

Based upon concerns expressed by some faculty due to newspaper reports concerning the assault on academic freedom at several academic institutions, the Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee (TAFC) appointed a subcommittee to look into the issue of academic freedom and the electronic media. The members of the subcommittee were:

Nick Bircher (Medicine); Chris Bonneau (A&S); Barry Gold (Pharmacy); Michael Madison (Law); Marianne Novy (A&S); Russ Salter (Medicine); Michael Spring (Information Sciences) Annette Vee (A&S); Seth Weinberg (Dental Medicine); and Carey Balaban (Provost Office)

- The subcommittee met on three occasions to discuss whether current Pitt policies on academic freedom needed to be revised based upon the common usage of electronic media in teaching and scholarship. There was unanimous agreement that the existing policies on academic freedom are strong and do not need to be revised. The links to the different relevant sections on Academic Freedom were provided by Vice Provost Balaban:

(1) Use of University Affiliation or Titles: <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-04-02.html>

(2) Academic Freedom at the University of Pittsburgh: <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/af.html>, which includes <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/update.html> and <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/afstatement.html>.

(3) Computer access and use policy: <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/10/10-02-05.html>

(4) Policy on personal use of University resources: <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/05/05-08-01.html>

(5) Anti-harassment policy statement: http://www.provost.pitt.edu/information-on/antiharassment_statement.html and procedures <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html>

(6) Tenure Obligations and Responsibilities: <http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-02-03.html>

- The subcommittee suggested that it would be reassuring to the faculty if the Provost would make a statement to indicate that Pitt policy on academic freedom covers all mechanisms of communication used in teaching and scholarship, including electronic media.

- In order to help Pitt faculty understand the limits and responsibilities associated with academic freedom, it was proposed to develop a best practices website. This website would have to be generated in concert with the Provost's Office to ensure that we provide faculty with accurate information that is consistent with existing Pitt policies.

- It was suggested that a webinar or plenary session on the topic of Academic Freedom be developed.