CHAPTER TWO
Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 RIGHTS

Academic Freedom. Faculty members have the right to academic freedom and are expected to seek and to speak the truth as they perceive it on the basis of expertise and research in their discipline. Academic freedom is this right for faculty members to teach, research, create and perform about their knowledge and understanding in their discipline without institutional restraint or censure. This freedom persists even when faculty members hold a minority view within their discipline, and/or when others in and beyond the institution find these views contrary or objectionable. The right of academic freedom applies to all faculty members, including non-tenure track faculty members. A faculty member should recognize that the right of academic freedom is enjoyed by all members of the academic community. She or he should be prepared at all times to support actively the right of the individual to freedom of research and communication.

Tenure. Tenure is a protection of academic freedom. This status is awarded to a junior tenure-track faculty member after serving a successful probationary period that is typically six years, to a senior faculty member with previously demonstrated academic excellence who maintains excellence for a shorter probationary period, or to a senior faculty member of outstanding excellence or who is assuming a senior administrative position at the time of appointment. Additional information about tenure is found in Chapter 3 [link].

Freedom as a Citizen. When faculty members communicate as citizens, they operate independently of the University, and so are not subject to institutional discipline or control. In this situation, faculty members have rights common to all citizens, including the rights to organize associations, join associations, participate in public meetings, run for and serve in government offices, demonstrate, picket, and voice their opinions. To exercise their rights as citizens, faculty members must also respect the University by not claiming institutional support or involvement, and by not using institutional resources [link to University policies about acceptable usage].

2.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Importance of Scholarship. Faculty members at the University of Tennessee pursue scholarship throughout the course of their academic careers. Junior faculty members on tenure-track appointments are expected to focus their scholarly activities on establishing a reputation as

1 While formal descriptions of “Academic Freedom” and “Tenure” are presented in Chapter 3, the descriptions of these two rights along with “Freedom as a Citizen” in Chapter 2 present their essence.
experts in their disciplines by constructing new knowledge and understanding that is presented in respected venues in a manner recognized by their discipline and the University. Senior faculty members, having established a recognized expertise, build an even greater contribution to the scholarship of their disciplines; contribute to the scholarship about improved learning and teaching; and/or contribute to the scholarship of improved outreach to K-12 education, applied research focused on the needs of the community, and applied service to benefit the community.

Successful faculty members maintain disciplinary expertise even when pursuing scholarship in learning/teaching and outreach.

While the responsibilities of a faculty member are divided among research, teaching, and service, these arenas are not isolated, particularly at an institution such as the University of Tennessee, which is both a land-grant and research university for the state. For example, faculty members might involve undergraduate students in research or involve the greater community through outreach in basic and applied research. Each faculty member makes a distinct contribution to the University that is in accordance with her/his terms of appointment, departmental bylaws, discipline and rank. Specific responsibilities in each of the three areas described below are evaluated and modified as appropriate annually:

**Teaching.** Faculty members are responsible for teaching effectively by employing useful methods and approaches that facilitate student learning. Faculty members design courses to achieve clearly defined learning objectives with appropriate evaluation tools and teaching methods. Advising undergraduate and graduate students concerning courses, curricula, and professional opportunities beyond the degree is also important. Faculty members may educate students through distance learning including off-campus settings. Faculty members may pursue the scholarship of education, so as to improve teaching of faculty members and other educators, such as primary and secondary teachers, or Extension agents. Other faculty members through outreach instruct non-traditional audiences in off-campus settings to improve professional expertise and public understanding.

**Research/ Scholarship/ Creative Activity.** Faculty members make intellectual and creative contributions through the scholarship of discovery and application, both within and across disciplines. Faculty disseminate their scholarly work through venues respected in their disciplines and beyond academia, secure funding where appropriate for their scholarly endeavors through organizations and disciplinary opportunities, and mentor undergraduate and graduate students in the research experience. Some faculty members pursue the scholarship of discovery by creating new knowledge and skills. Some faculty members pursue the scholarship of application, which typically involves outreach to the community to co-develop successful practices to address problems to benefit individuals and organizations.

**Service.** Faculty members should participate in department, college and university governance. Faculty members serve their disciplines by providing leadership in appropriate public, private, professional and governmental organizations. Faculty members benefit the community beyond
the institution by lending their professional expertise to aid or lead organizations that create
beneficial linkages between the University and the community.

Professional Conduct. Within the University, faculty members treat colleagues, staff, and
students with respect and fairness. They listen to the views of others, work constructively as
members of the diverse academic community, and safeguard the recognition of achievements of
others, including those in subordinate positions. Faculty honesty in financial and personnel
matters is expected. Beyond the University, individual faculty members are representatives to the
wider community, which they treat with respect and fairness. [link to HR Policy 580]