

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Between September 2005 and June 2006 Academic Freedom hearings were held by a committee of the Pennsylvania legislature – the first in the history of the Commonwealth. The hearings revealed that all existing academic freedom provisions at Pennsylvania’s public universities were written to protect professors, not students. As a result of the hearings, however, the trustees of Temple adopted a new policy called “Faculty and Student Rights and Responsibilities” that grants students at Temple academic freedom rights for the first time.

The Temple academic freedom policy states that “Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom.” It further declares: “Students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth.” In pursuit of these ends, “student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis and by reference to the professional standards that sustain the University’s pursuit and achievement of knowledge, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to the academic subject.”

The Temple policy also states:

// Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial (or other) matter which has no relation to their subject. //

In other words no speeches on the Iraq War in English classes or Women’s Studies courses or in any class where the subject matter is not about Iraq or American foreign policy. No attempts to promote in class a political candidate during elections, or at any time in between. No wasting of students’ valuable time with personal agendas that have nothing to do with the academic subject they signed up for.

If you are a student at Temple, you pay good money for professional expertise, not off-the-cuff political advocacy. You can get opinions for free on talk radio or in the student union. You have a right to form your own conclusions on controversial matters, without worrying about how this might affect your grade; and you have a right to be presented by your professor with readings on more than one side of a controversial issue. It’s your education. See that you get one.

Under the new Temple academic freedom policy the Temple Board of Trustees will be informed of all grievances filed under its provisions. Information on how to file a grievance can be found at:

http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02

This ad has been placed by Students for Academic Freedom as a public service. For more information contact Sara Dogan at **sara@studentsforacademicfreedom.org** or visit our website at **www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org**.

