SON OP: 20.020 Academic Freedom

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to clarify the expectations related to academic freedom by nursing faculty members.

REVIEW: This section of the handbook shall be reviewed by the Dean and the Faculty Council by September 1st on odd-numbered years. This policy will be reviewed by September 1st of every odd-numbered year by the Dean in collaboration with the Faculty Council with revisions presented to the faculty and the President of TTUHSC.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

A position as a nursing faculty member of TTUHSC implies correlative obligations. In addition to preserving standards of competence, principally those involving to scholarship and teaching capability, nursing faculty members are also accountable for retaining the appropriate mind-set in objectivity and cooperation with the university. (Regents' Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.01)

As nursing faculty members, they should keep in mind that the community may judge their profession and institution by their testimonials and other actions. Thus, they should be truthful at all times, employ suitable restraints, and demonstrate respect for the views of others. (Regents' Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.01)

Attainment of the teaching, research, client care, and service missions of TTUHSC depends upon an unconstrained exploration for reality and its open expression. Hence, it is crucial that every nursing faculty member be liberated to pursue scholarly inquiry without unnecessary constraints. They must be able to enunciate and publish individual conclusions with reference to the significance of evidence that is considered pertinent. (Regents' Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.1)

A nursing faculty member at TTUHSC is permitted complete autonomy in the classroom in discussing the subject, but should abstain from initiating contentious issues, which have no relation to the classroom focus. Every nursing faculty member when communicating as a member of the nation, state, and community must be released from institutional censorship or discipline. They ought to make it apparent that in this capacity they do not speak for TTUHSC. A nursing faculty member is subject to academic responsibility as noted below. (Regents’ Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.1)

1. Academic responsibility.

The perception of academic freedom for nursing faculty members is accompanied by a
uniformly essential belief of academic responsibility. A nursing faculty member has an obligation to: TTUHSC; his or her profession; students; and society at large. The privileges of a nursing faculty member as extended by society and protected by written policies and the courts necessitate reciprocally the postulation of definite responsibilities. The primary responsibility of a nursing faculty member as a teacher, scholar, and/or clinician embraces the continuation of proficiency in his or her field of specialization. This competency is demonstrated in the classroom, clinic, laboratory, and in the public arena by such activities as discussion, lectures, consulting, publications, and participation in professional organizations and meetings. (Regents’ Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.1)

Statements by a nursing faculty member are protected even though they may be derogatory in quality or content. However, such statements are not protected by free speech if they significantly hinder the nursing faculty member’s implementation of his or her daily obligations, materially and substantially impedes the normal undertakings of TTUHSC, or is part of an ongoing pattern of expression that may destroy the harmony and morale of an academic unit. False statements made publicly with knowledge of their falsity, or in irresponsible contempt of the truth, are not entitled to constitutional protection; such events may call into question the appropriateness of the nursing faculty member to execute his or her professional duties. (Regents’ Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.1)

A nursing faculty member should be prudent in the utilization of controversial information in teaching. They should initiate such items only as it has a apparent correlation to his or her subject theme. A nursing faculty member should be professional in his or her demeanor in the classroom and in interactions with students. They should retain respect for the student and for the student’s rights in the educational experience, and be properly accessible to students for consultation on course assignments. (Regents’ Rules, October 11, 2007, 04.03.1)