

Policy Title	Academic Freedom
Policy Number:	ADM 1.07
Department:	SCHS
Functional Area:	Administration
Contributing Department	
Approved by:	RHEI Leadership Team
Effective Date:	8/1/2026
Version:	1
Status:	Approved
Manual	To be entered by Compliance360 System administrators or N/A if not in C360
Section	ADM 1

I. Mission, Vision and Values

This policy reflects our commitment to human dignity, integrity, compassion, stewardship, and service by guiding decisions and actions that uphold respect for all individuals and promote excellence in our work.

This policy aligns with our mission of extending the compassionate ministry of Jesus by improving the health and well-being of our communities and providing good help to those in need, especially the poor, dying, and underserved by ensuring that our practices support ethical, effective, and accountable service across all areas of the organization.

II. Policy

Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) recognizes and supports the principle of academic freedom, by which each faculty and staff member has the right to teach, conduct research, and publish material relevant to that faculty member's discipline, even when such material is controversial. Faculty of this College are responsible for complying with the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as interpreted by Bon Secours Mercy Health.

III. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define academic freedom in the higher education setting as it pertains to Southside College of Health Sciences.

IV. Scope

This policy applies to all associates of SCHS as defined.

V. Policy Details

The College guarantees to its faculty and staff the same rights shared by all citizens, which include:

- The right to free expression
- The right to assemble
- The right to criticize and seek revision of the institution's regulations

At the same time, the faculty and staff should recognize an equally binding obligation to perform their academic duties responsibly and to comply with the internal regulations of the College and Bon Secours Mercy Health.

Each faculty and staff member is expected to recognize the right of free expression of other members of the College community; intolerance and personal abuse are unacceptable.

Faculty and staff shall not claim to be representing the College unless authorized to do so.

Southside College of Health Sciences endorses the nationally recognized definition of academic freedom from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP): The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Notes, as follows:

- (a) Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research, for pecuniary return, should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
- (b) Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial subject matter which has no relation to the subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing.
- (c) College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraints, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

VI. Definitions

None

VII. Attachments

N/A

VIII. Related Policies and Procedures

None

IX. Regulatory Notices

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Bon Secours Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS), a department owned and controlled by Bon Secours Mercy Health Petersburg, LLC, (d/b/a Southside Medical Center), and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

X. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Description	Supersedes, if applicable	Prepared By
1.0	8/1/2020	N/A	Initial Policy	N/A	VP, Chancellor, RHEI
1.1	8/1/2023	8/1/2026	Updated Template & Minor Revisions	1.0	CDDAA
1	3/15/2026	3/15/2029	Reviewed/Version Changed – BSMH Template Adopted	1.1	CDDAA

This policy/procedure/guideline is not intended to establish a standard of clinical or non-clinical care or practice. Rather, this policy/procedure/guideline creates a general tool to help guide decision-making with the understanding that different action(s) may be necessary in response to the totality of the circumstances presented.

Sites revised 05/06/2025- Bon Secours Mercy Health adopts the above policy, procedure, policy & procedure, guideline, manual / reference guide / instructions, or principle / standard / guidance document for all Bon Secours Mercy Health entities including, but not limited to, facilities doing business as Mercy Health – St. Vincent Medical Center, St. Vincent – St. Charles Hospital, St. Vincent – St. Anne Hospital, Mercy Health – Perrysburg Medical Center, Mercy Health – Tiffin Hospital, Mercy Health – Willard Hospital, Mercy Health – Defiance Hospital, Mercy Health Allen Hospital LLC, Mercy Health - Lorain Hospital, Mercy Health St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital, Mercy Health St. Joseph Warren Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital, Mercy Health - St. Rita's Medical Center, Mercy Health – Springfield Regional Medical Center, Mercy Health - Urbana Hospital, Mercy Health - Anderson Hospital, Mercy Health - Clermont Hospital, Mercy Health – Fairfield Hospital, Mercy Health - West Hospital, The Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health, Mercy Health – Kings Mills Hospital, LLC, Mercy Health - Lourdes Hospital LLC, Mercy Health – Marcum and Wallace Hospital, Chesapeake Hospital Corporation DBA Rappahannock General, Maryview Hospital, Bon Secours Richmond Community, Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center, Bon Secours – St. Mary's Hospital, Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center, Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital, Bon Secours - Southside Medical Center, Bon Secours Mercy Health Franklin, LLC, Southern Virginia Medical Center, and Bon Secours Harbour View Medical Center. This also may apply to Bon Secours Mercy Health Medical Group LLC and its medical group affiliates.