Academic Freedom: Opportunity and Responsibility

In consistency with its stated mission to be a Christian university, Biola University subscribes to this policy of academic freedom in the pursuit and dissemination of truth, within the conviction that ultimately God himself is truth and the source of all truth.

Academic freedom is both an opportunity to be exercised and a responsibility to do so. In the exercise of this freedom in teaching, in research, and other aspects of professional service, the faculty member is free to seek and to examine all data, to be guided by relevant data and evidences, to identify and to question assumptions, to distinguish between data and interpretations of data, and to explore alternative explanations and applications. With this freedom, the pursuit and dissemination of truth are meaningful, significant, and beneficial to the faculty members and their students and to the broader communities in which they serve. Without this freedom, scholarship is shallow or trivial, if it exists at all.

In exercising the opportunity and responsibility of academic freedom, the faculty member accepts authority outside of himself or herself. The most basic authority is that of God’s revelation of himself to mankind. There is also authority in the data and evidences that are encountered in scholarly work, with the recognition that interpretations and applications of the same evidences may vary, both from one another and from ultimate truth.

In individually exercising academic freedom at Biola University, the faculty member recognizes that the university has specified its institutional distinctiveness within the diversity that characterizes higher education generally and that he or she is a part of this university. The faculty member, having freely become a part of this institution, accepts the opportunity and responsibility of supporting Biola’s mission and agrees to work to advance it.

It is recognized that the exercise of the opportunity and the responsibility of academic freedom in this university setting may at times be accompanied by tensions. It is further recognized that these tensions can be of positive value in encouraging and facilitating the growth of all participants toward maturity in their understandings of the biblical, Christian worldview and in their commitment to it.