AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
POLICY

Policy Title: ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY	Policy Number: 4-4-101
Institutional Authority: President	
Associated SBTCE Policy: 3-1-100	
Associated ATC Procedure:	

Approved: _____ _____

President Commission Chairperson

Date Adopted: 07/01/2004
Date Revised: 08/10/2026

DISCLAIMER

PURSUANT TO SECTION 41-1-110 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SC, AS AMENDED, THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY.

It is the policy of Aiken Technical College to defend academic freedom to ensure an instructional program marked by excellence. Aiken Technical College honors the premise that faculty members and students have the right to pursue teaching and learning with full freedom of inquiry. In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, faculty and students must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism. Aiken Technical College subscribes to the principles regarding academic freedom articulated in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (1940, as revised) and the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedom of Students (AAUP, 1967, as revised) as summarized below.

Academic freedom is the right of the instructor to research and to communicate conclusions without being subjected to any interference or penalty because these conclusions are at variance with those of constituted authorities or organized groups inside or outside the College. A faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom to express and question ideas germane to the coursework in keeping with the principles and ethics of their profession. Faculty members should be careful not to introduce into their teaching matters that have no relation to their field or the course being taught.

Aiken Technical College also recognizes that commitment to every freedom carries with it attendant responsibilities. The faculty members must fulfill their responsibilities to society and to their profession by manifesting competence, professional discretion, and good citizenship. When they speak or write as a citizen, they will be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As professional educators, they must remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

Likewise, the academic freedom of the student is the freedom to express or defend views or beliefs, and the freedom to question or differ without fear of repression and/or scholastic penalty. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

Aiken Technical College strives to create a classroom environment that supports and encourages the free and vigorous exchange of ideas necessary for teaching and learning in higher education. An instructor may not harass a student nor act on an invidiously discriminatory ground toward a student, in class or elsewhere. It is a breach of professional ethics for an instructor to hold a student up to obloquy or ridicule in class for advancing an idea grounded in religion or politics. It is neither harassment nor discriminatory treatment to hold up to close criticism an idea or viewpoint a student has posited or advanced. Ideas that are germane to a subject under discussion in a classroom cannot be censored because a student with particular religious or political beliefs might be offended. Further, indecent or obscene language not necessary for and related to the subject matter of the class or that creates a sexually charged or hostile environment is not appropriate for use by either instructors or students.

At no time shall the principles of academic freedom prevent the institution from making reasonable efforts to assure the best possible instruction for all students in accordance with the objectives of the institution.

Where there are conflicts or inconsistencies between this policy and the Ethics Act of 1991, the provisions of the Ethics Act will take precedence.