

Committee on Academic Freedom Interim Report at end of Fall 2014

The Committee has considered several cases during the Fall 2014 semester. Full reports will be made available during the Spring 2015 semester.

Academic Freedom has been recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States as a special expression of the first amendment right of free speech. Court decisions, among them *Sweezy vs. New Hampshire*, have described the concept as including the right for institutions and faculty to express their academic judgments concerning who is to teach, what is to be taught, to whom it is to be taught, and how it is to be taught. Cases brought to the attention of the QCC Faculty Committee on Academic Freedom are described in terms of those fundamental freedoms of faculty.

Case 1: (Who is to teach and what is taught and how it is taught)

Call for punishment through disciplinary action by President Diane Bova Call for the exercise of academic freedom by Dr. David Klarberg in expressing judgments concerning faculty rights in the department and on the P&B, and the faculty role in deciding who is to teach and what is taught and how it is taught. Dr. Klarberg attempted to assert the rights of his faculty colleagues through communications with the department chairperson and deputy chairperson shared with all members of his department. A few of these communications were deemed unacceptable by President Call who cited them as evidence of “conduct unbecoming a member of the staff,” although the language of others in the conversations could be described as even worse and was not so cited. This case is ongoing.

Case 2: (Who is to be taught)

Possible interference by CETL with faculty expression of academic judgment concerning who is to teach and the Chairperson’s right to schedule classes. This involved a conflict between the requirements for inclusion in a Learning Community vs. problems in scheduling students for classes they desired to take. This matter has been settled, and the rights of department chairpersons to schedule classes and determine who is to be entered into those classes has been upheld.

Case 3: (Who is to teach)

Possible interference by QCC Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity with faculty expression of academic judgment in the search process. The primary concern on the part of the administration involves lawsuits by applicants claiming unequal application of standards in evaluating candidates. There has been acknowledgement of some problems and the administration has made clear that there is to be no attempt to interfere with the academic judgments of faculty serving on search committees. Several suggestions were made concerning problems that led to the perception of interference with faculty judgments.

The committee also handled another case which did not directly bear on the four precepts resulting from *Sweezy vs. New Hampshire*: an allegation that a chairperson was requiring an

improper review of abstracts of presentations at conferences before approval of the travel/ excusal from teaching required for attendance at said conferences. This case resulted from a confidential complaint made to me personally – the identity of the complainant remains known only to myself, yet the committee was able to proceed with the matter, although it was settled without our involvement. I would like to point out to all members of our community that this option, for confidential complaint, had been used several times in the committee’s history. We encourage anyone to come forward to any member of the committee (currently, the FEC plus myself, Aithne Bialo-Padin, and Joan Dupre) if they feel that some aspect of their academic freedom has been violated.

Sincerely,

Aithne Bialo-Padin

Joan Dupre

Wilma Fletcher-Anthony

Jenny Maan Lin

Alicia Sinclair

Edmund Clingan

David Humphries

Anthony Kolios

Philip Pecorino

Julian Stark, Chair