**FREEDOMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS**

It is for the general well-being of society that academic institutions have been established for the pursuit of truth, the transmission of knowledge, and public service. Those who charter institutions of higher education accept the need for autonomy with responsibility in academic matters. The degree of autonomy and the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the academic community are those that have been established by common agreement between academicians and their governing boards. While other elements of society may influence academic policy, only members of the governing boards and the academic profession have the responsibility for determining that which is appropriate to their mission. To relinquish this responsibility does not serve the public interest.

Academic freedom is vested in individual faculty members and students. The faculty member has a right to extend and disseminate knowledge in his/her area of competence in accordance with the adopted mission of his/her institution. By sustaining academic freedom for its members, an educational institution maintains its integrity and vitality. In return, the faculty must zealously guard the university's reputation for objectivity and honesty. The educator has an obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in fulfilling these special academic responsibilities.

Dental educators are an integral part of the dental profession and aspire to achieve the common good through the highest forms of communication and reason. All elements of the profession should exercise good judgment and pursue a course of cooperation in discharging their responsibilities to society.

Dental education institutions serve as bridges between fundamental understanding and dental health care for the American public. Like other components of the university, they must have autonomy with responsibility in academic matters. At the same time, their direct involvement in health care delivery introduces several important and unique external influences. For example, licensing and regulation of dental practitioners have been vested in authorities outside the university. Other constraints are imposed indirectly through external funding agencies.

Various external agencies seek to influence academic policy and to determine what may and may not be taught and what may and may not be investigated by academicians. Such actions abridge institutional freedom and limit the institutions' prerogative of determining how best to serve the public interest. Professional societies, consumer groups, licensing boards, and other governmental bodies as well as educators are the responsibility for representing the public interest and acting in a manner that will improve oral health. Together, these groups must encourage investigation and innovation and work through orderly processes to effect indicated changes which would enhance the quality of oral health care.

The AADS calls upon faculties, administrators, and governing boards of institutions of higher education to identify any internal pressures which may be brought to bear on dental education and to reaffirm by their pronouncements and their actions that such pressures will not be permitted to alter the fundamental mission of this segment of higher education. The principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are negotiable.

*Adopted by the House of Delegates, March 17, 1977.*