

History of Higher Education Outline for Higher Ed 101*

*Colleges and Universities may use all or part of this outline as long as credit is given to the Department of Information Services- Northeastern University.

This part takes approximately 20-25 minutes

- 1) We begin with the fact(s) that Higher Education began
 - a. in Bologna in the 1200's
 - b. in Paris in or around 1000
 - i. We emphasize that there is still debate over where it actually began in the form that we know now
 - ii. This debate, and others, is at the core of higher education- always a search for the 'truth'
- 2) Higher Education institutions often look like medieval cloisters
 - a. The reason for this is that the scholars, who were the keepers of knowledge, and often the only person in that vicinity who knew about a certain subject, had to be protected from the warring factions that (aside joke – unlike today <grin>) rampaging the countryside in Europe at that time. The scholar's role was to hand down the knowledge to the students, hence the lecture is often the standard pedagogical method worldwide.
 - b. Each institution often had just one scholar in one finite discipline. This continues to this day.
- 3) We emphasize that the reason we go through this quick history of higher education is because it is directly related to the three organizing themes in Academia: Shared Governance, Academic Freedom and Tenure and Promotion. These three themes make the organizational structure of higher education different than that of corporations and often antithetical to technology.
- 4) Shared Governance
 - a. In most universities, there is a sharing of decisions between the faculty, the administration and often the board of trustees. Faculty are involved in searches for not only other faculty but also for deans, vice-presidents and for the president as well.
 - b. Think of shared governance as a form of check and balance. While a university, like a corporation, has to make money, it also is responsible for educating the next generation, for research and for economic development. Shared governance serves to keep the balance between the pursuit of the academic and the tendency, especially in these times of increasing costs, to yield to market trends.

5) Academic Freedom

- a. We refer during our lecture to academic freedom as the ‘rallying cry’ of higher education. We read directly from the 1940 statement of the American Association of University Professors:

- i. 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments

“In 1940, following a series of joint conferences begun in 1934, representatives of the American Association of University Professors and of the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities) agreed upon a restatement of principles set forth in the 1925 Conference Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

The 1940 Statement is printed below, followed by Interpretive Comments as developed by representatives of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges in 1969. The governing bodies of the two associations, meeting respectively in November 1989 and January 1990, adopted several changes in language in order to remove gender-specific references from the original text.

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to ensure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher¹ or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.”

(<http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/1940stat.htm>)

- b. Following reading the statement, we explain that academic freedom and technology sometimes can seem as if they are at loggerheads. Technology works best when its components can be standardized. In colleges and universities, there is very little standardization on the academic side. Some professors prefer Macintoshes, and some disciplines such as architecture, require Apple computers. The right to teach as the professor sees his or her subject is core to governance and to academic freedom.

6) Tenure and Promotion

- a. The third theme is tenure and promotion and the slide we use to introduce is this called –Is Getting Tenure Contagious?
- b. We walk through the tenure process from how long it takes to get a terminal degree to how long (three, five or seven years) it takes for tenure.
- c. We emphasize that once a faculty member has achieved tenure, it is very difficult to either remove that person from the university and it is also very difficult to require faculty to perform in a specific way. An example of this

is at our own university where the student government wants all syllabi online and, while most will, there will be some who will refuse.

- d. We then tie tenure and promotion to shared governance and to academic freedom emphasizing two points:
 - i. That it is almost impossible to standardize technology equipment which makes the job of outfitting technology in a university far more complex than in a corporation.
 - ii. With shared governance, faculty expect consultation in the running of the university including having input into choosing technology that affects them. This may even include the brand of email system used.

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