

Academic Freedom Summary of 2023/2024 Activity

The Academic Freedom (AF) Committee convenes at the request of the Faculty Council (FC) to review and respond to issues germane to academic freedom at the college. Their meetings often arise after faculty, council representatives, and/or administrators route issues or concerns to the attention of the FC president or FC representatives. The FC body then charges the committee to deliberate on these exigent issues.

Towards the end of the Fall semester, the FC president requested that the AF Committee convene to brainstorm a formal procedure through which faculty across the district can report to FC academic freedom concerns and/or violations that impact the college and its culture. In early January, the AF Committee met, discussed various perspectives and possible media for the procedure, and after extensive discussion, the AF Committee settled on proposing a Google Form as the primary medium for reporting concerns. They also decided that it would be best if the completed forms were routed directly to the current AF co-chairs to initiate an investigative response.

At the FC meeting in January 2024, the co-chairs presented their report to the body, and FC expressed support for the AF Committee's plan. The co-chairs then undertook preparation to reconvene the AF Committee for the purpose of drafting the particular fields and sections for the Google form; however, progress had to be put on hold when Dr. Hardesty expressed a need to consult with Human Resources about any potential concerns or employee rights/privacy issues that may limit/place restrictions on the requirements of a reporting procedure. Since then, the co-chairs have followed up with Dr. Hardesty through email, but due to the necessary prioritization of accreditation processes, the co-chairs have yet to receive guidance regarding potential limitations in establishing a reporting procedure for FC. As a result, the AF Committee is currently on standby, waiting for an administrative update.