

Resolution F18-A: Amendments to YCCD Board Policy Procedure 4-8065-Syllabus

Academic Freedom

Proposed: MJC Academic Senate Executive

- Whereas [Article 34 of the Yosemite Faculty Association Contract](#) stipulates that “academic freedom is essential to the pursuit of truth in a democratic society, and therefore, for the fulfillment of the educational mission of the District and the ability of faculty members to perform their professional duties. In addition, academic freedom ensures faculty members’ rights and obligations of professional autonomy and responsibility. (See [YCCD Board Policy 4030](#)). The District Also recognizes the academic freedom rights of our students” (See [YCCD Board Policy 5-8081](#))
- Whereas Article 34 of the Yosemite Faculty Association Contract further stipulates that “Faculty members have the principal right and responsibility to determine the methods of instruction, the planning and presentation of the course materials, and the fair and equitable methods of assessment in the assignments and in accordance with the approved curriculum and course outline of record and the educational mission of the District in accordance with state laws and regulations.”
- Whereas Article 34 of the Yosemite Faculty Association Contract further stipulates that “While faculty have the right to present ideas and conclusions, which they believe to be in accord with available evidence, they also have the responsibility to acknowledge the existence of different opinions and to respect the right of others to hold those views.”
- Whereas [YCCD Board Policy 5-8081](#) similarly defines the rights and freedoms of students when it states, among other things, the students’ “right to listen, the right to decide, the right to choose, the right to reject, the right to express and defend individual beliefs, and the educational purpose of the District is best served by this freedom of expression...Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or view in any course of study and to reserve judgement about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of study for which they are enrolled. Student performance will be evaluated on a broad academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matter unrelated to academic freedom.” (See also [Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students](#) (1967))
- Whereas Academic freedom of faculty is often, poorly understood. Academic freedom is not an excuse for incompetence in teaching or scholarship, irresponsible and indefensible positions, or arbitrary and capricious behavior.
- Whereas Academic freedom of students does not excuse them from their responsibility for “learning the content of study for which they are enrolled.”
- Therefore In order to promote a robust, collegial, and professional learning academic environment in which instructors and students fully understand the scope of academic freedom, the Modesto Junior College Academic Senate urges the YCCD Board of Trustees to amend the procedure of policy 4-8065 as follows (*highlight denotes new language*):

Yosemite Community College District faculty provide their students with a syllabus during the first week of classes.

The syllabus must include at minimum:

- *Current student learning outcomes for the course*
- *Grading scale and process*
- *Instructor contact information*
- *Office hours, if applicable*
- *Required and recommended text and course materials*
- **Academic Freedom Policy, (modeled after language from faculty and student Board Policies and YFA Faculty Statement on Professional Ethics)**
- *Classroom Policies*

Each college shall establish procedures to gather and archive every course syllabus each semester.