The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. (Academic Freedom)

Narrative
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. The mission statement of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and corresponding core values state the following.

*Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, resolution of complex issues and the empowerment of citizens and communities. The University provides a student-centered environment consistent with its core values. The faculty is committed to educating students at the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and professional levels, preparing graduates to apply their knowledge, critical thinking skills and creativity in their service to society. FAMU’s distinction as a doctoral/research institution will continue to provide mechanisms to address emerging issues through local and global partnerships. Expanding upon the University’s land-grant status, it will enhance the lives of constituents through innovative research, engaging cooperative extension, and public service. While the University continues its historic mission of educating African Americans, FAMU embraces persons of all races, ethnic origins and nationalities as life-long members of the university community.*

FAMU holds the following values essential to the achievement of the University’s mission: Scholarship, Excellence, Openness, Fiscal Responsibility, Accountability, Collaboration, Diversity, Service, Fairness, Courage, Integrity, Respect, Collegiality, Freedom, Ethics, and Shared Governance [1]

In keeping with its mission and core values, FAMU ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. FAMU describes academic freedom in the FAMU Board of Trustees and the United Faculty of Florida (FAMU BOT/UFF) Collective Bargaining Agreement [2], the Faculty Handbook [3] and the Faculty Senate Academic Constitution and By-Laws [4].
The FAMU BOT/UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement [2] states:

The Board and the UFF shall maintain and encourage full academic responsibility and full academic freedom. Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the full development of a true university and apply to teaching, research/creative activities, assigned service, and the activities set forth in Sections 10.4(d) and 10.4(e). An employee engaged in such activities shall be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence. Teaching and Research. Consistent with the exercise of academic responsibility, employees shall have freedom to present and discuss their own academic subjects, frankly and forthrightly, without fear of censorship, and to select instructional materials and determine grades in accordance with university and Board policies. Objective and skillful exposition of such subject matter, the acknowledgment of a variety of scholarly opinions, is the duty of every such employee. Employees shall also be free to engage in scholarly and creative activity and publish the results in a manner consistent with their professional obligations.

Academic Responsibility. Academic freedom is accompanied by the corresponding responsibility to:

- Be forthright and honest in the pursuit and communication of scientific and scholarly knowledge;
- Respect students, staff, and colleagues as individuals; treat them in a collegial manner; and avoid any exploitation of such persons for private advantage;
- Respect the integrity of the evaluation process with regard to students, staff, and colleagues, so that it reflects their true merit;
- Indicate, when appropriate, that one is not an institutional representative unless specifically authorized as such; and
- Contribute to the orderly and effective functioning of the employee’s academic unit (program, department, school, and/or college) and/or the university.

In addition to their assigned duties, employees have responsibilities arising from the nature of the educational process. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, observing and upholding the ethical standards of their discipline; participating, as appropriate, in the shared system of collegial governance, especially at the department/unit level; respecting the
confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student; adhering to one’s proper role as teacher, researcher, intellectual mentor, and counselor; and conducting oneself in a collegial manner in all interactions [2].

The FAMU Faculty Handbook [3] states:

(1) Academic Freedom and Responsibility.
(a) The University believes that academic freedom and responsibility are to the full development of a true university, and such freedom and responsibility applies to teaching, research, service, and creativity. Consistent with the exercise of academic responsibility, a teacher must have freedom in the classroom in discussing academic subjects. The university student must likewise have the opportunity to study a full spectrum of ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that the student may acquire maturity for analysis and judgment. Objective and skillful exposition of such matters is the duty of every instructor.
(b) The established policy of the University continues to be that the faculty employee must fulfill his/her responsibility to society and to his/her profession by manifesting academic competence, scholarly discretion, and good citizenship. The university instructor is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an academic officer of the University. The instructor should be constantly mindful that these roles may be inseparable in the public view, and should therefore at all times exercise appropriate restraint and good judgment. [3]

The Faculty Senate Academic Constitution [4] states:

Faculty member shall have the freedom to speak, to investigate, to draw conclusions, to choose instructional materials, and to express in their teaching, research, and creative activities, opinions regarding controversies in their field of study, without designed intent to indoctrinate. Each faculty member shall exercise self-discipline and sound judgment in transmitting, utilizing, and extending knowledge.

Section a: The policy of the University shall be to maintain and to encourage academic freedom, and to protect the faculty against forces and efforts from within and without the University that seek to curb this freedom.

Section b: Faculty who believe that their academic freedom has been jeopardized or inhibited shall be entitled to utilize the established procedures to seek relief. [4]
The By-Laws of the Faculty Senate Academic Constitution state:

* Academic freedom and responsibility are absolutely essential for the University to carry out its essential functions of instruction, research, creativity, and public service. The Faculty Senate shall be the highest legislative body within the University, and shall advise the President on academic matters and other concerns affecting more than one school or college.
* The University shall actively and consistently strive to protect the academic freedom of its faculty members, including the provision of its legal counsel or other outside resources. [4]

A grievance may be filed if a faculty member feels that his or her academic freedom has been violated. The University’s grievance procedures are provided in the FAMU Board of Trustees (BOT) Regulation 5.002 – Student and Faculty Grievances [5].

**Summary**

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. Therefore, FAMU is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.7.4.

**DOCUMENTATION**

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