

University-Wide Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

The central functions of an academic community are learning, teaching, research and scholarship. By accepting membership in the University, an individual joins a community ideally characterized by free expression, free inquiry, intellectual honesty, respect for the dignity of others and openness to

constructive change. At Soka University of America the rights and responsibilities exercised within the community are compatible with these qualities.

The rights of members of the University are not fundamentally different from those of other members of society. The University, however, has a special autonomy, and reasoned dissent plays

a particularly vital part in its existence. All members of the University have the right to press for action on matters of concern by any appropriate means. Soka University of America affirms, assures and protects the rights of its members to organize and join political associations, convene and conduct public meetings, publicly demonstrate and picket in orderly fashion, and advocate and publicize opinion by print, sign and voice.

The University places special emphasis, as well, upon certain values which are essential to its nature as an academic community. Among these are freedom of speech and academic freedom, freedom from personal force and violence and freedom of movement. Interference with any of these freedoms is regarded as a serious violation of the personal rights upon which the community is based. Furthermore, although the administrative process and activities of the University are not ends in themselves, such functions are vital to the orderly pursuit of the work of all members of the University. Therefore, interference with members of the University in performance of their normal duties and activities is regarded as unacceptable obstruction of the essential processes of the University. Theft or willful destruction of property of the University or its members is also considered an unacceptable violation of the rights of individuals or of the community as a whole.

Moreover, it is the responsibility of all members of the academic community to maintain an atmosphere in which violations of rights are unlikely to occur and to develop processes by which these rights are fully assured. In particular, it is the responsibility of officers of administration and instruction to be alert to the needs of the University community; to give full and fair hearing to reasoned expressions of grievances; and to respond promptly and in good faith to such expressions and to widely-expressed needs for change. In making decisions which concern the community as a whole or any part of the community, officers consult with those affected by the decisions. Failures to meet the responsibilities may be profoundly damaging to the life of the University. Therefore, Soka University of America has established orderly procedures consistent with imperatives of academic freedom to assess the policies and assure the responsibility of those whose decisions affect the life of the University.

No violation of the rights of members of the University, nor any failure to meet responsibilities, justifies any violation of the rights of members of the University. All members of the community, students and officers alike, are expected to uphold the rights and responsibilities expressed in this statement so that the University is characterized by mutual respect and trust.

Intense personal harassment of such a character as to amount to grave disrespect for the dignity of others is an unacceptable violation of the personal rights on which the University is based.