



MEMO

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TO Faculty Deans; Chairs and Directors; Graduate Program Chairs; Senate Graduate Studies Committee	TEL
FROM Jonathan C. Driver	
RE Protection of Academic Freedom – Graduate Students	
CC Vice President, Research; Vice President, Academic	
DATE March 5, 2007	
	TIME 1:06:55 PM

In 1998 the Vice-President, Academic sent a memo to Vice-Presidents and Deans concerning the University’s obligation to provide legal support and protection to graduate students whose academic freedom to conduct research was challenged by an agency external to the University. Following the provisions in SFUFA’s Framework Agreement for protection of faculty members, the following policy was proposed:

“Where a graduate student, who is a candidate for a degree, undertakes in good faith research approved by the University under faculty supervision, and where that individual’s academic freedom is challenged or compromised by an external body, the University has an obligation to provide legal advice, representation and/or indemnification to him/her in defending against those actions unless the matter relates to allegations of plagiarism or libel. This protection does not apply to legal action initiated by the graduate student.

Where there is a dispute between a graduate student and the University regarding the application of this policy it will be referred to a three-person ad hoc subcommittee of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee which includes at least one student. The decision of this subcommittee will be final.”

Please ensure that graduate students who are intending to conduct research that requires formal University approval (e.g. involving human subjects or animal subjects) have obtained the relevant approvals before beginning the research.