

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By tradition and by philosophical principle, an academic institution is committed to the pursuit of truth. To carry out this essential commitment calls for institutional integrity in the way an institution manages its affairs, specifies its goals, selects and retains its faculty, admits students, establishes curricula, determines programs, conducts research, and fixes its fields of service.

The maintenance and exercise of such institutional integrity postulates and requires appropriate autonomy and freedom.

This is the freedom to examine data, to question assumptions, to be guided by evidence, to teach what one knows, and to be a learner and a scholar. This is the freedom from unwarranted harassment, which hinders or prevents an institution from proceeding with its essential work.

An institution must be managed well and remain solvent. It may be organized and structured for profit, but it is not strictly a business; while it must be concerned with the needs of its community, state and country, an institution of higher education is not a political party or a social service. It must be morally responsible, but even when church-related, it is neither a religion nor a church.

Those within an institution have, as a first concern, evidence and truth, rather than particular judgments of institutional benefactors, concerns of churchmen, public opinion, social pressure, or political proscription.

Relating to this general concern and corresponding to intellectual and academic freedom are correlative responsibilities. On the part of trustees and administrators, there is the obligation to protect faculty and students from inappropriate pressures or destructive harassment.

On the part of the faculty, there is the obligation to sift and question, to be actively involved in the life of the institution, but also involved as learners at appropriate levels.

Intellectual freedom does not rule out commitment; rather, it makes it possible and personal. Freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual or the educational institution - certainly not toward the task of inquiry and learning, or toward the value system which may guide them as persons or as schools.

All concerned with the good of institutions will seek for ways to support their institutional integrity and the exercise of their appropriate autonomy and freedom. In particular, Commissions that have a particular responsibility to look at an institution in its totality, will always give serious attention to this aspect and quality of institutional life so necessary for its well-being and vitality.