

Academic Freedom Policy

Preamble

University of Detroit Mercy, a Catholic university in the Jesuit and Mercy traditions, exists to provide excellent student-centered undergraduate and graduate education in an urban context. A Detroit Mercy education seeks to integrate the intellectual, spiritual, ethical and social development of our students¹. The spirit of Mercy inspires the academic community's commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service² - all within a climate of academic freedom³.

This Academic Freedom Policy emanates from the mission of the university and the Jesuit and Mercy traditions. It aligns with the regional accreditation criterion⁴ that an institution be committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth. The policy mirrors the chief provisions and interpretations of the American Association of University Professor's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure⁵.

Academic Freedom Policy

University of Detroit Mercy recognizes and acknowledges the importance of academic freedom to all faculty, including tenured, probationary, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty. The term "academic freedom" refers to the right of scholars freely to study, discuss, investigate, teach, publish; and for artists, to freely create and exhibit their works of art and other creative endeavors. Academic freedom applies to teaching, research, professional library services, and creative endeavors. Detroit Mercy faculty are entitled to freedom in researching and teaching, subject to the appropriate performance of their assigned professional responsibilities.

The standards of academic freedom must be accompanied by equally demanding standards of academic responsibility. Detroit Mercy faculty are members of a learned profession and representative of their institution. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a private individual, they shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline by the university, but their special position in the community imposes a special obligation. As a person of learning, they must remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their statements. Hence, when they speak or write as a private individual, they should make every effort to indicate that they are not representing the university. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a representative of the institution, they should exercise professional care to be accurate and to respect the opinions of others.

Approved by McNichols Faculty Assemble 10/7/2021

Approved by Academic Leadership Team 12/7/2021

¹ Detroit Mercy's Mission Statement.

² Extracted from Some Common focus Areas of a Mercy Catholic College/University

³ Extracted from the Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education (2021) (page 3, para 1)

⁴ Criterion 2.D, Higher Learning Commission Policy Book, November 2021

⁵ American Association of University Professor's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and 1970 interpretations.