


[SACS Home](#)
[Committees](#)
[Compliance Table](#)
[Quality Enhancement Plan](#)
[Supporting Document Index](#)

- [Alphabetical](#)
- [By Standard](#)

[Focused Report](#)

Comprehensive Standard 3.7.4

The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom.

Judgment: Compliant

Response:

Columbia Campus



The University of South Carolina is committed to promoting and protecting academic freedom for faculty and students as an essential element of the higher education experience. To this end, the University of South Carolina ensures the protection and promotion of academic freedom through written policies [STAF 6.28] and faculty governance procedures [Faculty Manual]. The university adheres in principle to the American Association of University Professors' "Statement of Academic Freedom." (Faculty Manual, p.53)

The privilege of academic freedom is protected through the grievance process and extends beyond those with tenure. The Office of the University Ombudsman was established to serve as a neutral and confidential resource for faculty concerns and conflicts. All faculty regardless of tenure status are guaranteed protection in their pursuit of excellence in research, teaching, and service. (Faculty Manual, p.4)

The responsible use of academic freedom enhances the contributions of the faculty and students to society, and must respect the dignity and rights of others. In October 1990, The Carolinian Creed was submitted for approval and endorsement to the USC National Advisory Board, the Board of Trustees, the Student Senate, and the Faculty Senate and became an official University document. A bronze tablet containing the text of the Creed was cast and placed on the Horseshoe. Copies of The Carolinian Creed are mailed to incoming freshman, given to incoming faculty and framed copies hang in many campus buildings and offices.

The text of the Creed has been added to many University publications including the preface (pps.3-4) of the Faculty Manual. The faculty added several paragraphs that address the faculty's responsibilities and expected behavior and specifically states that the faculty of the University of South Carolina "affirm our commitment to academic freedom even as we pledge ourselves to civil and responsible discourse" as teachers, colleagues, researchers and scholars.

The University of South Carolina recognizes that the principles of academic freedom are vital in protecting faculty in the pursuit, creation, and dissemination of knowledge and extends this privilege to students. The statement of student rights and freedoms was passed by the Student Senate, the Faculty, and approved by the Board of Trustees of the University. Students are encouraged to learn in an environment that encourages free inquiry and free expression, while respecting the rights of others. President Pastides has made a commitment "to elevate the tenor of civil discourse" with the launching of a new initiative: Toward a more civil discourse. By engaging our citizens and students in an effort to bring harmony and unity to the state when discussing today's issues, this initiative has "a goal of instilling an appreciation for the importance of fair-mindedness, personal responsibility, and respect for differing opinions."

Faculty members who believe that their academic freedom rights have been curtailed have the right to grieve as stated in the USC Columbia Faculty Manual. For grievances other than those involving non reappointment, denial of tenure or denial of promotion, or termination of a tenured faculty member, the following statement from the Faculty Manual applies.

"For grievances or procedures" other than the aforementioned, "including material breaches of special contractual obligations of the university, the faculty member shall attempt to resolve the issue at the department level. If a solution cannot be obtained at this level, the redress may be pursued through the offices of dean, provost, and president. If redress cannot be obtained from any of these officers, the faculty member may appeal to the Faculty Grievance Committee. If this committee finds that there are grounds for a grievance, it shall try to resolve the matter through mediation or other appropriate action. The committee shall report its recommendations and reasons to the faculty member and to the president. The president shall be the final university authority to whom a grievance may be submitted."

The Center for Teaching Excellence was established in 2006 as a resource for faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants to pursue innovative approaches to excellence in teaching. Central to this process is a safe, supportive environment that upholds the principles of academic freedom. The Center for Teaching Excellence's teaching policies is a compilation of all the University's policies and procedures that support and protect academic freedom.

Regional Campuses

The University recognizes and protects the academic freedom of regional campus faculties by adhering to the American Association of University Professors' "Statement of Academic Freedom." Moreover, the Regional Campuses Faculty Manual makes the following declaration:

1. A faculty member of the University of South Carolina is entitled to full freedom in research and in publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance on all other academic duties, but research for pecuniary return shall be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
 2. The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, but shall not introduce into teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject.
 3. Faculty members are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of the institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As persons of learning and educational officers, they shall remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they shall at all times be accurate, shall exercise appropriate restraint, shall show respect for the opinion of others, and shall make every effort to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons. ("Academic Freedom", p. C-29)
- In the event that a faculty member feels his/her academic freedom has been violated or called into question, s/he, "may make written request of the President that an investigation be made of the case. The request should set forth in a clear and concise manner the event and circumstances upon which the charge is based. ("Academic Freedom", pp. C-29-30)

In addition, as specified in **Appendix III of the Extended University Faculty Manual**, The individual faculty members have the right to grieve any administrative decisions affecting their employment including but not limited to the (1) denial of tenure or promotion, (2) salary and compensation, (3) non-reappointment of tenure-track faculty, "and other matters (e.g., work assignments and disciplinary actions are grievable, although the faculty member should exhaust all other administrative procedures first) on the grounds of unlawful discrimination; violation or denial of procedural due process; or denial of academic freedom."

Finally, an exhaustive description of Academic Freedom is included in **Appendix VII of the Regional Campuses Faculty Manual**. (pp. F-16-25)

Supporting Documentation:

Description	Source
Faculty Manuals	http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/
USC Columbia Faculty Manual	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualColumbia.pdf
Page 4	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualColumbia.pdf#Excellence
Page 53	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualColumbia.pdf#Freedom
Regional Campus Faculty Manual	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualRegCamp.pdf
Academic Freedom	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualRegCamp.pdf#Freedom
Appendix III	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualRegCamp.pdf#AppendixThree
Appendix VII	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualRegCamp.pdf#AppendixSeven
University Policies and Procedures	http://www.sc.edu/policies
Academic Freedom Policy	http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf628.pdf
University Ombudsman	http://www.sc.edu/ombuds/index.shtml
Grievance Process	http://www.sc.edu/ombuds/grievance.shtml
Carolinian Creed	http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/index.html
Students Rights and Freedoms	http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/rights.htm
Civil Discourse	http://president.sc.edu/Civil_Discourse/harrisPastides_OpEd.php
Center for Teaching Excellence	http://www.sc.edu/cte/about/
Teaching Policies	http://www.sc.edu/cte/guide/policies/index.shtml
AAUP Statement of Academic Freedom	http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/EBB1B330-33D3-4A51-B534-CEE0C7A90DAB/0/1940StatementofPrinciplesonAcademicFreedomandTenure.pdf

