This policy assures freedom in teaching, scholarship/research and publication, and community activities. It also provides the process to be followed in the event of alleged violations of the policy.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all faculty of Red Deer College. Faculty, for the purposes of this policy are defined as College employees designated as “academic staff” by the Board of Governors of Red Deer College.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Academic freedom does not imply rights greater than those granted by the laws of Canada to all Canadian residents.
2. Red Deer College, through this policy, endorses the statement from UNESCO— Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (November 11, 1997) and endorses the Statement on Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy (May, 1988) from the AUCC.
3. Red Deer College recognizes and protects the right of the individual to the honest search for knowledge, wherever knowledge is to be found, without fear of reprisals by the College or by third parties.
4. There is a duty to respect the rights of others, to exercise academic freedom in a reasonable and responsible manner, and to respect the academic objectives of the College.
5. Academic freedom implies the right to communicate freely the acquired knowledge and the result of scholarly activity.
6. Freedom of inquiry is tempered by a high degree of respect for evidence, impartial reasoning and honesty in reporting.
7. All research and scholarship must be conducted ethically, with full consideration of the implications and in ways that respect full human rights as defined in law.
8. Differences in opinion are valued because the expression of unpopular opinions and research advances attainment of the whole truth. Prevailing opinion is often not the whole truth.

9. Faculty are not hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through freely expressing their opinion of state policies and of policies affecting higher education.
10. Faculty adhere to accepted professional principles including professional responsibility and intellectual rigour with regard to standards and methods of teaching.
11. Faculty have a right to undertake professional activities outside of their employment, particularly those that enhance their professional skills or allow for the application of knowledge to the problems of the community, provided such activities do not interfere with their primary commitments to Red Deer College in accordance with institutional policies and regulations.

GUIDELINES:

1. Academic freedom includes the right to teach and facilitate learning in course subjects without fear of censure. Faculty members have the right to select course materials, content, methodology, and sequence of subjects. Faculty members have the responsibility to teach subjects consistent with course syllabi.
2. Faculty members have the right to participate in decision-making with respect to curriculum, new programs, new course offerings, modifications of existing courses, and degree, diploma or certificate requirements through Department Councils, Curriculum Committee, and Academic Council. This requires significant coordination and the imposition of a certain degree of structure, as well as a need for collaboration and agreement on such matters as general course content, syllabi, and examinations.
3. Faculty members are free to select topics for scholarly activity and the publication of results and conclusions of that work. They have the responsibility to ensure that scholarly activity meets high scientific and ethical standards, including honest and thoughtful inquiry and rigorous analysis.
4. Faculty members have the right to participate in College governance by providing counsel and advice on matters of policy, including strategic planning, program and student evaluation and services to students. They do so without fear of censure and undue interference.
5. Faculty members, as citizens and members of learned professions, have a right to personal and professional opinions, no matter how unpopular they may be, and to state these publicly without censorship or fear of harassment or reprisal. Because of their special position as faculty members, they must recognize that both their institution and their professional association may be judged by their public statements. Consequently, they must avoid creating the impression that they speak for the institution or for their profession, unless they are expressly delegated that responsibility.

PROCEDURES:

Complaint Resolution

1. In cases where College policies or practices appear to infringe upon the academic freedoms in this policy, any affected person may apply, in writing, to the Vice President Academic who calls for an *ad hoc* committee to resolve the issue.
2. The *ad hoc* committee is comprised of two members appointed by the Faculty Association of Red Deer College, plus two members appointed by the Vice President Academic.
3. Those members then select on a simple plurality a fifth member. The five members so constituted then select a Chair amongst them who presides at the meetings of the committee.
4. The committee may investigate the complaint by requesting written submissions, interviewing individuals, and by holding hearings with the complainant and respondent present. The committee establishes its process depending on the nature of the complaint.
5. Any decision of the committee is delivered in writing by the Chair to the persons who made submissions, to the committee, to the Faculty Association and to the Office of the Vice President Academic. The decision may include recommendations of remedy should the complaint be upheld. The decisions of the committee are final and binding.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Chair, Academic Council

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Academic Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Academic Council, Academic Policy Committee, Faculty at RDC, Deans' Council

POLICY REVIEW DATE: January 2017

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2012

REVISION HISTORY: March 18, 1987
April 7, 2003
March 1, 2012

RELATED POLICIES:

- Conflicts of Interest and Mandatory Disclosure
- Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants
- Integrity In Research And Scholarship
- Policies Governing Ethics and Integrity In Research and Scholarship at Red Deer College
- Scholarly Activity At Red Deer College
- Intellectual Property

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors operational policies.