

Defining Academic culture

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Academic Culture

* Definition:

- Academic culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, and norms that guide the behavior of individuals within educational and research institutions.



Central practices of Academic Culture

- ★ **Peer Review:** This is a quality control mechanism where scholars evaluate the work of their colleagues before it is published or used for professional advancement.
- ★ It ensures that research and scholarship meet established standards of excellence and objectivity.
- ★ **Academic Integrity:** This practice involves adherence to core values such as honesty, trust, fairness, and responsibility.
- ★ It is most visible through the use of **citations and referencing**, which acknowledge the contributions of others and distinguish a researcher's own ideas from existing knowledge.



Central Practices-2

- ★ **Academic freedom:** which grants scholars the autonomy to pursue knowledge without external interference, and
- ★ **Collaborative research:** which involves shared inquiry and knowledge exchange between peers.



Academic Culture

- ★ Academic culture is complex & lacks a single definition but involves key structural components like values and beliefs, norms, rituals, symbols, language.
- ★ It often extends beyond institutions to a global "meta-level" of scholarly pursuit.



Academic Culture-2

- ★ Its structure is multifaceted, encompassing elements like **research orientation, academic freedom, institutional organization.**
- ★ It encompasses relationship between teaching, administration, and societal roles, influencing everything from departmental organization to individual research practices



?Why Academic Culture matters

Understanding academic culture helps address challenges like:

- ★ Integrating quality
- ★ Fostering innovation
- ★ Managing institutional change
- ★ Navigating diverse external expectations in shaping effective higher education.



Levels of Academic Culture

- ★ **Micro-Level:** Individual researchers, students, and specific departments.
- ★ **Meso-Level:** Institutional policies, management, and strategies.
- ★ **Macro/Meta-Level:** Global scholarly traditions, international collaborations, and universal hallmarks of academia.



Academic Freedom: What is it?

Why is it important

- ★ Academic freedom is a fundamental concept to ensure that institutions of higher education function for the public good without undue pressure from external influences.
- ★ This provides an opportunity to introduce theories, concepts, and experiences that challenge long-held paradigms of higher education to create a more inclusive environment in our learning spaces.



Academic Freedom -2

- ★ Academic Freedom is required so that the faculty professionals who teach and research are protected from external forces.
- ★ Part of academic freedom provides faculty freedom in the classroom to discuss their subject.



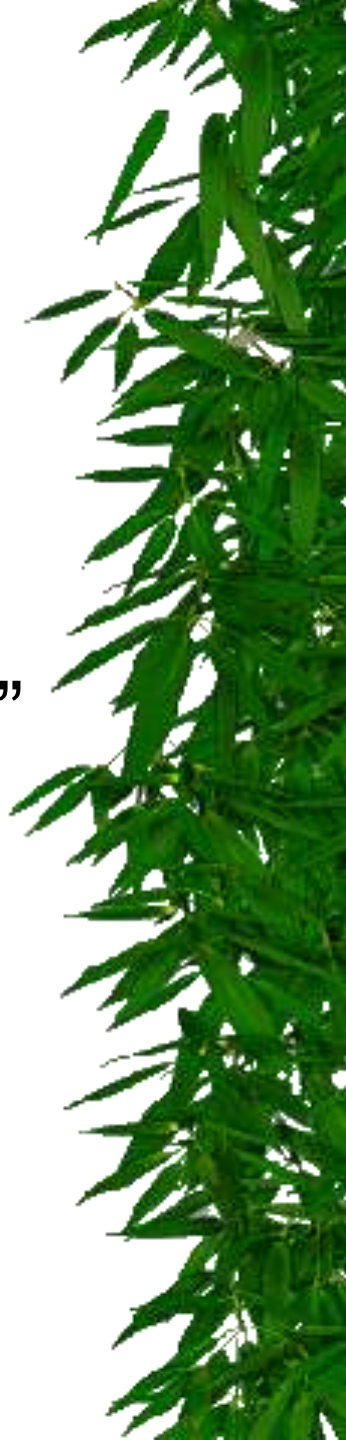
Academic Freedom Definitive

- ✓ With academic freedom comes responsibility (Hawkins, 2023)
- ✓ “Regardless of how academic freedom is interpreted, faculty members have an ethical obligation to deliver instruction in ways that do not violate students' rights to learn.



Academic Freedom Definitive

- ★ Institutions have a right as well as a duty to compel their faculty members to follow through with the obligation of responsibility (Poore-Pariseau, 2009).”
- ★ Finally, the connection between academic freedom and equity is fundamental.



Question?

**Is academic freedom in the
classroom absolute?**



Statement on academic freedom

Academic Freedom should follow the following best practices:

- **Research** and publication of the results
- Classroom in **discussing their subject**
- When they **speak or write as citizens**, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline
- However, Academic freedom is not absolute or equivalent to freedom of speech



Things academic freedom allows

Academic freedom typically allows faculty to do the following:

- **Present the course content** (per the Course Outline of Record) in the way they deem most appropriate
- **Determine** the assignments, readings, assessments, and exams that will work best for their class.
- **To create a classroom environment where controversial topics can be discussed without being censored** as long as the topic relates to the course and with recognition of students' right to freedom of speech



Conclusion

- ★ Be prepared to **collaborate** with all stakeholders to proactively develop policies and processes to support academic culture for faculty and students in your institution.



Questions



Do you have additional questions that were not addressed?

What next steps have you identified for your campus?



References

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