



Resolution S2024.04

Support of Academic Freedom

Moved: Sara Kelley

Seconded: Darren Hostetter

WHEREAS recent legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions including but not limited to religion, gender and sexuality, racism, including Critical Race Theory, and related issues of inequity in society;

WHEREAS Santa Ana College aims to inspire, transform, and empower a diverse community of learners; maintains a commitment to teaching, learning, and research; and encourages respectful, honest, and courageous discussion of controversial ideas in and outside of the classroom; and we are people of diverse voices and experiences who understand that open and respectful exchange of ideas and perspectives is essential to the pursuit of learning, knowledge, and fact among all members of the college community;

WHEREAS the SAC faculty, per state law ([Assembly Bill 1725](#), line 14, dated Sept.1988 as signed by Gov. Deukmejian), are discipline experts and are responsible for the college curriculum;

WHEREAS the current Rancho Santiago Community College District’s Board Policy (BP4030) and Administrative Regulation (AR4030) affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of the college, citing the [American Association of University Professors’ 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) but is outdated;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommends updating the Board Policy to reflect the current AAUP statement and [California SR45 Relative to Academic Freedom](#).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that,

1. Faculty are entitled to full freedom in research and publication of the results.
2. Academic Freedom is the right of faculty, regardless of modality, to discuss their discipline and subject.
3. Faculty are members of a learned profession and officers of an educational institution and should be free from institutional censorship or disciplinary action in matters related to their respective discipline.

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4. The Rancho Santiago Community College District, its campuses, its Trustees, and its subsidiaries should (1) endorse a principle of institutional neutrality and objectivity at the District, campus, and departmental levels, ensuring this does not restrict faculty from expressing themselves as individuals; (2) oppose and resist government mandates that would harm the honest pursuit of fact and the cultivation of free inquiry, such as bans on disfavored topics and subjects; and (3) not prescribe any moral or political positions as institutional orthodoxy or treat the failure to endorse such a position as grounds for sanction or exclusion, whether formal or informal.
5. Individual faculty have sole authority and discretion to determine course content and how classes are conducted. Decisions about research and curricular matters are the province of faculty. Faculty in class and conferences with students should aim to foster free inquiry, which entails being intellectually honest and welcoming reasoned disagreement even when dealing with potentially controversial topics, including but not limited to social justice, diversity, equity, cultural expression, and artistic expression; such topics should not be regarded as forms of harm or harassment.
6. Public forums, lectures, student/faculty/district employee interaction, social media, and the multitude of everyday expression that enliven campus life are venues where free speech should be possible. Faculty have a right and duty to defend themselves against external and internal pressures that compromise intellectual freedom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Academic Senate expects an environment where students and faculty can engage in the exchange of ideas without interference, threat, or coercion. The Academic Senate rejects any effort to curtail academic freedom, the free expression of ideas, and the pursuit of intellectual inquiry.

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Date Passed: May14, 2024

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