



Board Policy 313 Academic Freedom

Reference: *Education Code Section 87704*

The Board believes that academic freedom is an essential right arising from the nature and function of education. The aims and objectives of the West Hills Community College District point to the unreserved and unqualified obligation of the instructor to pursue his/her subject and the program area surrounding it in a manner consistent with standards of scholarly objectivity as defined by academic tradition and practice.

The West Hills Community College District holds that academic freedom involves inherently the following rights and responsibilities:

1. The right to explore to the limit of competence and training, the assigned teaching area and its references.
2. The responsibility within the teaching area to weigh studiously serious intellectual differences, when applicable, which rise from historical context and perspective.
3. The right to present the democratic process with its freedoms, rights, and safeguards as the sole way in which the academic community and nation can exist and establish the means for progress and the greater fulfillment of man.
4. The responsibility in solving problems to appeal only to those criteria sanctioned historically by reason as confirmed through objective discussion.
5. The right to survey, probe, and question the condition of man within the guidelines of accepted research techniques and intelligent discussion.
6. The responsibility of avoiding the intellectual error of assuming absolute answers for complex problems and presenting these answers as unquestionable truth.
7. The responsibility to introduce within the assigned teaching areas, controversial concepts, issues and systems, subjecting these ideas to the test of objective reasoning.
8. The responsibility of recognizing, respecting, and discussing fairly those areas of human activity not amenable as such to the scientific method.
9. The right to create unhampered and clear intellectual atmosphere, maintained, encouraged, and supported by staff, administration and trustees.
10. The responsibility of avoiding any teaching method, which relies on rigid authority or implied infallibility.

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11. The responsibility in challenging students, notwithstanding their ability or program, to develop a spirit of inquiry regarding all academic areas and to seek logical answers.

The West Hills Community College District considers academic freedom defined by its attendant rights and responsibilities as a vital, primary force in the achievement of the aims and objectives of the institution.

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