

The Student in the

Academic Community

The following statement was developed by representatives from the student body, the faculty, and the administration, to spell out the role of the student at UNL. In the spring of 1968, the document was adopted by the student government (ASUN), validated by a referendum vote of the student body, adopted by the University (Faculty) Senate, and accepted by the Board of Regents as a continuing policy.

Almost a century ago, the people of

Nebraska established this University to provide opportunity for human and intellectual development in the service of society. Repeatedly in the history of the institution, the Regents, the faculty, the students, and the interested public have affirmed those qualities within the University community which have enhanced the development of responsible individualism. It is appropriate, during a time of change and reassessment of established values, that the academic community re-examine and clarify the conditions conducive to the personal and intellectual development of students. It is the purpose of this document to indicate the general character of the expectations, the rights, and the obligations of the students at the University of Nebraska. The significance of this document will depend upon the willingness of students to exercise the opportunities and to accept the obligations, both stated and implied. Many of the statements contained herein reflect the legacy of the past which has made these values an integral part of the educational environment at the University of Nebraska. There is merit in restating values as a means of strengthening our resolve to provide the optimum climate for the educational enterprise and to direct our attentions toward new and better methods of attaining common goals. It is recommended to the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, the University Senate, and the Board of Regents that this document be adopted as a statement of institutional policy. As a statement of policy, it should be examined periodically for revision.

I. General Rights and Responsibilities

All members of the academic community have the responsibility to create and support an educational environment which will achieve the basic purposes of the University. Each member of the community should be treated with respect and dignity. Each has the right to learn. This right imposes a duty not to infringe upon the rights of others. The academic community should assure its members those opportunities, protections, and privileges which provide the best climate for learning. Views and beliefs expressed by a member of the academic community should be kept within the community unless released by the individual. The University encourages a variety of modes in thought, behavior, and values within the guidelines of the educational community.

An important aspect of the educational effort is the recognition of differences between individuals. In all instances, including informal campus activities and associations, each individual should be assured that judgments about the individual will be made on relevant criteria which do not include race and color. Each member of the academic community

should actively encourage practices and policies to insure that all races, colors, creeds, and religions are welcome on the campus and are extended all the privileges of the academic community. As more and more young people seek the benefits of higher education, it may be desirable for the state University to offer special recognition and assistance to students disadvantaged by limited educational opportunity.

A. *Admission Policy*

Admission policies of the University of Nebraska should be made clear to all applicants. The Charter of 1869 explicitly provided that admission and the privileges of the University cannot be denied to an applicant because of age, sex, race, color, national origin, religious or political beliefs.

B. *Rules and Regulations*

Regulations are not comprehensive codes of conduct, but rather expressions of the general expectations of the academic community. Upon admission to the University, students should receive statements of these expectations.

Rules and regulations should:

1. seek the best possible reconciliation between personal freedom and necessary order.
2. be formulated with equitable participation by students in areas affecting student life.
3. be as clear and concise as possible, specifying to whom they apply.
4. be designed for guidance and correction of behavior.
5. be enforced by means of clearly defined channels which insure procedural fair play, including students' rights:
 - a. to be informed of the specific charges against them.
 - b. to receive, upon request, a hearing before a regularly constituted board with the privilege of appeal.
 - c. to maintain status as a student while a conduct case is pending.

C. *Off-Campus Freedom of Students*

University students enjoy all the rights and privileges of citizenship. Students are subject, however, to the special obligations which accrue to them as members of the academic community. Institutional effort should be exerted to develop, not inhibit, intellectual and personal development of students by the exercise of the rights of citizenship both on and off campus. The enforcement of the obligations of students to the larger society is the responsibility of the legal and judicial authorities duly established for that purpose. If students are alleged violators of the law, they should proceed through legal channels, and institutional authority should never be used merely to duplicate those functions.

When the interests of the academic community are clearly involved, the authority of the institution should be asserted. The fact that a violation occurs off campus does not preclude the interest and involvement of the University. When participating in off-campus activities, students should make it clear that in their public expressions or demonstrations they speak and act only for themselves as individuals.

D. *Student Records*

All policies and practices concerning student records should be based upon respect for the privacy of the individual. To minimize the risk of improper disclosure, academic and disciplinary records should be separate and the conditions of access to each should be set forth in an explicit policy statement. Transcripts of academic records should include only information about a student's academic status. *Upon graduation*, notations of probation and suspension will be removed from transcripts of the permanent record. Information from disciplinary and counseling files should not be made available to unauthorized persons on campus or to any person off campus without the expressed consent of the student involved, except under legal compulsion or where the safety of other persons is involved. Provision should be made for periodic destruction of noncurrent disciplinary records.

II. Rights and Responsibilities in the Classroom

A. Freedom of Expression

It is the responsibility of each faculty member to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to freedom of expression by encouraging discussion and permitting exception to the views he/ she has presented. In addition, faculty members have the responsibility to guide and direct such discussion and inquiry in a scholarly manner. The scope and duration of discussion, however, is to be determined by the instructor. Students have the right of expression in the classroom and the responsibility to learn from the course of study according to the standards of performance established by the faculty. Student behavior in the classroom should contribute to the learning process.

B. Instructional and Grading Procedures

The faculty determines the character of courses which includes content, instructional and grading procedures. Students should be informed of these matters at the beginning of the course.

Each student has the right to a course grade based upon an unbiased evaluation of his/her performance and the specified grading procedure. A student has the right to ask for clarification of the basis for his/her grade.

The faculties of each college or department should provide a standing committee to consider the appeal of those cases in which a student feels the evaluation of his/her performance was biased. This committee must have the authority to direct change based upon its findings.

C. Instructor-Student Consultation

Instructors should be available on a regular basis for consultation with students. Students may ask for an evaluation of their performance during the progress of the course. If a student conveys information of a confidential nature to a member of the faculty, his/her confidence should be respected.

D. Procedure For Course Evaluation

Students can contribute significantly to the evaluation of instruction. The faculty has the obligation to solicit student evaluation of its educational efforts and to make changes in

accordance with its best judgment. To assist the faculty in the task of providing the best possible education, students should express their reactions and opinions about the character and relevancy of the instruction to the department or college involved. Each college or school should establish a standing procedure through which student evaluations can be expressed.

III. Rights and Responsibilities in Other Instructional Settings

A. *Freedom of Expression*

The acquisition, understanding, and interpreting of knowledge can be facilitated by the study and evaluation of controversial positions. Free expression should be permitted in publications and broadcasting. Students should be allowed to invite and hear any person of their own choosing. Those procedures required by the institution before a guest speaker appears on campus should insure orderly scheduling of facilities and adequate preparation for the event. The institutional control of campus facilities should not be used as a device of censorship. However, all activities should be conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community. It should be made clear to the academic and larger communities that sponsorship of events and speakers does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of the views or actions either by the sponsoring group or the University. Participation in the exchange of ideas through these media is normal in the academic community.

B. *Student Government*

Students should be free, individually or collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student population. The students should have clearly defined means to participate equitably in the formulation of institutional policies and procedures which affect student life. Student government is the principal agency for student participation in the decision-making process of the University.

C. *Student Organizations*

Students bring to the campus a variety of interests and can be expected to develop new interests as members of the academic community. They should be free to organize and join associations to promote their common interests, provided those associations are not antagonistic to the basic purposes of the institution. Students should be able to participate in those organizations provided they meet the membership requirements set up by the organization; in no instance will these criteria for membership include race or color.

This document was approved by the Student Senate of ASUN (April 7, 1968), a Referendum of the Student Body (April 10, 1968), the University Senate (May 14, 1968), and the Board of Regents (June 19, 1968).