

# Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

## Student Affairs

POLICY NAME: Student Rights and Responsibilities

POLICY NUMBER: 3250

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### A. PURPOSE

To provide guidance regarding student rights and responsibilities as members of the academic community.

### B. DEFINITIONS

None

### C. POLICY

#### 1. **General Rights and Responsibilities**

Students, as members of the academic community, have the responsibility to create and support an educational environment which will achieve the basic purposes of an institution of higher learning. Each member of the community should be treated with respect and dignity. Each student has the right to learn which imposes a duty not to infringe upon the rights of others. Each student is a member of a learning community that entails responsibility to enhance the learning of others.

The academic community environment is designed to encourage a variety of thoughts, behaviors, and values within the educational goals of the community. An important aspect of the community is the recognition of differences between individuals. In all instances, including in informal College activities and associations, each individual should be treated in a fair and unbiased manner. Students shall actively encourage practices that ensure that all persons are welcome at the Colleges and are extended all the privileges of the academic community to which they are entitled.

#### 2. **Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom**

##### 2.1. Freedom of Expression

- As appropriate for the course content, students have the right of expression in the classroom and the responsibility to learn from the course of study according to the standards of performance established

by the faculty. Student behavior in a classroom should contribute to the learning process for themselves and other students. As members of a learning community, students have an obligation for contributing to the learning of others in the process of their own learning. Communication that threatens individuals, disrupts the learning process, and/or creates a harassing environment is not a right held pursuant to this right of expression. Disruptive behavior undermines the learning environment for others.

- Faculty have the right to restrict classroom discussions and/or redirect comments that do not contribute to established course curriculum topics and learning outcomes.

## 2.2. Instructional and Grading Procedures

- The faculty determines the character of courses which includes content and instructional and grading procedures. Students have the right to be informed at the beginning of each course of the nature of the course, course expectations, evaluation standards, and the grading system through the official course syllabus. Students may ask for an evaluation of their performance during the process of a course.
- Each student has the right to a course grade based upon a sound academic evaluation and upon a specified grading procedure. A student has the right to receive, upon request, a clarification of the grade received. In cases that the student has documented evidence to indicate the performance evaluation exhibited prejudice or bias and was based on factors other than student performance the student may submit a grade appeal. Colleges shall provide a written grade appeal policy and process to consider cases in which the student chooses to appeal the initial decision.

## 2.3. Faculty-Student Consultation

As members of a learning community, students are encouraged to meet with faculty for clarification of assignments, unclear concepts, progress in course, career opportunities, methods of study, and other course and program matters.

## 2.4. Student Evaluation of Instruction

- As members of a learning community, students have an important role in contributing to the appraisal of instruction, through providing insight into instructional effectiveness as perceived from their perspective.
- Faculty have an obligation to solicit student appraisal of the learning environment, combine student feedback with other evidence and make changes in accordance with their best judgment.
- To assist the faculty in the task of providing the best possible education, students should express their reactions and opinions about

quality and relevancy of the instruction to the Department Chair or Dean.

- Each College should establish a standing procedure through which student evaluations can be expressed.

### **3. Rights and Responsibilities in Other Instructional Settings**

#### **3.1. Freedom of Expression**

- The acquisition, understanding, and interpreting of knowledge can be facilitated by the study and consideration of controversial issues and positions. Free expression in the academic community shall not be abridged by special restrictions or censorship on publications, speakers or broadcasting. Any formally recognized student group, in consultation with faculty advisors and/or College administrators, shall be allowed to invite and hear any person of its own choosing who does not substantially disrupt the operation of the College. Those procedures required by the institution before a guest speaker appears on campus should insure orderly scheduling of facilities and adequate preparation for the event. The event should be conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community. The institutional control of College facilities should not be used as a device of censorship but should contribute to student learning.
- It should be made clear to the academic and larger communities that sponsorship of events and speakers does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of the views or actions by either the sponsoring group or the College. Participation in the exchange of ideas through these media is a normal expectation of the academic community.

#### **3.2. Student Government**

Students should be free, individually or collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student population. The students should have clearly defined means to participate equitably in the formulation of institutional policies and procedures which affect student life. Student government is the principal agency for student participation in the decision-making process of the College.

#### **3.3. Student Organizations**

Students bring to the College a variety of interests and can be expected to develop new interests as members of the academic community. They should be free to organize and join associations to promote their common interests, provided those associations are not likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operation of the College. Students should be able to participate in those organizations provided they meet the membership

requirements set up by the organization; in no instance will these criteria for membership violate the College's non-discrimination policy.

**FORMS/APPENDICES:**

None

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**SOURCE:**

**Legal Reference:** The Nebraska Constitution, Article I, Section 5

**Policy Adopted:** June 1993

**Policy Revised:** March 1994, March 2011, November 2018, April 2022, September 2022