

Concordia University System Manual Statement on Academic Freedom

0. Academic Freedom

0.1. Higher Education Mission Statement

"The colleges, universities, and seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod exist to supply the higher education services needed to accomplish the mission of the church.

"Strongly committed to the Lutheran concept of vocation, synodical colleges and universities are liberal arts institutions which provide a Christ-centered spiritual and value-oriented environment for men and women who will be Christians in the church and in secular occupations.

"The objectives of the Synod include the recruitment and education of professional church workers. Therefore, central to the system of synodical higher education is the preparation of those who are called to serve through preaching, teaching and related vocations. Professional preparation for the pastoral ministry is the special assignment of the Synod's seminaries."

"Statement of Mission and Purpose"
as adopted by the 1986 LCMS Convention

0.2. Freedoms and Opportunities

1. Much of value can be learned from the concepts of academic freedom that are commonly found in American culture. However, academic freedom and its related responsibilities as recognized and practiced in the Concordias have their fundamental basis in the Christian identity of our institutions of higher education.
2. A Concordia campus views academic freedom and responsibility as an expression of the reality of the scriptural Lutheran faith. As agencies of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Concordias express the confessional significance of believing in Christ and his Scriptures, teaching the scriptural Lutheran faith, and confessing the Gospel to the world.
3. A Concordia campus is a Christian community, characterized by a high awareness of the reality and importance of collegial relationships and commitments.
4. A Concordia campus values the centrality of a Lutheran understanding of Law, Gospel, and the forgiveness of Christ for all. This reality permeates classrooms, administrative work, and human relations among all campus constituencies.
5. A Concordia campus provides opportunities for faculty to integrate faith, life, and learning. This includes opportunities to address issues in our contemporary environment from the standpoint of informed Lutheran scholarship.
6. A Concordia campus values the individuality of each faculty member and respects the right of faculty to hold diverse opinions. The right of persons to retain the convictions of their faith and conscience is respected, but the institution has specific expectations regarding the presentation of doctrinal teachings.

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- 7.** A Concordia campus expects its faculty to exhibit a strong commitment to scholarship and the professional expectations of the various academic disciplines. The pursuit of knowledge through intellectual inquiry and research is highly valued as a mark of institutional excellence.
- 8.** A Concordia campus respects the right and responsibility of faculty members to present the empirical and historical subject matter involved in their scholarly disciplines. Scholarly information related to the subject matter may be presented, provided the manner of presentation is within the parameters of the responsibilities and limitations listed below.

0.3. Responsibilities and Limitations

- 1.** A Concordia faculty member may present and discuss concepts that conflict with synodical teachings, including historical information and the results of research in a faculty member's discipline. The corresponding responsibilities are that the faculty member presents the material in a manner that encourages constructive insights and enhanced understanding of the issues, that he/she presents a fair and accurate description of the synodical position, and that he/she does not advocate a position contrary to that of the Synod.
- 2.** A Concordia faculty member acknowledges that he/she functions within a community that has multiple dimensions (e.g., campus, congregations, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the church-at-large, society). As a responsible colleague, the faculty member has a clear awareness of the position of respect and responsibility that those communities confer upon faculty members.
- 3.** A Concordia faculty member acknowledges that in certain situations he/she will voluntarily limit his/her expression of opinions and convictions. Such limitations involve a professional and personal judgment regarding the appropriateness of the message to the audience, so that the mission of the institution and of the church is supported rather than hindered.
- 4.** A Concordia faculty member affirms that expressions of academic freedom are primarily a matter of individual and professional responsibility.
- 5.** A Concordia faculty member will ordinarily confine his/her teaching and counseling of the institution's students to his/her areas of professional expertise.
- 6.** A Concordia faculty member, when engaged in publication and public presentation, will do so with the awareness that there is always a tacit association of the professor with the institution.
- 7.** A Concordia faculty member acknowledges that he/she is serving an institution that is an entity owned and operated by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and that the Synod expects its mission, values, and teachings to be clearly taught and reflected in its institutions.
- 8.** A Concordia faculty member will work peacefully under the Constitution, Bylaws, and policies of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, its Board for University Education, and the institution.

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9. A Concordia faculty member will not actively promote a doctrinal position that is in opposition to the doctrinal position of the LCMS. A Concordia faculty member accepts responsibility for becoming knowledgeable regarding the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the theological topics and issues related to his/her academic responsibilities.

0.4. Due Process

1. The fundamental purpose of due process regarding academic freedom responsibilities is to protect the academic freedom of the faculty member and to uphold the policies and positions of the institution. The attitude of all involved should be inclined to humility and forgiveness.
2. Each institution is responsible for maintaining clearly stated procedures for due process that include the process described in the 2004 LCMS *Handbook* §§3.8.3.8.5, 3.8.3.8.8, 3.8.3.8.9.

0.5. Implementation

Written acceptance of the preceding "Responsibilities and Limitations" is required for all faculty members. This applies to new and renewal contracts as well as offers of regular appointment. Faculty with tenure or open-ended contracts shall sign the above "Responsibilities and Limitations" one time.