

## **Delimitation of Academic Freedom for the Faculty and Staff of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University**

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (SDATS) values and promotes academic freedom to facilitate an optimum spiritual and intellectual environment in which excellence in teaching, rigorous academic research and vigorous scholarly dialogue, as well as the personal growth of its students, staff, and faculty, can take place. It also expects from its faculty a firm support of and commitment to the beliefs and lifestyle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Therefore as a faith-based confessional institution of higher learning, the SDATS hereby delimits the academic freedom that you as a faculty may exercise in your teaching and writing as well as in your personal life. What is stated below is not something new but descriptive of the practices and assumptions that the SDATS has had in place for engaging in all its search and hiring processes. The intent of this document therefore, is to make explicit what has been assumed hitherto by the administration and faculty of the SDATS whenever they look into the qualifications of a faculty, administrator, or staff, both present and future. Moreover, this document seeks to bring our current practices into conformity with the guidelines on academic freedom formulated by the Association of American University Professors (AAUP). According to the guidelines, which were drafted by the Association in 1940, the following item delimits academic freedom in confessional institutions of higher learning:

Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.<sup>1</sup>

Two points in particular are addressed by this document to bring the SDATS in compliance with the guidelines of academic freedom and to avoid receiving a censure from institutions like the AAUP, as such censures are taken very seriously by the academic community. The pertinent points are that (1) “limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing” and that (2) they must be presented to the faculty “at the time of the appointment.” In other words, full academic freedom at SDATS means that the delimitations have been presented “in writing at the time of the appointment” and that the faculty has made the choice to work and teach within those boundaries. So, the following are the limitations of academic freedom at the SDATS.

As a faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University:

1. You will hold the Bible as your only creed and rule of faith and practice.
2. You will support the “28 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists,” inclusive of the Preamble,<sup>2</sup> in all your teaching, both in and out of the classroom, in your publications and lifestyle. At the same time, this does not preclude you from discussing or even raising questions about the Beliefs responsibly and in the appropriate circles.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, you will support the GC documents “Methods of Bible Study”<sup>4</sup> and “Academic and Theological Freedom and Accountability.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure](http://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure).

<sup>2</sup> [www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf](http://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Keep in mind the following caveat from the AAUP on the exercise of academic freedom: “As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution” ([www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure](http://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure)).

<sup>4</sup> “Methods of Bible Study” document as voted by the General Conference Executive Committee at the Annual Council Session in 1986. [www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/documents/article/go/-/methods-of-bible-study/](http://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/documents/article/go/-/methods-of-bible-study/).

<sup>5</sup> [www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/-/theological-and-academic-freedom-and-accountability/](http://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/-/theological-and-academic-freedom-and-accountability/).

This includes more specifically the following:

3. You may not interpret the Bible employing methodologies that undermine the authority of the Bible as the Word of God, including historical-critical methodologies and presuppositions, either in your teaching, in or out of the classroom, or in your publications. This does not preclude you from discussing historical-critical methodologies in your teaching or publications, nor does it prohibit you from belonging to and actively participating in scholarly societies, conferences, or gatherings organized by critical scholars, or publishing in journals and books edited and refereed by such scholars. Neither does this delimitation preclude you from forming collegial relationships with such scholars for personal purposes or for scholarly collaboration.
4. You may not employ theories of macroevolution, including theistic evolution, to interpret the Bible and its creation account in your teaching, either in or out of the classroom, or in your publications. This does not preclude you from discussing or mentioning such ideas in your work or lectures.
5. You will support monogamous, heterosexual marriage as the divine pattern in all your teaching, both in and out of the classroom, and in your publications as well as in your private life. Monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the only divine plan for marriage. In addition, you will abide by the “Code of Ethics for Seventh-day Adventist Educators,”<sup>6</sup> and the “Pastoral Ethics.”<sup>7</sup>
6. You may not make personal attacks against a colleague’s character and competence at the SDATS in your teaching, either in or out of the classroom, or in your publications, as well as in your private conversations. This does not preclude discussing their ideas in the context of respect and collegiality.

I accept the above stated terms of engagement for my lifestyle and academic activities as long as I am employed by the SDATS at Andrews University.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>6</sup> The International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE), *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education* (Silver Spring, MD: Department of Education–Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2001), 91–93. Online: [http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/IBMTE\\_Handbook\\_2001.pdf](http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/IBMTE_Handbook_2001.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–90. Online: [http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/IBMTE\\_Handbook\\_2001.pdf](http://adventistaccreditingassociation.org/images/stories/IBMTE_Handbook_2001.pdf).