

# POLICY STATEMENT<sup>15</sup> ACADEMIC FREEDOM, FREE SPEECH, AND TENURE

## POLICY DIGEST

Monitoring Unit: Office of Academic Affairs

Initially Issued: April 22, 2020

Last Revised:

matters. This policy complements [Permanent Memorandum 79](#)

\_\_\_\_\_, which is the university policy on  
Freedom of Speech and Expression.



Tenure is a means to provide freedom of teaching, research, and extramural activities that makes the profession attractive to those individuals with the ability to pursue knowledge and its dissemination. Tenure is indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society. Tenure nurtures and sustains the campus spirit that values inquiry into truth and understanding, free from pressures outside the academy or due to differing styles and ideological views. Tenure protects academic freedom by ensuring that faculty members can be removed or suspended from the academic staff for causes such as gross professional incompetence, continued unsatisfactory performance, violation of laws, or violation of LSU policies that disrupt activities of the University, after due process according to LSU personnel policies. Tenure is also a property right, designed to protect those academic freedoms concomitant with the duties of the individual faculty members.

#### IV. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- A. Teachers and investigators are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties. In all meetings and hearings when the actions of a faculty member are being questioned, the faculty member has the right to be accompanied by a faculty member of his or her choosing and to be counseled by that faculty member.
  
- B. Teachers and investigators are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject but should not introduce information or topics which have no relation to the subject being instructed. Instructors should be careful to use appropriate examples, metaphors, and analogies to achieve the desired student learning. The Faculty Senate Admissions, Standards and Honors Committee or the Faculty Adjudication Committee will evaluate the circumstances and context and provide a written report to the President.

rights and obligations of other citizens, but as scholars and educational officers, faculty members should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances and their actions, including those on social media. A key aspect is the pursuit of truth in the context of established standards and methods specific to the subject discipline. The urgency of these obligations must be measured in relation to the responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. In order to be fully engaged members of a university community and of society in general, faculty may express personal opinions; and these opinions need not always be in complete agreement with the positions of the university and its related institutions. In all instances of broadcasting a personal opinion, it is incumbent on the faculty member to clearly indicate that the opinion is personal and that they are not speaking as an institutional spokesperson. However, this does not decrease the responsibility and accountability that the faculty member bears to the governing board, the system, the state, and the nation. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have an obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom and free speech. Views expressed by individuals in their university position should be defensible by discipline, scientific, and ethical standards.

## V. ACADEMIC TENURE

After the expiration of a successful probationary period, tenure track faculty members should be awarded continuous tenure, and their service should be terminated only for just cause, except under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies as determined under clearly defined University guidelines. The principle of tenure shall not protect an individual from removal from a position after a full and careful investigation, according to due process, when it is revealed that the faculty member has not met and does not give promise of meeting the responsibilities of the position. Standard academic practices regarding tenure are:

- A. The precise terms and conditions of every appointment shall be stated in writing and be in the possession of both institution and teacher before the appointment is consummated.
- B. The terms and conditions of an offer to an individual should be consistent with the job announcement for the position.
- C. Once tenured, the terms and conditions of employment cannot be changed or altered without

## VI. CONCLUSION

Faculty are expected to be knowledgeable about laws and regulations that increasingly are affecting universities and to operate within the guidelines of university policy and regulations. This statement of policy on academic freedom, free speech, and tenure do not supersede those regulations and guidelines, but rather supplement them in order to provide an environment conducive to inquiry and learning in a respectful and collegial manner.

## VII. SOURCE

This statement corresponds to the “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, with 1970 Interpretive Comments” promulgated by the [American Association of University Professors](#) and the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities).