

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Valencia College is committed to the principle of academic freedom throughout the institution. This commitment is exemplified through a variety of mechanisms.

The District Board of Trustees has adopted Policy 6Hx28:4-02: Academic Freedom (<http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicfreedom/4-02-academic-freedom.pdf>) and subscribes to the following statement on academic freedom:

Academic freedom and responsibility as they apply to teaching, research and creativity are essential to Valencia College. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, a college faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence.

The Valencia College policy on academic freedom is included via link to the policy manual in the Faculty Handbook (<https://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/resources/>), available to all faculty, and this catalog which available to all faculty, the student body and the general public. Information on Valencia College policies is also published in the Student LifeMap Handbook/Planner (<https://valenciacollege.edu/handbook/>) that all students receive at New Student Orientation. The Student LifeMap Handbook/Planner (<https://valenciacollege.edu/handbook/>) is also available year-round at any campus Information Station and any campus Student Development office (<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/student-development/>).

The practice and protection of academic freedom is an important part of Valencia's policy on tenure (Policy 6Hx28:3E-02: Award of Tenure and Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty (<http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicfreedom/3e-02-award-of-tenure-and-evaluation-of-tenured-and-tenured-track-faculty.pdf>)) which states that, "Valencia College recognizes the following principles as underlying the award of tenure by the college. ...Tenure provides significant protection for academic freedom. Academic freedom is essential for maintaining social and political freedom in a democracy..."

In order to ensure that students have the ability to address potential concerns, including issues associated with academic freedom, the College has adopted policies that describe the process for Academic Dispute and Administrative Complaint Resolution (Policy 6Hx28:8-10: Student Academic Dispute and Complaint Resolution (<http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicfreedom/8-10-student-academic-dispute-and-administrative-complaint-resolution.pdf>)). The College has also established an Ombudsman Office as an option for the resolution of academic disputes. The Office of the Ombudsman (<https://valenciacollege.edu/ombudsman/>) provides a safe and comfortable environment for students to discuss complaints, concerns or problems confidentially. When appropriate, the office will initiate an informal intervention with the goal of facilitating a resolution that is acceptable to all parties involved. The ombudsman acts as an independent, impartial resource. If a matter cannot be resolved through this office, a referral will be made. When appropriate, the office can make recommendations regarding policy review and change.