

Academic Freedom Policy
Approved by the Board of Trustees January 22, 2010

At Azusa Pacific University, we believe that all truth is God's truth. Furthermore, God has made it possible for humankind to access, discover and understand truth. We also affirm that the knowledge of truth will always be incomplete and that people, including those with educational credentials, are fallible and may interpret data and ideas imperfectly. Academic freedom, therefore, from a Christ-centered perspective, must be carried out with civility, mature judgment, and the awareness of the broad representation of Christian faith that exists within this institution. Accordingly, Azusa Pacific University affirms its commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression in academic endeavors.

The university recognizes that academic freedom has historically been defined both by broadly accepted academic standards, and by the mission and character of the institution in which it is practiced.

Azusa Pacific University seeks to maintain an academic community in which faculty are free to engage in rigorous scholarly inquiry and expression within an intellectual context shaped by the evangelical Christian tradition. In addition to this freedom, Azusa Pacific University seeks to pursue scholarly inquiry and expression in a way that extends and enriches the academic disciplines out of the unique resources provided by our institution's identity.

Thus, at Azusa Pacific University, academic freedom is defined both by the commonly accepted standards of the academy and by those commitments articulated in the documents that are central to the university's identity as a Christian university. These documents articulate the central commitments which shape the academic community, and thus the practice of academic freedom, at Azusa Pacific University: a belief in God as the creator of all things, in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, in the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide, in Scripture as God's authoritative and infallible revelation, and in the Christian community as an expression and vehicle of God's redemptive work in this world.

The University follows these principles in its practice of academic freedom.

- Faculty are entitled to the rights and privileges, and bear the obligations, of academic freedom in the performance of their duties. Specifically, faculty are free to pursue truth and knowledge within their disciplines in the classroom, in their research and writings, and in other public statements in their field of professional competence. At all times faculty should strive for accuracy, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinions of others.
- Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Faculty should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject.

- While faculty are members of the global community, as scholars and members of the Azusa Pacific University community, faculty should remain cognizant that the public will form perceptions of their profession and their institution by their utterances.
- In the practice of the academic vocation, complaints against faculty may be generated. Faculty shall be protected from any request to retract or modify their research, publication, or teaching merely because a complaint has been received. Only complaints alleging faculty violations of professional standards of the discipline or of advocating positions incompatible with those commitments articulated in the documents that are central to the university's identity as a Christian university, and then only when the evidence supporting the allegation is more substantial than rumor, inference or hearsay. Alleged violations of the academic freedom policy should be referred to the dean of the school in which the faculty member teaches. The dean may recommend a sanction appropriate for the case at hand including counseling, disciplinary action or termination of employment.
- In the event that a faculty member believes his or her academic freedom has been unduly restricted, he or she may pursue resolution of this issue through the existing faculty grievance procedure as articulated in the Faculty Handbook.