

# STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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**Introduction:** Wake Forest University exists for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. The School of Divinity is committed to providing an environment that will encourage divinity students to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. The School of Divinity is also dedicated to the principles of honor, mutual respect, and trust among the faculty and students. The common observance of professional ethics is basic to study and research.

**Rights:** The minimal standards of academic freedom outlined below are essential to any community of scholars. Any violation of these standards may be grounds for a student to initiate the grievance process.

**Freedom of access to higher education:** The facilities and services of the University should be open to all of its enrolled students, and the University should use its influence to secure equal access for all students to public facilities in the local community.

**Classroom and research environment:** Student performance will be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

**Protection of freedom of expression:** Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study or research activity and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

**Protection against improper academic evaluation:** Students have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for the program in which they are enrolled.

**Protection against improper disclosure:** Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors is considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, always with the knowledge of consent of the student.

**Protection against harassment:** Students have protection through orderly procedures against physical (sexual, etc.) harassment and/or psychological abuse.

**Student records:** To minimize the risk of improper disclosure, access to academic and disciplinary records should be considered separately. Transcripts of academic records will contain only information about academic status. Information from disciplinary or counseling files will not be available to unauthorized persons on campus, or to any person off campus, without the written consent of the student involved, except where a judicial order of subpoena compels disclosure or health and safety emergency cases are involved. No records will be kept which reflect the political activities or beliefs of students. The dean of the School of Divinity should make provision for periodic review and possible destruction of non-current disciplinary records. Administrative staff

and faculty members should respect confidential information that they acquire about students.

**Freedom of association:** Students bring to the campus a variety of interests previously acquired and develop many new interests as members of an academic community. They are free to organize and join associations to promote common interests.

**Freedom of inquiry and expression:** Students and their organizations are free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately. They are free to support causes by orderly means that do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the University.

Students and their organizations will be allowed reasonable access to University facilities for academic purposes, organizational meetings, sponsored lectures, etc. Routine procedures required by the University for obtaining access to facilities are designed only to insure that there is orderly scheduling of a facility as well as adequate preparation for an event and that the occasion is conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community. Students and their organizations are allowed to invite and hear any person of their choosing. The University's control of campus facilities cannot be used as a device of censorship.

**Student participation in University government:** As constituents of an academic community, students are free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of University policy and on matters of general interest to the student body.

**Off-campus freedom of students:** If activities of students result in violation of law, University officials should be prepared to apprise students of sources of legal counsel and may offer other assistance. Students who violate the law may incur penalties prescribed by civil authorities. Only where the University's interest as a community is clearly involved should the special authority of the University be asserted to consider off-campus violations. The student who incidentally violates University regulations in the course of his or her off-campus activity is subject to no greater penalty than would normally be imposed for such infractions on campus.

**Responsibilities:** The faculty expects students to be mature and responsible members of the community. Infractions of academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating on examinations, misrepresentation of the work of other scholars, and falsification or fabrication of data in reporting one's own research. These infractions, as well as acts that disrupt the educational environment and any violations of local or federal law that occur on the University campus or during University sponsored activities, can be grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the University.