

Role in Campus Dissent

Date

1/95

As free American citizens or residents, faculty members have a right to hold and express opinions on any issues or matters of concern to them. The expression and advocacy of these opinions are properly tempered only by obligations inherent in their other roles:

1. As members of their political communities, faculty members have a legal obligation to comply with the laws of the city, county, state, and nation.
2. As employees of the University of Southern Indiana, faculty members have a contractual obligation to comply with the terms of their employment.
3. As members of an academic community, faculty members have a professional obligation to encourage the maintenance of an environment conducive to scholarship, learning, and academic freedom.

Obligations inherent in two of the three roles mentioned above are specifically codified and generally understood. Legal obligations are codified in local, state, and national laws. Contractual obligations are contained in the written understandings reached at the time of initial employment and are amplified in the University of Southern Indiana ***University Handbook***.

Obligations implicit in membership in the academic community are not clearly or specifically codified in any single known instrument. Concerning their appropriate role in campus dissent, all faculty members should subscribe to guidelines contained in the following statements:

1. There is a distinction between peaceful, orderly, and lawful protest on the one hand, and violent, terroristic, unduly disruptive, and/or unlawful protest on the other. Faculty members have a right to participate in the former as their conscience may dictate, but professional integrity precludes participation in the latter.
2. Faculty members will not engage in or support activities which imperil the academic rights of others or the freedom and safety of persons and property.
3. Faculty members will make every feasible effort to discourage violence and unlawful actions by using their personal influence and powers of persuasion to achieve these ends.

Since faculty members are not empowered to exercise nonacademic authority outside their classrooms, the University of Southern Indiana faculty supports the properly constituted administrative officials of the University of Southern Indiana, acting under the authorities legally granted them by the State of Indiana, in taking prompt and decisive action to preclude violations of the general standards implicit in the preceding paragraphs.

When any persons, regardless of the nature of their affiliation with the University of Southern Indiana, engage in overt on-campus actions jeopardizing the free functioning of the University of Southern Indiana or threatening the freedom or security of persons or property, those persons should be ejected from the campus and suspended from duties or classes until appropriate due process action shall have established grounds for permanent sanctions or for re-instatement. It is the duty of the president, or his/her designated representatives, to make the determination concerning the seriousness of the threat and to effect the necessary actions.

This policy statement is not intended, nor will it be used, to restrict the free exercise of constitutional freedoms and civil liberties assured all persons under law. Faculty members suffer no special disabilities nor enjoy any special legal immunities because of their profession. This statement simply reaffirms the dedication of this academic community to certain standards of conduct inherent in their professional responsibilities and encourages the University of Southern Indiana administrative officials to act promptly and decisively, as circumstances warrant, to ensure the security and well being of the University.