

DATE: April 10, 2006

TO: Academic Advisors

SUBJECT: Processes for addressing complaints  
Re: Statement on Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity

FROM: Martha M. Garland, Vice Provost for Enrollment Services  
Dean for Undergraduate Education

Last week you received a memo from Provost Snyder in which she reiterated 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.

We are all aware that the issues of academic rights and responsibilities have been in the public consciousness of late. As Provost Snyder's memo made clear, the free exchange of ideas is a foundational value of higher learning—and a hallmark of this institution since its earliest days.

We have also long had mechanisms for addressing the complaints 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 guidelines that you may find helpful, should you need to provide direction to a student who feels that he or she has been the subject of unfair treatment.

- 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>. 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>. 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.

It is important that students know of these means of addressing their grievances, however infrequently they are invoked. Thank you for your help in discharging this responsibility.