3.7.4

Faculty: Academic freedom

The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom.

Judgment

V	Compliant	☐ Non-Complian	nt 🔳 Not Applicable
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Narrative

Note: Text for all linked documents below can be increased/decreased for ease of reading by pressing your keyboard's Ctrl key while rotating the mouse wheel.

Angelo State University is strongly committed to the principles of academic freedom and has established policies and procedures to safeguard and protect the academic freedom of its faculty in accordance with *The Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System*, as summarized below.

REGENTS' RULES

The *Regents' Rules* governing faculty rights and responsibilities identify the component institutions of the TTU System "As centers for learning...[that] have the obligation to maintain conditions which are conducive to freedom of inquiry and expression in the maximum degree compatible with the orderly conduct of their functions" (Section 04.04.2, *Regents' Rules*). This commitment to academic freedom is also reflected in the rules governing intellectual property rights, which state that the TTU System "recognizes and affirms the traditional academic freedom of its faculty and staff to publish pedagogical, scholarly or artistic works without restriction" (Section 10.3.b(3), *Regents' Rules*).

ASU POLICIES TO PROTECT ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In alignment with the *Regents' Rules*, ASU has established operating policies and procedures to define and protect the academic freedom of its faculty.

Definition of Academic Freedom

Faculty rights and responsibilities related to academic freedom are defined in ASU OP 04.04, Academic Freedom, as follows:

- a. Freedom in the Classroom: The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the faculty member's subject but should be judicious in the use of controversial material in the classroom and should introduce such material only as it has clear relationship to the subject field.
- b. Freedom in Research: The faculty member is entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results in accordance with responsible academic and professional practices.

ASU takes measures to safeguard and protect these rights through its tenure and promotion policies.

Tenure and Promotion Standards and Procedures

Because academic freedom is closely related to the granting of tenure, policies governing tenure and promotion serve as a measure of a university's commitment to academic freedom. ASU has established clear and equitable tenure and promotion standards and procedures that reflect a strong institutional commitment to the principles of academic freedom. As stated in ASU OP 06.23, Tenure and Promotion Standards and Procedures (p. 2), the purpose of tenure is to accomplish the following:

- a. To assure the faculty that they are free to teach, conduct research, express opinions, and participate fully as citizens in the community without interference so long as they maintain professional and ethical standards of conduct;
- b. Provide procedures that guarantee due process, adequate notice, and a fair hearing to establish justification for possible termination of tenured faculty;
- c. To assist the university by encouraging sound standards for the original selection of faculty; and
- d. To result in the retention, encouragement, and promotion of the ablest and most promising faculty.

The policy also specifies that termination of tenured faculty will be only for adequate cause, with the burden of proof on the university, and that termination will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or constitutional rights (ASU OP 06.23, Tenure and Promotion Standards and Procedures, p. 7).

Matters pertaining to tenure or academic freedom may be referred by the faculty member to the Tenure Advisory Committee, which oversees the review procedures for tenure revocation, non-reappointment, and termination cases. The composition and responsibilities of the Tenure Advisory Committee and the termination review procedures are defined in ASU OP 06.23, Tenure and Promotion Standards and Procedures, pp. 7–11, section 9.

Grievance Provisions and Procedures Not Involving Tenure and Promotion

Faculty grievances that are "related to the actions or decisions of an administrator, a staff member, a student, or another faculty member," and that are *not* related to tenure, promotion, non-reappointment, or termination, are addressed in accordance with ASU OP 06.11, Faculty Grievance Procedures.

DISSEMINATION OF POLICIES

The *Regents' Rules* and the ASU OPs are publicly available online. Policies and procedures are developed, approved, and reviewed in accordance with procedures outlined in ASU OP 02.04, Operating Policy and Procedure Manual for Angelo State University. The ASU OP Manual home page includes links to a list of

updates to existing OPs and drafts of new OPs, and the university community is notified of the publication of new policies and significantly revised policies via e-mail in accordance with ASU OP 02.04.

ISSUES INVOLVING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

ASU was last reaffirmed by the Commission in 2002. Since then, no faculty member has filed a grievance for an alleged violation of academic freedom at ASU.