

## **CAROLINAS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES BOARD POLICY**

**SUBJECT:** ACADEMIC FREEDOM

**REVIEWER:** Board of Directors

### **POLICY**

- A. The Carolinas College Board of Directors recognizes and supports the principles of academic freedom for faculty. Academic freedom allows faculty to examine data, question assumptions, opinions and views. Faculty are guided by the evidence of scholarly research and can present issues in the classroom that may be of a debatable or controversial nature; provided this is done objectively and in the spirit of academic inquiry and the topic is pertinent to the subject matter of the course. What is taught is expected to reflect knowledge which is research/data-based, scientifically validated, or generally accepted within the profession or academic field. Faculty members will not be subject to irresponsible treatment, procedural irregularity, arbitrary decisions, discrimination, or differential treatment related to their exercise of academic freedom. Faculty members will be provided the opportunity for due process throughout any disciplinary action related to academic freedom issues.

Faculty members are presumed to be competent authorities in the subject matter of their formally organized courses of instruction and have the freedom to develop curriculum and determine methods of classroom and or clinical instruction and evaluation. The right to academic freedom, however, cannot be separated from the equally important responsibility, which everyone has, to uphold professional ethics and academic integrity. Respect and collaboration are expected in regard to individual academic freedom when a team-teaching approach is utilized for course instruction and presentation of information.

Faculty members who develop and present curriculum content to students are expected to operate within the guidelines of their various professional certification agencies, and course content must fulfill the requirements of those agencies and the requirements and standards of the college's institutional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Most Carolinas College courses have a dual purpose, educating the student in a specific discipline and preparing the student for success on certification exams. Thus, didactic content must be accurate and current – often requiring ongoing research and revision.

Faculty members are also private citizens and as such have the rights and responsibilities of all ordinary citizens. When faculty members speak or write as private citizens, thereby exercising their constitutional right of free speech, it should be as people who are free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, when Carolinas College faculty members express their opinions in public, they are expected to indicate the opinions they express are their own and not representative of the college.

- B. The right to academic freedom shall be protected and supported through a thoughtful, well-articulated process, readily accessible to all faculty.
- C. While the primary focus of the Carolinas College faculty is the effective education of students, individual faculty members are encouraged to pursue other academic endeavors such as scholarly publications and research. Research proposed to be conducted during paid time must be of value to the college, must be approved by the department manager and provost, and will follow the tenets of the "Intellectual Property" policy. When appropriate, research must be approved through the established Atrium Health Institutional Review Board process and/or the Atrium Health Nursing Research Council.

D. The Academic Freedom policy will be reviewed/updated at 5-year intervals.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Related Policies to Consult**

**Carolinan College:** ACADEMIC – Academic Freedom

### **Related 2024 SACSCOC Standard(s)**

6.4 Academic freedom

10.4 Academic governance