

Excerpt from the 2021-22 Faculty Handbook (beginning on page 49)

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A concern to provide faculty and students with an atmosphere of freedom to pursue truth and to discuss all relevant questions has led the executive committee of the Otis College of Art and Design Board of Trustees to accept the general principles and purposes embodied in the 1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. This statement was originally cosponsored by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors, and has subsequently been endorsed by many major educational associations and learned societies. Its purpose is as follows, according to the authors:

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure, and agreement upon procedures to ensure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual [faculty member] or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free expression.

This statement emphasizes that for maximum effectiveness, faculty members should have security adequate for freedom to teach and seek truth. This includes security of position after a reasonable period of probation, income commensurate with professional attainments, and assurance of explicit contract. As a citizen, the faculty member is also entitled to the right to participate in activities related to citizenship in a democratic society.

The statement further emphasizes the correlative obligations and responsibilities imposed by the special position occupied by the faculty member. Most important is the obligation for effective performance of duty. In addition, the statement of 1940 makes it clear that when the faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, they should remember that the public might judge their profession by what is said; therefore, the faculty member should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinion of others, and indicate that they speak as an individual and not for the institution.

The acceptance by the College Board, administrative officers, and faculty members of the related principles of freedom and obligation assures the individual faculty member of reasonable protection against incompetence and irresponsible utterance.

Expression of, and tolerance for, a wide diversity of thought and opinion is a natural part of an academic community, and the College strongly supports such academic freedom. We judge you by your ability to perform your job, not by factors that are irrelevant to your job performance. If you have a complaint in regard to this policy, refer to the section titled "Appeals and Grievances."