Senate Workgroup Draft Policy on Academic Freedom
February 28, 2014

The University of Oregon encourages and supports open, vigorous, and challenging debate across the full spectrum of human issues as they present themselves to the university community. The University of Oregon protects free speech through Policy No. 01.00.16. This policy on Academic Freedom builds on these existing commitments by recognizing the special contexts of scholarship, teaching, governance, and public service. Faculty represented by United Academics are subject to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and United Academics.

SECTION 1

a. SCHOLARSHIP. The University's research mission requires that members of the UO community have autonomous freedom to conduct research and produce creative work, and to publish and disseminate that work, limited only by the standards and methods of accountability established by their profession and their individual disciplines.

b. TEACHING. The University's responsibility to help students to think critically and independently requires that members of the university community have the right to investigate and discuss matters, including those that are controversial, inside and outside of class, without fear of institutional restraint. Matters brought up in class should be related to the subject of courses or otherwise be educationally relevant, as determined primarily by the faculty member in charge of the class.

c. POLICY GOVERNANCE. Members of the university community have freedom to inform themselves about, address, question, or criticize any matter of institutional policy, action, or administration, whether acting as individuals or as members of an agency of institutional governance as provided by law.

d. PUBLIC SERVICE. Public service requires that members of the university community have freedom to participate in public debate, both within and beyond their areas of expertise, and to address both the university community and the larger society with regard to any matter of social, political, economic, cultural, or other interest. In their exercise of this freedom, university community members have the right to identify their association or title, but should not claim to be acting or speaking on behalf of the University unless authorized to do so.

SECTION 2

These freedoms derive immediately from the university’s basic commitment to advancing knowledge and understanding. The academic freedoms enumerated in this policy shall be exercised without fear of institutional reprisal. Only serious violations of this policy – ones that rise to the level of professional misbehavior or professional incompetence – should lead to adverse consequences. Any such determinations shall be made only in accordance with established, formal procedures involving judgment by relevant peers.