

# **DECLARATION OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES INHERENT IN ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

## **1. Preamble**

The past few decades have seen, throughout the world, a new emphasis on the growth and development of higher education. This has been brought about by a number of factors : the recognition of the relationship between economic development and educational provision ; the growing demand for equality of educational opportunity ; the need to adapt institutions to the needs and aspirations of modern societies. These changes are welcome but they have brought with them some dangers for principles and values essential to the ideas of a free university. In particular, the growing financial dependence of the university, at a time of economic difficulty, has led to pressures on the university in the exercise of fundamental principles of university autonomy and academic freedom. It is appropriate, therefore, to restate today the essential role which academic freedom plays in the definition of the university.

## **2. The Role of the University**

2.1 The university is a community bound together by a common commitment to the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of truth. Central to the definition of the university are its functions of maintaining and transmitting the high culture of the community and of creating new knowledge through scholarship and basic scientific research.

2.2 The university, therefore, exists for purposes which require a high degree of freedom if they are to be adequately fulfilled. It is at one and at the same time an institution which exists to enlarge the frontiers of knowledge, and an institution which must hand down, not only the body of knowledge existing at any time, but also those attitudes of mind which will make possible the enlargement of knowledge and the critical examination of beliefs and theories so that they may develop as society itself develops. It is vital for a free society that there should be within it such a free institution, committed to seek and know the truth and bound to no ideology, vested interest, party or government.

## **3. Conditions for Freedom in a University**

The conditions necessary to ensure freedom in the university are university autonomy and academic freedom. University autonomy requires the independence of the university from external constraints in the performance of its functions. Academic freedom signifies the maintenance of those conditions which make it possible for the members of the university to accomplish their functions without discrimination or fear of reprisal from any authority or interest, external or internal to the university.

## **4. Rights inherent in Academic Freedom**

4.1 A university staff member must be free to teach and to express the conclusions of research, subject only to canons of scholarship and intellectual rigour. Equally the staff member must be allowed to pursue and publish research, even if the conclusions of that research should prove unwelcome to outside authorities or interests.

4.2 The academic must hold employment under a system of tenure which is granted after a reasonable period of probation to those who have satisfied

stated criteria in teaching and research to the satisfaction of an academic body. The dismissal of an academic staff member with tenure or during a probationary period should not take place without the establishment of adequate cause through formal academic due process procedures.

- 4.3 Evaluation and promotion within the academic community should be based only on academic criteria in research, teaching and other academic duties as interpreted by academic peers.
- 4.4 The academic must be given adequate time to carry out research into his or her subject, and reasonable access to the resources that are available to his or her institution for research and the publication of the results of research.
- 4.5 There must be freedom for the academic to travel and otherwise to consult with the international community of Scholars in his or her subject.
- 4.6 The university teacher must be free to teach students who are free to learn, and to establish the content of courses and the method of teaching, subject to the requirements of an institutional curriculum.
- 4.7 The academic must be subject to no constraints from within the university in speaking responsibly on any subject, within or without the university.

## **5. Duties inherent in Academic Freedom**

- 5.1 There is a responsibility to the academic's subject or professional discipline, to assist in continuing its development through scholarly research activity and the publication of the results of such research in scholarly journals.
- 5.2 There is a responsibility to respect and to acknowledge the scholarly work of academic colleagues.
- 5.3 There is a responsibility to students, to teach them effectively and to be available to them for guidance in their studies.
- 5.4 There is a responsibility to undertake such duties as are required in the government of the university and of professional bodies.
- 5.5 In speaking outside scholarly channels on matters which are not related to his or her professional expertise, the academic should be conscious of a responsibility to avoid misleading the public mind on the nature of his or her professional knowledge.
- 5.6 The academic must always respect the primacy of his or her professional duties.

## **6. The Defence of Academic freedom**

We believe that the principle of academic freedom outlined above is central to the concept of a free university in a free society. As such it is the proper concern, not just of university teachers and research workers, but also of those entrusted with the government of universities, as well as of state educational authorities.

Academic freedom has always been under threat from forces both within and without the universities. This is a true today as at any time in history. Accordingly,

we pledge ourselves to defend academic freedom in areas where it is attacked and to seek its extension into those areas where it does not fully exist. This we see as the duty of the international academic community.

*Siena, 21 may 1982.*