



St. John's College Policies and Procedures

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SYSTEM: HSHS	MANUAL(S): HSHS St. John's College Policies
TITLE: Academic Freedom Policy	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: St. John's College
EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/01/2025	REVISION DATE(S):
SUPERCEDES: Local ministry handbooks/catalogs/policies adopted prior to the effective date of this policy.	

Purpose:

This policy affirms the College's commitment to academic freedom as a foundational principle in higher education and nursing practice. It defines the scope and responsibilities of academic freedom as exercised by faculty at St. John's College of Nursing.

Policy:

Policy Statement

St. John's College of Nursing recognizes that academic freedom is essential to fostering critical thinking, scholarly inquiry, and professional growth within a nursing education context. Faculty are entitled to academic freedom in teaching, scholarship, and expression, provided such freedom is exercised in alignment with professional standards, institutional values, and programmatic requirements.

Scope of Academic Freedom

Faculty are granted the following freedoms:

1. In Teaching

Faculty may present, discuss, and critically examine relevant ideas and evidence in the classroom, clinical, simulation, or online learning environments, so long as the content is:

- Consistent with course objectives and expected student learning outcomes (SLOs/EPsLOs)
- Aligned with current, evidence-based nursing practice
- Presented in a professional, respectful, and inclusive manner

2. In Curriculum Contribution

Faculty have the right and responsibility to participate in the development, evaluation, and revision of nursing curricula in accordance with:

- The standards and outcomes required by programmatic accreditors
 1. Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
 2. Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
- State regulatory bodies
 1. Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR)
 2. Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
- The mission and programmatic goals of St. John's College of Nursing



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3. In Scholarship and Inquiry

Faculty are free to pursue scholarship, evidence-based practice, and professional inquiry, and to share their findings publicly, provided such work:

- Meets ethical and scientific standards
- Does not compromise patient or student confidentiality
- Reflects professional accountability

4. In Professional Expression

Faculty are free to speak or write as individuals on matters of public concern but must clarify when they are not speaking on behalf of the College.

- Such expression must not:
 1. Conflict with the College's mission or HSHS policies
 2. Violate professional codes of conduct or confidentiality
 3. Involve misuse of institutional resources or representation

5. Responsibilities and Limitations

- Academic freedom must be balanced with:
 - Professional Responsibility as defined by the ANA Code of Ethics, state licensing boards, and accrediting bodies
 - Programmatic Requirements, including evidence-based instruction, compliance with student learning outcomes, and curricular integrity
 - Institutional and System Policies, including those of St. John's College of Nursing and HSHS

6. Faculty are expected to exercise academic freedom in a manner that:

- Promotes civil discourse and diverse viewpoints
- Upholds student and patient dignity and safety
- Respects regulatory and accreditation standards
- Supports the mission of the College and the nursing profession

7. Policy Violations

- Concerns about misuse or violation of academic freedom will be reviewed through the College's established faculty evaluation or grievance procedures, as appropriate.
- Faculty retain the right to appeal decisions related to academic freedom within the scope of institutional policies.