

## IV. FACULTY RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Faculty members enjoy a great measure of professional autonomy. Collectively, they have a primary role in deciding who will teach, what will be taught, what students will be expected to learn, and they play an important role in institutional governance. Individually, they have considerable freedom in pursuing their scholarly and educational work. Faculty members also have a number of rights and privileges, including the right to academic freedom and, for those who have earned it, the privilege of tenure. But faculty autonomy, rights, and

privileges are combined with professional responsibilities; and this combination of rights and responsibilities shapes to an important degree the roles of faculty members.

Rice University makes decisions concerning the appointments and promotions of faculty members, the assignment of teaching and other academic duties, the support and sponsorship of scholarly research, and the granting or withholding of benefits and the imposition of burdens without regard to political, social, or other views not directly related to academic responsibilities.

## A. Academic Freedom and Free Expression

*"Academic Freedom ... is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment, which does not tolerate laws that cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom ... The classroom is peculiarly the marketplace of ideas. The Nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth out of a multitude of tongues, [rather] than through any kind of authoritative selection."* Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* (1967)

The law recognizes in academic freedom a principal means of safeguarding free expression throughout society. In *Keyishian*, Justice Brennan put academic freedom at the very core of First Amendment protections. Two other justices, Felix Frankfurter in *Sweezy v. New Hampshire* (1957) and Lewis Powell in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), saw fit to incorporate into their opinions a still more expansive definition of academic freedom, the "Statement of Remonstrance" addressed to the government of South Africa by senior scholars at the Open Universities of Cape Town and

Witwaterstrand. "A university ceases to be true to its own nature," they wrote, "if it becomes the tool of Church or State or any sectional interest. A university is characterized by the spirit of free inquiry, its ideal being that of Socrates -- to follow the argument where it leads... . It is the business of a university to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment, and creation. It is an atmosphere in which there prevail the four essential freedoms of a university -- to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study."

Quite apart from its value to society at large, freedom of expression is the enabling precondition of the academic enterprise, for where people hesitate to speak their mind, critical thinking has no purchase and the university cannot even begin to carry out its mission. That is why academic freedom and its material complement, tenure, have become defining features of university life. But because free expression can be deeply disturbing, none of us, whether inside or outside of the academy, is immune to the temptation to suppress offensive speech by force, censorship, or intimidation. It is accordingly incumbent on each individual associated with the university -- whether as student, teacher, administrator or trustee -- to exercise the vigilance and self-restraint without which freedom of expression cannot flourish. In the university, even more than in democratic society at large, the principle of free thought must prevail, not just "free thought for those who agree with us," as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. warned in *U.S. v. Schwimmer* (1928), but "freedom for the thought we hate."

Liberating though its influence has been, academic freedom, like other freedoms in civil society, carries with it an implicit burden of self-restraint, not only in responding to the views of others, but also in

expressing one's own views. The American Association of University Professors, founded in 1915 specifically to cultivate and defend the rights of academic freedom, has consistently acknowledged the need for restraint. The most authoritative statement of the rights of academic freedom as they exist today is the AAUP's "1940 Statement of Principles." It defines three facets of academic freedom (freedom of inquiry, teaching, and extramural utterance) and explicitly calls attention to the limits of each:

*(a) Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.*

(b) Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

(c) College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be

accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

The ideal of freedom of expression can be a hard taskmaster, especially when we are deciding how to respond to expression that offends us. The burdens it imposes are most eloquently expressed in the *Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at Yale* (1975), a thoughtful examination of one university's mixed successes and failures during the campus disruptions of the 1960s and 70s, when controversial speakers were sometimes silenced by well-meaning protesters.

*If freedom of expression is to serve its purpose, and thus the purpose of the university, it should seek to enhance understanding. Shock, hurt, and anger are not consequences to be weighed lightly. No member of the community with a decent respect for others should use, or encourage others to use, slurs and epithets intended to discredit another's race, ethnic group, religion, or sex. [But] it may sometimes be necessary in a university for civility and mutual respect to be superseded by the need to guarantee free expression. The values superseded are nevertheless important, and every member of the university community should consider them in exercising the fundamental right to free expression.... [Still,] if the university's overriding commitment to free expression is to be sustained, secondary social and ethical responsibilities must be left to the informal processes of suasion, example, and argument.*

Tolerating offensive expression does not mean putting up with slander, defamation, "fighting words," or gratuitous personal insults. Neither does it mean abstention from judgment. What freedom of

expression requires is not passivity in the face of expressions that offend, but a readiness to debate openly differences of opinion in a spirit at once candid and civil. The best response to offensive speech is neither silence nor censorship, but more speech, preferably cast in the form of arguments exposing the inadequacies of that which offends. Of all the institutions of society, the university is the one most deeply committed to the sublimation of conflict into reasoned argumentation. Far from being a scene of indiscriminate toleration where "freedom of expression" degenerates into "anything goes," Rice University, like other universities, is properly a forum for judgment and mutual criticism, in which all opinions are entitled to a respectful hearing, none is exempt from criticism, and only those that earn acceptance on their intellectual merits remain in circulation.

The foregoing section, "Academic Freedom and Free Expression," was approved unanimously by Faculty Council of Rice University on April 27, 1999. Although it is not a university policy, it is intended to co-exist with all of Rice University's policies, including its policies on equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination, and with [Rice's Values Statement of May 2, 2025](#). For more details about academic freedom, see:

William Van Alstyne, "Academic Freedom and the First Amendment in the Supreme Court of the United States: An Unhurried Historical Review," in *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy: The 50th Anniversary of the 1940 Statement of Principles*, ed. W. Van Alstyne (Durham: Duke University School of Law, 1990).

"1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," in *American Association of University Professors, Policy Documents*

*and Reports, 1995 Edition* (Washington DC: AAUP, 1995).

- *Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at Yale*, [Chair, C. Vann Woodward] (New Haven: Yale University, 1975) and the *YALE UNDERGRADUATE REGULATIONS*.

Copies of the complete *Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at Yale* are available in the offices of the president, provost, and in the Woodson Research Center in Fondren Library.

## B. Tenure

Academic tenure protects faculty members from being dismissed for teaching, researching, or inquiring into areas that might be politically or commercially controversial. The process of exploring and expanding the frontiers of knowledge often challenges the established order. Tenure is valuable not merely as a protection for individual faculty members but also as an assurance to society that the pursuit of truth and knowledge commands the faculty's first priority. The privileges of tenure include: (a) continued employment as an associate professor or professor until voluntary retirement or resignation, with the possible exception of dismissal for cause or termination due to the discontinuation or reduction of a program, (b) equitable compensation and benefits, (c) continued institutional support for teaching and scholarship, and (d) continued involvement in the academic mission of the university.

Because tenure is a privilege with the purpose of protecting academic freedom, it is offered after extremely careful deliberation and only to those faculty members who have demonstrated an unusual capacity for a lifetime of scholarship, teaching, and service. Tenure does not protect demonstrated incompetence in teaching and research,

substantial and manifest neglect of duty, or serious misconduct. A tenured professor who faces such charges may be dismissed for cause through proceedings carefully crafted to assure academic due process. A tenured professor may also be dismissed because the university has in good faith decided to discontinue or reduce a program, department, or other segment of the university. The decision to discontinue or reduce a program will be implemented only after consideration of the educational, economic, and other aspects of the decision, and review by the Board of Trustees. An effort will be made to ease any dislocation experienced by the faculty members involved. See Policy 201: Faculty Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure.

Having tenure does not mean that a professor is free from review. Rice reviews all faculty members annually to consider salary adjustments. In addition, department chairs hold periodic performance reviews with all departmental faculty members to evaluate and encourage their professional growth according to a schedule and a procedure described in Policy 214: Faculty Performance Reviews. These routine professional reviews are distinct and separate from individualized disciplinary procedures that might lead to dismissal for cause.

### C. Professional Responsibilities and Duties

Research, teaching, and service are all essential obligations of Rice faculty members. Full time Rice University faculty members owe their primary professional allegiance to Rice University, and their primary commitment of time and energy to these goals. But because long-term success in teaching and continued effective service to Rice and other communities depend on intellectual vitality, scholarship is the foundation of academic life at Rice. Members of the Rice faculty are,

therefore, expected to engage in research, reflection, and publication or in other creative efforts that expand knowledge or enrich cultural life. These demanding scholarly and creative undertakings are fundamental to the educational work of the university -- not just to graduate but also to undergraduate education.

In the words of Edgar Odell Lovett, "the most distinguished teachers must take their part in undergraduate teaching, and their spirit should dominate it all." The faculty should, therefore, devote considerable time and thought to their teaching -- to keeping abreast of new scholarly work in their fields, to preparing carefully for their classes, and to being reasonably available to their students outside of class for advice, counseling, and instruction. They should also become familiar with academic regulations for students described in the *General Announcements* (especially "Faculty Grading Guidelines" and "Syllabus Standards Policy") and with the Honor System.

In addition to their scholarly research and teaching, faculty members are expected to serve their departments, schools, and the university. They have a primary responsibility to: (a) determine the curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, and other academic standards and processes, (b) establish the requirements for earning degrees, and (c) evaluate the appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty members. In these capacities they are making collective recommendations to the administration and governing boards on academic standards and policy and on faculty status. The faculty are also encouraged to take part in college life as associates and magisters (see Section III.F), to serve on departmental and university committees, to stand for election for Faculty Senate, to shoulder various administrative responsibilities by serving as directors of centers and institutes or as department chairs (see Policy

103: Policies Related to Department Chairs), and to serve the public through professional organizations and community outreach activities.

In fulfilling their obligations, faculty members are expected to have a substantial presence on campus during the academic year, beginning with freshman orientation and ending with commencement, which they are expected to attend. A member of the faculty with research projects or other commitments requiring a lengthy absence from the campus during the academic year should apply through her/his department chair to the president's office for a leave for the period in question. See Section VII.B below for guidelines on normal professional travel and Policy 206: Summer Recess for Faculty Members.

More generally, membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities. Faculty members should demonstrate ethical behavior in their professional dealings with students, colleagues, staff, and persons outside the university. As teachers, they should encourage the free pursuit of learning, holding to the best scholarly and ethical standards of their disciplines. Faculty members have obligations to their colleagues that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, they should respect the opinions of others and defend the free inquiry of associates. As members of an academic institution, faculty members should recognize that their paramount responsibilities are within the university and give due regard to these responsibilities in determining the level of activities that they can assume outside the university. Specific responsibilities differ across schools and departments, but should be based on a general understanding between the school dean or department chair and the faculty member. At times, a *conflict of commitment* may arise when a

faculty member undertakes external commitments that burden or interfere with their primary commitment to Rice University. For more information on what constitutes a conflict of commitment, see the relevant section included in [Policy 216: Conflict of Interest in Research and Scholarship](#).

## D. Faculty Responsibilities: The Honor Code, Syllabus Requirements, Creating New Courses, Advising, Student Privacy Rights, and Employing Students

### 1. Honor Code

Faculty members have a particular responsibility to support the university's Honor Code. That code provides a fair and university-sanctioned way to review claims of academic misconduct by students. If faculty members have evidence of a violation of the honor code, they should report the potential violation to the Honor Council as described on its website (<http://honor.rice.edu/>). The Honor Council's website provides a useful overview of the Honor Council's procedures, as well as faculty members' role in the process, both of which faculty should review and be familiar with. According to the Honor System Constitution, all faculty are responsible for communicating to their class the specific Honor Code policy for each assignment through the syllabus or on the assignment itself.

Please note that graduate student cases are governed by the [Graduate Academic Integrity System](#).

### 2. Syllabus Requirements

Faculty members and course instructors are required to provide a course syllabus to students on or before the first day of class. The syllabus should be uploaded into ESTHER, and may additionally be distributed in hard copy and/or on Canvas. For archiving purposes, updated versions of the course syllabus can be uploaded into ESTHER through the end of the semester. Each syllabus must include the following instructions:

- Instructor's name, office number, and e-mail address
- Office hours or a statement of either an "open-door" policy or hours by appointment
- Overall course objectives and expected learning outcomes
- Grade policies
- Absence policies
- List of required texts
- Special materials required for the class, if any
- Number of required examinations and papers
- Statement of expectations regarding course work and the Rice Honor Code
- A statement encouraging any student with a disability that requires accommodation to contact both the course instructor and Disability Support Services in the Allen Center
- A mental health statement that includes a link to a list of mental health resources compiled by the Wellbeing and Counseling Centers, and an encouragement to students to reach out to the Wellbeing and Counseling Centers to discuss mental health concerns
- It is permissible to include a statement indicating that the information contained in the course syllabus, other than the absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### 3. Creating New Courses

Changes in the procedures to create new courses were approved by Faculty Senate in November 2015 with the goal of enhancing faculty oversight of the curriculum.

## Creating a course:

For new courses that will be active for the Fall 2016 semester and beyond, and for reactivation of currently inactive courses, faculty will use the revised New Course Request Form and observe the following deadline for submitting forms to the appropriate Dean for signatures:

- For new courses to be offered in Fall semester, the deadline is March 1, with an extension to August 1 for visiting faculty and postdocs and new faculty hires teaching their first Rice courses in the fall.
- For Spring semester courses, the deadline is October 1.

New Procedures for creating or reactivating **undergraduate** courses now include:

- Increased participation of Directors of Undergraduate Studies and/or members of departmental curriculum committees in the course review process.
- Additional review by the appropriate School Course Review Committee (SCRC). Each school has its own SCRC composed of Directors of Undergraduate Studies (or other curricular representative chosen by each department and program) and the Dean of the school, *ex officio*.

NOTE: There is no SCRC review for graduate courses. The signatures and process for graduate courses remains unchanged.

New Course Request Forms and full information and instructions are available on the Office of the Registrar

webpage: <http://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/courseprocess/>.

## 4. Student Advising in Departments and Colleges

Faculty members are expected to advise Rice students (see [Rice Policy 220: Undergraduate Academic Advising Policy](#) and the associated [Campus Advising Procedures](#)). Faculty are organized

within their departments to assist undergraduate majors and graduate students in planning their courses of study and their subsequent careers. Those faculty who also serve as divisional advisors, associates, and magisters in the residential colleges help freshmen and sophomores choose courses and adjust to college life.

In certain cases, a faculty member may need specific information concerning advising questions, and can refer a student to the Office of Academic Advising (OAA), or may need help identifying students at risk. In such cases, the Office of Academic Advising's website (<https://oaa.rice.edu>) may be of help.

## 5. Student Privacy Rights

Faculty should also be aware that students have a clearly established right to privacy under the Federal Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (or Buckley amendment). The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) generally provides that the education records of students -- including grades, graded assignments or exams, records, and letters of recommendation -- may not be disclosed to third parties without the student's written consent. **For an undergraduate or graduate student, parents are considered to be "third parties" according to this law, and a faculty member would violate FERPA if he or she were to discuss the student's grades with the parents without the student's written consent.** If the faculty member or department chair feels the need to discuss a student's academic performance with the parents, the faculty member or the chair should first discuss it with the student and get the student's written consent.

Alternatively, the student may already have filed with the Office of the Registrar a consent allowing discussions with parents. The Office of the Registrar may, then, be consulted, but faculty members' assumption, until they have obtained or confirmed a student's

written consent, should be that they are not permitted to talk with parents about a student's education record. There are some exceptions to this rule, but a professor should assume no exception without discussion with a chair or dean or legal counsel.

Under FERPA, there is also a standard for disclosures of student education records within the institution. If a professor has a legitimate educational interest and needs to obtain protected information as part of his or her job responsibilities relating to that student, then the professor may have access to the information, but they may not further disclose it unless it is to someone else who also has a legitimate educational interest. More information on FERPA is available through the Registrar or at: <https://registrar.rice.edu/ferpa>.

## 6. Employing Students

Faculty members who need assistance with their teaching or research may be able to employ students. Faculty should see their departmental coordinators for information on work/study or other programs that support students while they work within the university. In some cases, there may be opportunities to give students course credit in place of monetary rewards for appropriate academic efforts.

## E. Faculty-Staff Relations

The Rice University staff includes literally hundreds of talented individuals. These women and men support the faculty through department, school, and university offices. They maintain and develop the library and a variety of laboratories; they schedule classes and keep academic records; they provide meals throughout the university; and they keep the campus safe and attractive. The staff works very

hard to serve the university community and to carry out policies they rarely establish. They deserve the respect, appreciation, and consideration of all members of the faculty.

## F. Grievance

Faculty grievance is a grievance against an action, judged by a faculty member to be unjust or unfair, that affects directly and adversely academic freedom, economic conditions, professional status, or some other circumstance of employment. Included among such grievances are disputes relating to the interpretation of an appointment letter, enforcement of university policies governing faculty conduct, and decisions such as assignment of academic duties. The most immediate appeal in case of a faculty grievance should be made to the appropriate university official. If this appeal fails to remedy the situation, then a further appeal should be directed to higher-level officials. Thus, if the department chair cannot resolve the dispute, the appeal should go to the appropriate dean, and, if that also fails, to the provost. If none of these appeals is successful, then a faculty member may file a grievance. Grievances are handled by the Appeals and Grievances Committee of the Faculty Senate, following the Faculty Senate Rules for Appeals and Grievances. This committee will hear two kinds of cases: appeals concerning whether proper university procedures have been followed (for example, in decisions on promotion and tenure) and grievances regarding any matter of concern (except decisions on promotion and tenure, which are subject only to procedural appeals). After hearing the case, the committee will submit a report with recommendations to the president with a copy to the speaker of the Faculty Senate and to the

appellant or grievant. If the grievance is not resolved by this process, the faculty member may request a formal hearing as outlined in Procedure for Investigating Accusations.

## G. Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Membership in the academic community imposes on faculty members, university officials, and students an obligation to respect the dignity of others, to acknowledge their right to express differing opinions, and to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off campus. It is therefore the policy of Rice University to provide an environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, disability or veteran status. Any discriminatory conduct seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust and respect that is essential to a healthy academic environment.

Furthermore, it is Rice University's policy to ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment. Members of the Rice faculty share with the administration responsibility for sustaining this policy and should work with the Office Equal Opportunity Services to ensure that all qualified individuals will have an equal opportunity to be considered for and appointed to faculty positions. The following policies describe Rice's equal opportunity guidelines in greater detail: Policy 815: Equal Employment Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy, and Policy 821: Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement for Use on Publications and Advertisements, and the September 18, 1997, Resolution of the Board of Governors: "The Rice University Commitment to Cultural Inclusiveness."

Sexual harassment, including acts of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, is prohibited by Rice University because they violate the values of our community and are unacceptable in our University community. Sexual harassment is a particular form of harassment that constitutes illegal employment discrimination or educational discrimination under Federal and State law. It encompasses unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual or gendered nature. It can include such behaviors as unwanted touching or unwelcome conduct (whether physical, verbal, written, or via technology) of a sexual or gendered nature. Sexual harassment occurs when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's education or employment; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for educational or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
- such conduct is reasonably regarded as offensive and has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or educational participation, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offense educational or working environment.

This policy applies to all members of the university community, who are encouraged to report promptly complaints about sexual harassment. Persons found to be in violation of this sexual harassment policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, written warning, demotion, transfer, suspension, or dismissal. See also the full text of [Rice Policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment](#).

## H. Mandatory Reporter Obligation

All faculty who receive information, directly or indirectly, regarding harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking by or against a University student or employee must

promptly report the incident to the Office of Equal Opportunity Services or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. Generally, reports should be made within 24 hours of receiving the information. When making a report, faculty and staff should communicate all relevant information, including whether the alleged complainant has expressed a desire for confidentiality.

This mandatory reporting obligation not only covers incidents that occur on campus, but also incidents that occur off-campus where there is a connection to the employment or educational activities of Rice University (e.g., sexual harassment during field work or a student organization trip, or at a work conference).

Faculty making such reports in good faith are protected from retaliation (See Policy 813: Whistleblower Protection and Non-Retaliation). Failure by faculty and staff to promptly comply with their mandatory reporting obligation may itself be a basis for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## I. Amorous Relationships

Sexual or romantic relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions have the potential for serious breaches of trust, may negatively impact the University environment when they are perceived to affect third parties, and have the potential for a conflict of interest, exploitation, favoritism, and an abuse of power. Often, such relationships are less consensual than the individuals believe. Moreover, circumstances may change, and conduct that was previously welcome may become unwelcome. Even when such a

relationship ends, there remains the risk of actual or perceived bias for or against the former romantic partner long after the end of the relationship.

Under Policy 829: Consensual or Romantic Relationships in the Educational or Workplace Environment, sexual or romantic relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions should generally be avoided and, in many circumstances, are strictly forbidden under this policy. Even in those situations where the relationships are not forbidden, the person in the position of greater authority or power must follow the requirements and processes set out in the policy to avoid any conflict of interest or disruption in the educational or workplace environment. Duty to disclose and disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy do not fall on the person in the position of lesser authority or power.

Because of undergraduates' potential vulnerability in such relationships, sexual or romantic relationships between teachers (as defined above in Section III of the Consensual or Romantic Relationships in the Educational or Workplace Environment Policy) and any undergraduate students are prohibited, regardless of current or future professional responsibility over such students.

A sexual or romantic relationship between a teacher and any graduate student over whom that teacher has either direct or indirect professional or supervisory responsibility is prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, individuals affiliated with or studying or working in the same department, program, center, institute, etc.

If a teacher had a previous sexual or romantic relationship with a student, the teacher must both recuse themselves from any professional or supervisory responsibility over that student and promptly notify their department chair, dean, or supervisor so that adequate alternative educational or supervisory arrangements can be made. Failure to disclose the relationship promptly is itself a violation of the Consensual or Romantic Relationships in the Educational or Workplace Environment Policy.

Sexual or romantic relationships between individuals in unequal positions where one individual has influence or authority over the other person, such as senior faculty and junior faculty, supervisors and individuals supervised by those supervisors, should generally be avoided. Should such a relationship arise or should such a relationship have occurred before the faculty or staff member had such influence or authority over the other person, both parties must recuse themselves from any professional or supervisory responsibility in regard to the other person and also notify their department chair, dean, or supervisor about the situation as soon as they become aware of the situation so that adequate alternative educational or supervisory arrangements can be made. Failure to disclose the relationship promptly is a violation of the Consensual or Romantic Relationships in the Educational or Workplace Environment Policy. (<https://policy.rice.edu/829>).

More information on the procedures for disclosing and investigating amorous relations are available in the Consensual or Romantic Relationships in the Educational or Workplace Environment Policy.

## J. Dismissal and Sanctions for Cause

Dismissal of faculty members with tenure or with a term appointment before the end of the term can occur only for cause. Adequate cause for dismissal must be related directly and substantially to the fitness of a faculty member in his/her professional capacity as teacher and scholar. A faculty member will be dismissed for cause only after he/she has had an opportunity for a formal hearing by a Faculty Hearing Panel convened for the express purpose of considering dismissal for cause. The procedure to be followed during dismissal hearings is established by the Faculty Senate. This procedure ensures an opportunity for a dignified, careful, and fair hearing, guaranteeing due process. Following the hearing, the panel will weigh the evidence and give the president a written report, containing its findings and recommendations. The final decision will be made by the president after reviewing the report. If he/she rejects the report, both the panel and the faculty member will have an opportunity for further comment before the case is transmitted to the board. Pending a final report by the panel, the administration can suspend the accused faculty member with full pay only if there is a threat of harm to persons or property. No severe sanction may be imposed on any faculty member without due process. Thus, if the administration believes that the behavior of a faculty member is grave enough to warrant strong punitive action, the case must be evaluated by a procedure identical to that used in investigating charges warranting dismissal. See Policy 201: Faculty Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure and Procedures for Investigating Accusations Warranting Severe Sanctions, Including Dismissal, Against Faculty Members.

## K. Public Affairs

### 1. Communications Channels

Rice University's Office of Public Affairs provides comprehensive communications and marketing strategies and services across the university. The office is responsible for news and media relations,

marketing, digital communications, creative services, government relations, community relations and multicultural community outreach. Media relations professionals work with faculty members to publicize their work, help handle media inquiries, and produce more than 400 news releases and media alerts a year. The marketing team provides strategic planning and execution for the university brand, including advertising, social media, video, and photography. The digital communications team is your one-stop shop for all Rice-branded web design and development, digital displays, email-based digital services, and accessibility/search engine optimization remediation.

Public Affairs also handles a spectrum of internal communications and produces Rice News, a weekly digital newsletter; INSIDE Rice, a weekly digital newsletter for faculty and staff; and Dateline Rice, a daily digital newsletter that compiles media mentions of Rice. The creative services team produces approximately 400 communications products a year, including more than 100 videos and the university's flagship magazines Rice Magazine and Rice Research Review (in collaboration with the Office of Research). It also provides design, photography, videography, writing and editing services for departments, institutions and centers across campus.

Finally, the office also houses the newly created, centralized campus and community engagement and conferences services division. This function is a key part of the university's ongoing efforts to enhance its connections and convening opportunities for the campus community and the broader Houston area as well as global audiences.

For more information, see the [Office of Public Affairs website](#).

Rice encourages faculty members to share their accomplishments with the public and provides media training to support that. Among the informational tools maintained by Public Affairs are:

- Rice website: RICE.EDU
- Rice News: NEWS.RICE.EDU
- Rice Magazine: MAGAZINE.RICE.EDU
- Dateline Rice: NEWS.RICE.EDU/DATELINE.RICE
- Rice brand standards: BRAND.RICE.EDU
- Rice web policy: BRAND.RICE.EDU/POLICIES/WEB
- Digital information accessibility policy (851): POLICY.RICE.EDU/851
- Rice social media guidelines: SOCIAL.RICE.EDU

Rice's main social media accounts are managed by Public Affairs. They are:

- Twitter: @RICEUNIVERSITY
- Instagram: @RICE.UNIVERSITY
- Facebook: RICE UNIVERSITY
- LinkedIn: RICE UNIVERSITY

Faculty members acting as individuals and not in the name of the university have the right to express their opinions and to hold meetings on campus as long as such activities do not violate the law, university functions are not disrupted, and access to any part of the campus is not impeded (see Policy 802: Use of University Buildings and Grounds for Campus Events). Any event sponsored or presented by faculty members or campus organizations must adhere to the procedures cited in this policy.

As a tax-exempt organization, Rice is also subject to laws concerning partisan political activities. Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code prohibits Rice from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public

office. Faculty members wishing to participate in the political process should do so only in their individual capacity and avoid the appearance of speaking or acting on Rice University's behalf (see [Policy 807: Partisan Political Activities](#)). Faculty members wishing to engage in lobbying should consult the Office of Public Affairs, President's Office, the Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Compliance, or the General Counsel for advice on these issues. Faculty Members may be limited by the Byrd Amendment to the 1990 Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which bars the use of federal funds to influence the awarding of specific federal grants, contracts, and loans. No person may lobby on Rice's behalf unless specifically authorized to do so by the Vice President for Public Affairs or the President.

Updated 7/16/2025