



## **AOP 13.11: ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to provide an understanding and standardization of the policy dealing with Academic Freedom.

### **POLICY**

Mississippi State University recognizes the fact that in the republic of scholars there are certain indisputable rights to freedom of expression. The University encourages the search for knowledge and truth, and does not abridge any scholar's right to reveal their research finding through appropriate channels by spoken and written word, visual displays, artifacts, or performances (e.g., artistic, musical, theatrical), even if in doing so they may find variances with students and professional peers, as well as with the lay community members. Faculty have the academic freedom to select an effective pedagogical approach appropriate to their discipline and based on their scholarly expertise; simultaneously, faculty have a professional responsibility to select pedagogical approaches demonstrated to be effective through assessment and established research. Additionally, all scholars must recognize the fact that they are fallable and may be subject to human frailty of bias and error. Therefore, every scholar has the right to express their views with conviction as well as a duty to uphold the academic freedom of every other member of the University community. This means the right to speak and express oneself freely, the right to criticize ideas, and the right to have one's ideas criticized. The pursuit of truth proceeds on the foundation of the free exchange of ideas. Academic disagreements are therefore not something to be feared, but a sign of the vitality of the University. As such, ad hominem, threats or intimidation, which attack people rather than their ideas, have no place in the academic community. Academic freedom is central to the mission of a healthy university. Every scholar claiming sanctuary in the University must uphold it as a matter of academic responsibility.

### **REVIEW**

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Executive Vice Provost with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

**REVIEWED:**

/s/ Peter Ryan  
Executive Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate School

8/28/2023  
Date

/s/ David Shaw  
Provost and Executive Vice President

8/28/2023  
Date

/s/ Robert Banik  
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate

8/28/2023  
Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham  
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness

8/28/2023  
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas  
General Counsel

8/28/2023  
Date

**APPROVED:**

/s/ Mark E. Keenum  
President

8/28/2023  
Date