

The RSCA subcommittee on Academic Freedom collectively drafted the following statement on October 13th 2020 and submitted it for comment to the RSCA on November 12th 2020 with an amendment on December 1st 2020.

Academic Freedom and Special Responsibilities of Faculty Members

In line with the University of Vermont's core mission to evaluate, share, and apply knowledge, the University supports and encourages its faculty to express opinions, without fear of retribution, that may sometimes challenge the ideas of others in the discharge of their duties. As such, we the University will provide the environment, resources, training and policies that facilitate each faculty member's academic freedom as prescribed in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and the 1970 Interpretive Comments of the American Association of University Professors:

- (a) Faculty are entitled to full freedom in their research and in the related publication and presentation of their results within the standards of accountability established by their profession and individual disciplines.
- (b) Faculty are entitled to freedom of teaching. Instruction may occur in an atmosphere of controversy so long as what is taught remains, in a broad sense, educationally relevant, placed in an appropriate context, and assists students in mastering or appreciating the significance of the subject.
- (c) By virtue of their education and institutional knowledge, faculty play a role as participants in university decision-making. Thus, they are entitled to comment of university policies or decisions, either as individual university members or through institutions of faculty governance.
- (d) Faculty are private individuals, members of a learned profession, and officers of the university. They should be free to participate in public forums, debates and symbolic expression within or beyond their areas of professional expertise, without fear of institutional discipline or restraint.
- (e) Faculty enjoy a special position in the community-at-large and as a result have a responsibility to indicate when they are not speaking/acting on behalf of the university, demonstrate respect for the rights and views of others, exercise intellectual honesty, and avoid speech not protected by the Supreme Court.