

## **STUDENT RIGHTS, FREEDOMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Introduction**

This section of the Student Handbook will familiarize you with student rights and freedoms at the University. All of these policies relate to students only. Faculty and staff should consult their own handbooks for similar policies.

Notre Dame de Namur University's mission statement affirms the dignity and potential of all members of our community. Toward this end we work to ensure that your educational experience is an enriching one.

### **General Statement**

As an institution rooted in the principles of Christianity, Notre Dame de Namur University seeks to maintain a campus environment that is conducive to spiritual, academic and personal development. To this end, the University seeks to strike a good balance between freedom of the individual student and the students responsibility to other University community members and to the University. In keeping with this commitment, Notre Dame de Namur University has established policies and regulations deemed necessary to achieve its goals as an institution of higher learning. The University will enforce these standards in order to protect its environment as well as the rights and property of its community members.

### **ACADEMIC FREEDOMS**

It is fundamental to the health of an academic institution and ultimately to the health of a society at large that individual persons and groups of persons exercise their responsibility and freedom to search for the truth and to speak the truth as it is discovered. In a collegial community, the corporate person of the University institution, and the persons of the faculty, staff, administration, and student body bear mutual responsibility to exercise professional competence and to extend to one another the trust and respect that fosters an environment for the exercise of academic freedom.

Students and student organizations of Notre Dame de Namur University may exercise all appropriate freedom to examine and to discuss questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately, subject to their concomitant responsibilities to the University community. However, the University also protects against individual or collective actions that might disrupt this institution, or be in conflict with its role, mission, and values, or obstruct or restrain members of the academic community.

Students at the University are free to take reasonable exceptions to the information or views offered in any course and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. Nevertheless, students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled and to adhere to the rules and norms of the community regarding time, place and manner of expression.

1. **In the Classroom:** The instructional staff, in the classroom and in conference, etc., should encourage relevant discussion, inquiry and expression at appropriate times and places. Student performance in coursework should be evaluated on an academic basis, not on their opinions or

conduct unrelated to the educational environment.

2. Evaluation of Academic Performance: Students shall have protection against prejudicial or capricious academic evaluation, if it violates the Equal Educational Opportunity policy. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance for each course in which they are enrolled. Students' rights shall include the following:

- The peaceful advocacy of any personal opinion that is an expression compatible with the rights of an individual living in a free society; even if it may contradict stated University principles. Students may represent without penalty any academic opinion in or out of class, but may be required to demonstrate knowledge of views contrary to their own in order to fulfill course requirements and to adhere to rules and norms regarding time, place and manner of expression.
- The student shall receive from his/ her instructor early in the period of the course an outline of the work and research expected for the course in which she/ he is enrolled and the dates on which such assignment(s) is due.
- Students are expected to attend classes for which they are registered. Policies on absences are at the discretion of the individual instructor and ordinarily will be announced during the first week of class.

3. Academic Forms

In order to ensure adequate communication among all affected parties, the Registrar's Office has forms available to document the following situations: Registration, Change of Major, Course Challenge, Independent Study, Petition for Academic Overload, Petition to Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee, Petition to Graduate Academic Standards Committee, Add/ Drop, Incomplete Grade, Leave of Absence and Withdrawal. All these forms require an advisor's signature.

### Access to Diverse Views: Overview

Recognized student organizations are free to invite and to hear speakers of their own choosing, and students or student organizations are free to present their views to the University community by means of graphic representation, and/or through peaceful demonstrations or public gatherings, subject only to their compliance of the policies of the University and adherence to applicable laws and norms regarding time, place and manner of expression.

In order to assure the right of free expression in the academic forum, to minimize conflicts between the exercise of that right and the rights of others in using University facilities, and to minimize possible interference with the responsibility of the University as an educational institution, the University restricts absolute freedom of expression by these policies:

- University Policy on Guest Speakers
- University Policy on Freedom of Expression
- University Policy on Freedom of Association

When an individual or group feels that their rights of free expression have been unfairly restricted or denied by administrative action, a complaint may be made by following the procedures outlined in the Student Grievance Policy.