DATE: April 12, 2006
TO: Deans
    Chairs and Directors
SUBJECT: Processes for addressing concerns
          Re: Statement on Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity
FROM: Barbara R. Snyder, Executive Vice President and Provost

Last week I sent a memo to the entire university community reiterating Ohio State's commitment to the principles on academic freedom and intellectual diversity as disseminated by the American Council on Education (ACE). As a quick reminder, the ACE principles are as follows:

- Academic freedom and intellectual pluralism are core principles of America’s higher education system.
- Government’s recognition and respect for independence of colleges and universities is essential for academic excellence.
- Colleges and universities should welcome diverse beliefs and the free exchange of ideas.
- Grades and other academic decisions should be based solely on considerations that are intellectually relevant to the subject matter.
- Neither students nor faculty should be disadvantaged or evaluated on the basis of their political opinions.
- Any member of the campus community who believes he or she has been treated unfairly on academic matters must have access to a clear institutional process to address grievances.

As a follow-up to that communication, our undergraduate advisors, graduate studies committee chairs, and the leaders of student government were sent a reminder of these principles. At the same time, they received an explanation of the mechanisms for addressing the concerns of those who believe they have experienced treatment that is inconsistent with our institutional commitment to freedom of thought and expression, respect for multiple points of view, and the civil and open discussion of these views. Here are those mechanisms:

- Students who are concerned that their grade in a course has been affected by a consideration not intellectually relevant to the subject matter should refer to the faculty rule associated with alteration of marks located at [http://trustees.osu.edu/rules8/ru8-22-231.php](http://trustees.osu.edu/rules8/ru8-22-231.php). An undergraduate student may choose to consult an academic advisor or the Student Advocacy Center for advice on this process. A graduate student may choose to consult the graduate studies committee chair for advice on this process.

- Students who are concerned about unfair academic treatment on the basis of political opinions or other personally-held tenets or points of view should refer to the faculty rule associated with complaints against regular, regular clinical, and auxiliary faculty members located at [http://trustees.osu.edu/rules5/ru5-04.php](http://trustees.osu.edu/rules5/ru5-04.php). An undergraduate student may choose to consult an academic advisor, the Student Advocacy Center, or the department chair or school director for advice on this process. A graduate student may choose to consult the graduate studies committee chair or department chair or school director for advice on this process.
Though complaints of this sort are infrequent at The Ohio State University, it’s important that you know how to respond in those cases when they do. Please plan to take this issue up with your college, school, and department leadership committees to ensure that we address all such concerns in the most correct and sensitive way possible.