

3185

Sponsor(s): Representative Boldt

Brief Description: Creating an academic bill of rights.

HB 3185 - DIGEST

Provides that, to secure the intellectual independence of faculty and students and to protect the principle of intellectual diversity, the following principles and procedures shall be observed. These principles apply only to public universities and to private universities that present themselves as bound by the canons of academic freedom. Private institutions choosing to restrict academic freedom on the basis of creed must explicitly disclose the scope and nature of these restrictions.

(1) All faculty shall be hired, fired, promoted, and granted tenure on the basis of their competence and appropriate knowledge in the field of their expertise and, in the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts, with a view toward fostering a plurality of methodologies and perspectives. No faculty may be hired, fired, or denied promotion or tenure on the basis of his or her political or religious beliefs.

(2) No faculty member may be excluded from tenure, search, and hiring committees on the basis of the member's political or religious beliefs.

(3) Students will be graded solely on the basis of their reasoned answers and appropriate knowledge of the subjects and disciplines they study, not on the basis of their political or religious beliefs.

(4) Curricula and reading lists in the humanities and social sciences should reflect the uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge in these areas by providing students with dissenting sources and viewpoints where appropriate. While teachers are and should be free to pursue their own findings and perspectives in presenting their views, they should consider and make their students aware of other viewpoints. Academic disciplines should welcome a diversity of approaches to unsettled questions.

(5) Exposing students to the spectrum of significant scholarly viewpoints on the subjects examined in their courses is a major responsibility of faculty. Faculty will not use their courses for the purpose of political, ideological, religious, or antireligious indoctrination.

(6) Selection of speakers, allocation of funds for speakers' programs, and other student activities will observe the principles of academic freedom and promote intellectual pluralism.

(7) An environment conducive to the civil exchange of ideas is an essential component of a free university; the obstruction of invited campus speakers, destruction of campus literature, or other effort to obstruct this exchange is prohibited.

(8) Knowledge advances when individual scholars are left free to reach their own conclusions about which methods, facts, and theories have been validated by research. Academic institutions and professional societies formed to advance knowledge within an

area of research, maintain the integrity of the research process, and organize the professional lives of related researchers serve as indispensable venues within which scholars circulate research findings and debate their interpretation. To perform these functions adequately, academic institutions and professional societies should maintain a posture of organizational neutrality with respect to the substantive disagreements that divide researchers on questions within, or outside, their fields of inquiry.