

STATEMENTS REGARDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Handout for the Workshop: “What Does Academic Freedom Mean at a Christian Institution of Higher Education?” ABHE Annual Meeting, February 2018

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

Calvin College (Christian Reformed Church, Michigan)

Academic Freedom

Every faculty member, whether tenured or untenured, shall be entitled to the right of academic freedom in the performance of his or her duties. The faculty member shall be judged only by the confessional standards of Calvin College, and by the professional standards appropriate to his or her role and discipline. A faculty member shall not be expected or required to retract or modify his or her utterances merely because a complaint against them has been received. Only complaints which allege a violation of confessional or professional standards shall be considered, and then only when the evidence supporting the allegation is more substantial than rumor or hearsay. By making this

commitment to its entire faculty, Calvin College seeks to implement the Christian principles of justice and charity in its own community.

A staff member is entitled to academic freedom as defined above. It extends to the discipline in the classroom, to research, writings, and other public utterances in the field of professional competence. It does not extend to the expression in the classroom of opinions on controversial and partisan issues which have no relationship to his or her discipline or teaching subject. The classroom may not serve the teacher as a platform for causes unrelated to his or her profession as a Christian teacher of a discipline.

The Calvin College teacher is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a representative of Calvin College. When speaking as a citizen, the teacher should be free from institutional censorship or discipline unless his or her Christian character is compromised or Christian witness impaired. However, a special position in the church and in the community imposes special obligations. The Calvin College staff member should remember that the public will tend to judge the profession and the institution by his or her utterances. Therefore, he or she should be accurate at all times, exercise proper restraint, and respect the rights of others to express their opinions. The faculty member shall not attempt to politicize the institution in purely partisan matters, and shall dissociate the college from political activities.

Staff members are permitted and, normally, even encouraged to run for political office or hold memberships on civic commissions. Should staff members be elected or appointed to such positions which necessitate either partial reduction in or complete separation from service to Calvin College, they may retain their position on the staff, but then under the terms of the leave of absence policy.

Lancaster Bible College (Pennsylvania)

Academic Freedom

A justification for freedom of instruction arises from the needs of students. It is the students' right to learn the complete truth about the subjects they study. They should be afforded the privilege of thinking without restraint about the problems that arise in such study. This freedom should never be denied students and it can exist only when a corresponding liberty of instruction is guaranteed instructors.

It should be realized, however, that in a socially created and socially supported institution, such as a college, there can be no such thing as complete freedom of expression in word and act. The basic limitations upon freedom arise out of the universally accepted beliefs and mores of society, such as truthfulness, decency, moral integrity, loyalty, and the standards of good taste. These may be assumed to be as binding upon all college instructors as upon other good citizens. Moreover, at Lancaster Bible

College academic freedom, as well as all other aspects of education, is governed by standards yet higher than these—those of the Bible.

The Bible, God’s Word, holds a unique and central place in LBC’s curriculum because it is the ultimate and only authoritative deposit of propositional truth and because it answers the vital questions of life. Recognizing that the Bible does not contain the totality of God’s truth, the College continues its search for truth through an informed and appropriate study of man and other elements of God’s creation, convinced that any accurate description of reality will form a unified body of truth.

In addition to the universal values and God’s Word, the College’s Reason for Existence, Institutional Goals, Student Goals, Distinctives, and Statement of Faith, as adopted by the College, complete the framework for all educational experiences, including academic freedom, at Lancaster Bible College.

Finally, the College believes that academic freedom does not require neutrality on the part of either the individual or the institution. Academic freedom is consistent with the intent to advance a particular point of view, so long as all the facts are accessible. We recognize that the pursuit of truth in this fashion will produce some tensions.

Within this framework, the College enthusiastically supports academic freedom at Lancaster Bible College.

Life Pacific College (Foursquare, California)

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

As an institution of higher education, it is the College’s goal to pursue and disseminate truth. Accordingly, trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students are free to question assumptions and to consider alternatives in the course of their pursuits and communication in the classroom, in casual and formal conversation, and in written communication.

At the same time, as a Christian institution, the College believes the Scriptures to be inspired by God and, therefore, to be the norm against which all “truth” is to be measured. Since human reason is fallible, all perceived “truth” is not necessarily God’s truth; only that which is consistent with the Scriptures is God’s truth.

Therefore, the College emphatically rejects indoctrination, whether it is that which results from eliminating the Scriptures as a norm or whether it is that which results from restricting the free pursuit of ideas. Thus, both the faculty and students of this College are free to pursue and disseminate truth, and have the responsibility to measure their conclusions against the Scriptures within the context of the College’s Declaration of Faith.

Pacific Rim Christian University (Foursquare, New Hope, Hawaii)

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Academic freedom involves the pursuit of truth, which is both an opportunity and an obligation. Discovering truth often requires us to question assumptions and methods, and to examine alternative viewpoints. Without the freedom to critically examine even deeply treasured ideas, scholarship becomes shallow. PacRim exists to equip emerging leaders; leaders need to have the freedom to consider new ideas and question both new and old beliefs. It is our conviction that a college is the ideal place to allow such exploration.

As we pursue the truth, we are united by the belief that God's Word is the ultimate source of truth, although different members of the PacRim community may arrive at different interpretations and conclusions. Thus, academic freedom at a Christian institution includes submission to the Bible, although it allows the questioning of interpretations of the Bible held by others.

Faculty members are encouraged to use their academic freedom, to engage students in free inquiry submitted to the authority of Scripture, and to enable students to be critical thinkers. As Christian thinkers, faculty members also have an obligation to fairly present opposing ideas and to be gracious in their disagreements with other views.

Faculty members also have the obligation to discern if their beliefs put them fundamentally at odds with Pacific Rim Christian University. While thinking Christians will always disagree on minor issues, faculty who no longer believe some aspect of our doctrinal statement or are otherwise in significant disagreement with the PacRim community should consider choosing another institution more in line with their beliefs.

KMK 2/2/18