

Resolution 2004-6. On Intellectual Integrity and Independence.

Introduced by the Agenda Committee

Whereas, education by its nature requires the open exchange of diverse ideas; and

Whereas, constant, productive, broad, and respectful discourse that transcends the boundaries of discussion available outside the Academy is at the heart of a well-rounded academic institution; and

Whereas, members of the University community at Chapel Hill share a commitment to the pursuit of truth and the dissemination of knowledge to succeeding generations of citizens devoted to the high ideals of respect for the rights of others; and

Whereas, intellectual honesty, trust, respect, and fair treatment between and among faculty and students are essential to secure the benefits of higher learning for a rising generation of citizens, as envisioned at the University's founding; and

Whereas, the University has long committed itself to principles of intellectual independence, and nondiscrimination on the basis of, among others, race, sex, and sexual orientation, and free speech and expression, and

Whereas, principles of fair treatment are embodied in longstanding University policies relating to appointment and promotion and grade assignments, which in each case prohibit actions based on personal malice and discrimination; and

Whereas, longstanding policies of the Board of Governors for the sixteen institutions of The University of North Carolina affirm The University's support for and encouragement of freedom of inquiry for faculty members and students to the end that they may responsibly pursue their goals of the transmission and advancement of knowledge and understanding through teaching, learning, research, discussion and publication that is free from internal or external restraints that would unreasonably restrict their academic endeavors, and

Whereas, these longstanding policies also affirm that the University "shall protect faculty and students in their responsible exercise of the freedom to teach, to learn, and otherwise to seek and speak the truth" while further stating that faculty and students of The University of North Carolina "shall share in the responsibility for maintaining an environment in which academic freedom flourishes and in which the rights of each member of the academic community are respected," and

Whereas, the Faculty Council wishes to reiterate its commitment to these principles at a time of growing pressures to politicize and therefore undercut the essential educational process; now therefore

The Faculty Council resolves:

The Faculty Council of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

1. Reiterates the importance of intellectual integrity and freedom, both in research and in classroom activities;
2. Recognizes a distinction between expressing arguments in an open discussion and presenting personal attacks on others, whether they are present in the classroom or not;
3. Reiterates its support for the ongoing policy and practice that political affiliation and position are irrelevant to, and not considered in, the processes of hiring, tenure, promotion, or teaching;
4. Supports constant and ongoing dialogue on a wide range of issues;
5. Supports established and well-known channels for instructors and students to address behavior that falls outside the bounds of reasonable and appropriate discourse;
6. Calls on the University administration and all others to protect the integrity of the classroom and the University as a space for safe, respectful difference and dialogue for all those present, within the guidelines of civility, openness, and respect, as well as the boundaries imposed by the curriculum.