

NUMBER: 1502

TITLE: Student Rights and Freedoms

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A statement of the rights and freedoms of students in attendance at Old Dominion University is set out in this document. Such rights and freedoms will be recognized by the administration until changed or otherwise modified by the Board of Visitors.

Rights and freedoms should always be exercised within a framework of responsible behavior. They should not be used as a vehicle for division. Rather, they should serve as a point of departure from which administration, faculty, and students can work together to continue the advancement of Old Dominion University as an outstanding institution.

I. Access to Higher Education

A. Admissions

Admission to Old Dominion University is open to all qualified students giving equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race (or traits historically associated with race including hair texture, hair type, and protective styles such as braids, locks, and twists), color, national origin, age, marital status, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, religion, or veteran status.

B. Continuance

Continuance requirements are set by the University. The policies for continuance shall be made clear and orderly procedures shall be established for appeal if extenuating circumstances warrant such action.

II. Academic Affairs

Instructors shall always endeavor to provide opportunities for discussion, inquiry, and expression in an atmosphere conducive to learning. Academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis.

A. Protection of Freedom of Expression

Students shall be free to take reasoned exception to the material or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled.

B. Protection Against Improper Academic Evaluations

Students shall have protection against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluations. Orderly procedures have been established (see "Grade Appeals" section of the Undergraduate or Graduate Catalog) through which students may appeal grades judged to have been given as result of prejudice or caprice. However, students are responsible for maintaining the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

C. Protection Against Unprofessional Academic Conduct (see [Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook](#) and [AAUP Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students](#))

Students shall have protection against the improper and unprofessional conduct of faculty members. Such behavior could include the following:

1. Repeated failure to meet classes;
2. Repeated failure to be available for conferences during published office hours;
3. Repeated failure to present relevant, in-class materials, and to provide assessment on such materials; and
4. Discriminatory actions in the classroom against individuals or groups.

Orderly procedures have been established through which students may lodge complaints of unprofessional conduct without jeopardizing their grades.

D. Protection Against Improper Disclosure of Personal Information

Information of judgments about a student's views, abilities, or character (information faculty members acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, or counselors) may be discussed by those faculty members only if such discussion is guided by standards of professional obligation. Private or confidential matters brought by a student to the attention of a faculty member should not be disclosed without the prior consent of the student, except where required by law.

III. Student and Campus Life

A. Freedom of Association

1. Students shall be free to organize and join associations that promote common interests.
2. Affiliations with external or national organizations shall not of themselves disqualify student organizations from institutional recognition.
3. Honorary and professional organizations may restrict their membership on the basis of clearly established and published criteria that have been approved by the University as part of the recognition process.
4. The facilities and services of the institution shall be open to all enrolled students through established procedures and used in accordance with University Policies [3200, "Use and Keying of Facilities and Grounds,"](#) and [1700, "University Demonstrations Policy."](#)

B. Freedom of Inquiry and Expression

1. Students and student organizations shall be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions privately and publicly. They should always be free to support causes by orderly means that do not disrupt the regular and essential operations of the institution.
2. In their discussion of issues and expressions of opinions, students shall be free from duress, coercion, attempts to intimidate, or attempts to otherwise persuade by use of force.
3. Institutional control of campus facilities shall not be used as a device of censorship, but student organizations will be required to adhere to [University Policy 3200, "Use of Facilities and Grounds."](#)
4. The University shall not tolerate actions by individuals or groups that seek to restrict the exercise of the rights just described in sections 1 through 3. In accordance with [Code of Virginia Section 23.1-401.1](#), members of the campus community cannot obstruct speakers and presenters. While students and members of the university community cannot disrupt a speaker or free speech, they can assemble to express alternate points of view (see [University Policy 1700, "University Demonstrations Policy."](#))

C. Student Media

1. Student media shall be free of censorship and advance approval of copy.

2. All student publications published and financed by the University shall explicitly state that the opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of the University or the student body.
3. Students shall be free to publish, distribute, and, in accordance with university regulations, post literature on campus.

D. Financing of Student Organizations

After considering student recommendations, the University shall establish orderly procedures for financing student activities. These procedures and the criteria for funding recognized student organizations will be publicized and uniformly observed. The budget for student activities shall annually be made available to the student body.