

# SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

*A Member of the Texas State University System*

**SRSU Policy:** Faculty Rights, Responsibilities, and Standards of Conduct

**SRSU Policy ID:** FH 2.07

**Policy Reviewed by:** Executive Vice President and Provost

**Approval Authority:** President of the University

**Approval Date:** July 25, 2023

**Next Review Date:** July 25, 2028

The Sul Ross State University policy concerning faculty rights, responsibilities, and standards of conduct conforms to the regulations set forth in *Rules and Regulations of the Texas State University System*.

## A. Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Sul Ross State University adheres to the guidelines set forth by the *Texas State University System Rules and Regulations* of the board of regents (Chapter V, Section 4.7) applying to the classroom, research and publication, licenses and permits, speaking as a citizen, partisan political activities, and non-competitive use of employee-owned courseware. In all areas of endeavor, Sul Ross State University respects the indisputable rights to freedom of expression for all scholars in the university. The university supports the search for knowledge and truth while recognizing that there is freedom to express opinions, as well. The degree to which one expresses opinions as a scholar, claiming sanctuary in the university, is a matter of academic responsibility. Overall, scholarly objectivity inside and outside the classroom is the practice.

The following statements provide additional clarification of the standards for academic freedom to which the faculty at Sul Ross State University are held:

1. "The faculty member is entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results in accordance with responsible academic and professional practices" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.72) and subject to the adequate performance of the faculty member's other academic duties.
2. "The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the faculty member's subject but should be judicious in the use of controversial material in the classroom and should introduce such material only as it has clear relationship to the subject field" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.71).
3. "The faculty member is a citizen, a member of a learned profession, and an employee of an educational component supported by the State. When the faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, the faculty member should be free from component censorship or discipline; but, the faculty member's special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and a faculty member of a state funded educational component, the faculty member should remember that the public may judge his or her profession and component by his or her utterance. Hence, the faculty member should at all times be accurate,

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exercise appropriate restraint, and . . . show respect for the opinions of others" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.74). At all times, the faculty member should make it plain that they are not a university representative.

4. The Board of Regents, Texas State University System, "recognizes and affirms a faculty member's right to participate in political activities as long as such political activities do not interfere with the discharge of the duties and responsibilities that a member of the faculty owes to the System or a Component or otherwise involve the System or a Component in partisan politics" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.75). With the interest of the system or Sul Ross University being given first consideration, a leave of absence without pay may, but need not, be granted to a member of the faculty. "If a member of the faculty, who has not been granted a leave of absence, wishes to engage in political activity that interferes with the discharge of the duties and responsibilities that are owed to the System or a Component, the faculty member should voluntarily terminate employment with the Component" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.75). If the faculty member's superior officer, such as the president or the board, "finds that the faculty member's political activity interferes with the discharge of the duties and responsibilities that are owed to the System or a Component, the President or the Board shall terminate such faculty member's employment by the Component" (*Rules and Regulations*, Section 4.75).
5. Faculty members have the responsibility to provide reasonable notice of their intention to interrupt or terminate institutional services.
6. Faculty have the right to their intellectual property as outlined in the SRSU *Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual*, [Chapter 7.04](#).

## B. Standards of Conduct

The *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System* prescribe general standards of conduct for all employees of the system. The standards, which are stated below, are found in Chapter V, section 2.4 and in Chapter VIII, Section 4.2 of the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*.

1. No employee shall "accept any gift, favor or service that might reasonably tend to influence the employee in the discharge of official duties" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(1)].
2. No employee shall use their "official position to secure special privileges or exemptions for the employee or others, except as may be otherwise provided by law" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(2)].
3. No employee shall "accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which might be reasonably expected to require or induce the employee to

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disclose confidential information acquired by reason of such employee's official position" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(3)].

4. No employee shall "disclose confidential information gained by reason of one's employment, or otherwise use such information for personal gain or benefit" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(4)].
5. No employee shall "transact any business in an official capacity with any business entity of which the employee is an officer, agent, or member or in which the employee owns a controlling interest unless the Board of Regents has reviewed the matter and determined no conflict of interest exists" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(5)].
6. No employee shall "make personal investments in any enterprise which could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the private interests of the employee and the public interests of his or her employer" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(6)].
7. No employee shall accept other employment which might "impair the employee's independence of judgment in the performance of public duties" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(3)].
8. No employee shall "receive any compensation for services as a state employee from any source other than the State of Texas, except as may be otherwise permitted by law" [Chapter VIII, Section 4.2(7)].
9. "No employee shall engage in any form of sexual harassment as defined by Paragraph 4.4 of Chapter VII of [the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*], or racial harassment as defined by Paragraph 4.3 of Chapter VII of [the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*]. As prescribed in Paragraph 4.43 of these *Rules and Regulations*, any employee who violates these rules prohibiting sexual and racial harassment shall be subject to discipline and/or dismissal from employment" (Chapter V, Section 2.41).