

**BLUEFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
POLICY NO. FC-403A**

**ACADEMIC FREEDOM, AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**SECTION 1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 This policy defines academic freedom and responsibility-as it relates to the roles and responsibilities of members of the faculty.
- 1.2 Effective date: August 4, 2022

**SECTION 2. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- 2.1 **Purpose:** Academic freedom at Bluefield State University is necessary to enable the institution to perform its societal obligation as established by the Legislature. The Board recognizes that the vigilant protection of constitutional freedoms is nowhere more vital than in institutions of higher education. Faculty members and students must always remain free to inquire, study, and evaluate.
- 2.2 **Privilege Granted:** Through the exercise of academic freedom, members of the academic community are free to study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish, depending upon their particular role at the institution.
  - 2.2.1. Responsibilities: To all of those members of the academic community who enjoy academic freedom, there are, commensurate with such freedom, certain responsibilities.
    - 2.2.1.1. All faculty members shall be entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results of such research, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties, which may include designated instruction, research, extension service, and other professional duties.
    - 2.2.1.2 The privilege of academic freedom does not automatically imply institutional support.
    - 2.2.1.3. Activity for pecuniary return that interferes with a faculty member's obligations to the institution as determined by the university should be based upon an understanding, reached before the work is performed, with the appropriate administrators of the institution.
      - 2.2.1.3.1. For the purposes of this section, "activity" shall include any work provided for pecuniary return through research, other activities associated with the university, the private sector, the

public sector and any other fee, salary or other payment for work performed.

2.2.1.3.2. Pursuant to this section, any faculty member engaged in activity for pecuniary return shall receive institutional approval by written agreement prior to engaging in such activity; provided that clinical faculty who are required to engage in activity for pecuniary return in order to maintain their professional licensure shall be exempt from the requirement for such approval.

2.2.1.3.3. Engaging in such activity without such approval shall be cause for termination of current appointment and refusal to provide in subsequent appointments.

2.2.2. Classroom Freedom. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject assigned to be taught.

2.2.3. Public Activity. In addition, when faculty members speak or write as citizens outside the institution, they shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

2.3 **Academic Responsibilities.** The concept of academic freedom is accompanied by an equally important concept of academic responsibility. A faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and a representative of the educational institution. As such, a faculty member, together with all other members of the academic community, has the following responsibilities:

- (a) Protecting, defending, and promoting individual academic freedom for all members of the community;
- (b) Contributing to institutional and departmental missions in teaching, research, and service as defined by the institution.; and
- (c) Striving to speak with accuracy and with respect for the similar rights and responsibilities of others. In speaking or writing only as an individual or for a limited group, the faculty member should not imply or claim to be a spokesperson for the institution.

2.4 **Additional Responsibilities.** In addition to meeting the primary responsibilities of addressing institutional missions in teaching, research, and service as defined by the institution, all faculty have an obligation to foster the quality, viability, and necessity of their programs.

2.4.1. Student recruitment. The financial stability of a program and recruitment of an adequate number of students depends in part on the faculty. As such, all faculty shall be responsible for engaging in the recruitment of students for their programs and the college, in general.

2.4.2. Quality. The common goal of quality must be nurtured and responsibility for it shared by all.

2.4.3. Serving the institution's purpose and mission. Integrity, objectivity, and service to the purposes and missions of the institution are expected.

2.5 **Professional Development.** Faculty interests and skills change, disciplines evolve, and new professions or fields of study merge. All faculty members are responsible for remaining current in their disciplines- as well as developing a versatile range of knowledge and skills that are important to the institution. Through individual initiative and faculty development programs, faculty members are responsible for growth in competency in their own disciplines and strengthening their interests in related fields.

2.6 **Participation in Program Review.** As members of an academic community, faculty members also are expected to participate in decisions concerning programs and in program-review processes.