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NU-Website-BOR-Policies 5.1.2

NU Board of Regents

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Chapter 5. Responsibilities and Rights of Students

RP-5.1 Responsibilities and Rights

RP-5.1.1 Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Individual Characteristics — Students

Students on each campus of the University of Nebraska shall be admitted and [shall] enjoy the programs and privileges of the University without regard to individual characteristics other than qualifications for admission, academic performance, and conduct in accord with University policies and rules and laws applicable to student conduct.

NOTE: The portion of this policy pertaining to employees is at RP-3.1.1

Reference: BRUN, Minutes, 54, p. 145 (May 12, 1989).

RP-5.1.2 The Student in the Academic Community

1. General Responsibilities and Rights

All members of the academic community have the responsibility to create and support an educational environment which will achieve the basic purposes of the University. Each member of the community should be treated with respect and dignity. Each has the right to learn. This right imposes a duty not to infringe upon the rights of others. The academic community should assure its members those opportunities, protections, and privileges which provide the best climate for learning. Views and beliefs expressed by a member of the academic community should be kept within the community unless released by the individual. The University encourages a variety of modes in thought, behavior, and values within the guidelines of the educational community. An important aspect of the educational effort is the recognition of differences between individuals. In all instances, including informal campus activities and association, each individual should be assured that judgments about the individual will be made on relevant criteria, and each member of the academic community should actively encourage practices to insure that all persons, irrespective of any irrelevant characteristics, are welcome on the campus and are extended all the privileges of the academic community to which they are entitled.

As more and more people seek the benefits of higher education, it may be desirable for the State University to offer special recognition and assistance to students disadvantaged by limited educational opportunity.

University students enjoy all the right and privileges of citizenship. Students are subject, however, to the special obligations which accrue to them as members of the academic community. Institutional effort should be exerted to develop, not inhibit, intellectual and personal development of students by the exercise of the rights of citizenship both on and off campus.

The enforcement of the obligations of students to the larger society is the responsibility of the legal and judicial authorities duly established for that purpose. If students are alleged violators of the law, they should proceed through legal channels and institutional authority should never be used merely to duplicate those functions.

2. Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom

a. Freedom of Expression

It is the responsibility of each faculty member to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to freedom of expression by encouraging discussion and permitting exception to the views he or she has presented. In addition, faculty members have the responsibility

to guide and direct such discussion and inquiry in a scholarly manner. The scope and duration of discussion, however, is to be determined by the instructor.

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.

b. Instructional and Grading Procedures

The faculty determines the character of courses which includes content and instructional and grading procedures. Students should be informed of these matters at the beginning of the 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 clarification of the grade received. The faculty of each department, school, or equivalent unit, shall provide a committee to consider the appeal of those cases in which a student feels the performance evaluation was unfair. Colleges shall provide standing committees to consider cases in which the student or faculty member chooses to appeal the initial decision. Any of these committees shall have the authority to direct changes in the grade based upon its findings.

c. Instructor-Student Consultation

Instructors should be available on a regular basis for consultation with students. Students may ask for an evaluation of their performance during the progress of a course. If a student conveys information of a confidential nature to a member of the faculty, this confidence should be respected.

d. Students can contribute significantly to the evaluation of instruction. The faculty has the obligation to solicit students' evaluation of their educational efforts and to 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 the character and relevancy of the instruction to the department or college involved. Each college or school should establish a standing procedure through which student evaluations can be expressed.

3. Rights and Responsibilities in Other Instructional Settings

a. Freedom of Expression

The acquisition, understanding, and interpreting of knowledge can be facilitated by the study and evaluation of controversial positions. Free expression in the academic community shall not be abridged by special restrictions or censorship on publications, speakers or broadcasting. Any student group shall be allowed to invite and hear any person of its own choosing. 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 campus facilities should not be used as a device of censorship.

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 University. Participation in the exchange of ideas through these media is a normal expectation of the academic community.

b. 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 University.

c. Student Organizations

Students bring to the campus 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 University. 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 University's non-discrimination policy.

Reference: BRUN, Minutes, 39, p. 18 (June 19, 1968).
BRUN, Minutes, 31, p. 191 (November 17, 1969).
See also, Bylaws BRUN (1973+), s. 5.10.
BRUN, Minutes, 56, p. 149 (September 6, 1991).

RP-5.1.3 University Right to Change, Discontinue Programs

Acceptance of registration by the University of Nebraska and admission to any educational program of the University does not constitute a contract or warranty that the University will continue indefinitely to offer the program in which a student is enrolled. The University expressly reserves the right to change, phase out, or discontinue any program.

The listing of courses contained in any University bulletin, catalog or schedule is by way of announcement only and shall not be regarded as an offer of contract. The University expressly reserves the right to (1) add to or delete courses from its offerings, (2) change times or locations of courses or programs, (3) change academic calendars without notice, (4) cancel any course for insufficient registrations, or (5) revise or change rules, charges, fees, schedules, courses, requirements for degrees and any other policy or regulation affecting students, including, but not limited to, evaluation standards, whenever the same is considered to be in the best interests of the University.

Reference: BRUN, Minutes, 51, p. 43, (June 8, 1985).

RP-5.1.4 Policy on the Baccalaureate Degree

1. Purpose

The University of Nebraska adopts the following policy to ensure that students have the opportunity to graduate in four years, if they take 15 hours in each of eight semesters.

2. Policy

The University of Nebraska baccalaureate degree shall require 120 credit hours.

3. Exceptions to the Policy

a. Exceptions to the 120 hour baccalaureate degree shall be approved by the Provost and reported to the Board of Regents if any of the following criteria are documented.