

**AGENDA ITEM 10.b**

Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy for Students

**RECOMMENDED DIRECTIVE:** The Board of Regents hereby approves the policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibilities for Students to be effective upon approval.

**DISCUSSION:**

1. The Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy for Students is a new policy. Accreditation eligibility requirements state that the college catalog must have a statement ensuring academic freedom for both students and faculty. COM-FSM has always had a policy for faculty, but not for students.
2. The policy was drafted by the Dean of Academic Programs and sent to Curriculum and Assessment Committee, Management Team and the Student Body Association for first review by Jan 29, 2013. Committees provided comments and suggestions for revision up until Feb. 8, 2013. A recommended draft went to the Executive committee on Feb. 13, 2013, where the policy was recommended for Board approval.
3. The policy was written based on the American Association of Colleges and Universities approved policy on student academic freedom and ACCJC suggested wording. Comments from faculty included concerns about student responsibilities, students acting in a respectful manner when disagreeing, providing sufficient and reliable evidence should a complaint be filed, and having a mechanism in place that also protects the faculty. Students did not provide any comments.
4. The final version of the policy was recommended based on the idea that students are now assured that they are free to express ideas and ask questions and at the same time be responsible for meeting the student learning outcomes of the course.
5. The approval process follows the current participatory governance structure and is outlined in section 2 of this discussion.
6. The policy should be implemented upon approval by the Board of Regents.
7. Once the policy is approved, a statement will be placed in the online version of the catalog so it is evident that COM-FSM will ensure student academic freedom and meet accreditation eligibility requirements.

**ACTION TAKEN:**

**VOTE:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved as presented

\_\_\_\_\_aye \_\_\_\_\_nay \_\_\_\_\_abstain

\_\_\_\_\_Approved w/ modifications

\_\_\_\_\_Disapproved

\_\_\_\_\_Deferred to a later meeting

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

# ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY (STUDENTS) POLICY

## **1.0 Policy**

### Academic Freedom

The College of Micronesia-FSM recognizes the principle of academic freedom for each student. This principle asserts that: each student is entitled to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general. Student performance is evaluated solely on an academic basis.

### Responsibility

1. Students should be free to disagree, or comment on the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
2. Students have protection through grievance procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
3. Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations that professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisers, and counselors should be considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

Any student, when speaking, writing, or acting as a private individual, is responsible for taking all proper precautions to ensure that his/her acts, statements, or speech can not be construed as representing the College as a body.

## **2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a student's right to exercise his/her freedom to learn and that the college provides the opportunities and conditions in the classroom for learning.

## **3.0 Application**

This policy applies to all students at the College of Micronesia-FSM.

## **4.0 Responsibility**

The President through the Vice President of Instructional Affairs has the overall responsibility for implementing this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Vice President of Instructional Affairs or designee to monitor for student complaints of violation of academic freedom and lead the investigation of a complaint.

It is the responsibility of the Dean of Academic Programs, Instructional Coordinator, or Division Chair to monitor faculty for instances of violation of student academic freedom and report to the VPIA.

## 5.0 Procedures

1. A student, student representative or other college employee files a complaint with the advisor, counselor, instructional coordinator, student services coordinator, dean or vice-president of student services or instructional affairs, that a student's academic freedom has been violated.
2. The person filing the complaint provides evidence of the violation of academic freedom. Types of evidence might be:
  - Written sworn statements from those who witnessed the incident.
  - Assignments along with grading criteria
  - Audio tape
  - Video tape
  - Witnesses
3. The VPIA or designee is notified of the complaint. The VPIA or designee investigates the situation and determines the outcome.
  - a. The VPIA may ask the Dean of Academic Programs, Campus Dean or Instructional Coordinator to assist in the investigation.
4. If it is determined that a violation has occurred, the person committing the violation will be disciplined according to the employee discipline and protection procedures outlined in the personnel manual in section XV.
5. The VPIA informs the student against which the violation occurred of the action taken or not taken regarding the complaint.
6. If the student or the faculty member is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, that student/faculty member may file a complaint with the President of the College. The decision of the President is final.

## 6.0 Definitions:

**Classroom** – the location where learning takes place.

**Students** – any person attending a learning session sponsored by the College.

**Student representative** – any person that the involved student selects to speak on his/her behalf.

References:

“*Students Rights and Freedoms*”, American Association of University Professors Policy Tenth Ed. 2, 10/26/06, pp 273 – 279.

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/stud-rights.htm>

College of Micronesia-FSM Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual