

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
ON CAMPUS**

WHEREAS, we, as representatives of the University community, are concerned about the strengthening forces outside and inside the University advocating restrictions on freedom of expression; we seek to protect and strengthen the University's reputation for addressing divisive issues in a principled way, in an environment that nurtures research and intellectual discourse; and we support the principles that enable the University to achieve its full purpose — the freedom to think, teach, listen, speak, speak out, learn, and prepare for global citizenship; and

WHEREAS, we respect and protect the need of all persons, including members of minority and historically marginalized groups, holders of unpopular viewpoints, and those subject to social injustice, to speak, hear, and be heard; and we recognize the importance of civility, diversity, sensitivity, and physical and psychological safety, as well as respectful listening; and

WHEREAS, rights of expression on campus extend to members of the University community and to their invited guest speakers; the occurrence of non-official communication on campus by any individual or group does not imply an endorsement by the University and its community; and the University may always set greater protections for free expression than those prevailing outside; and

WHEREAS, the historical trend of expanding rights of expression beyond governmental units to other societal realms has only partly reached private universities, and in consequence these rights are open to ad-hoc interpretations and applications; we therefore seek to establish principles based not on a particular divisive incident but on a wider consideration of the character of our institution; these principles must guide rules for University life as well as their application in specific cases, and they establish a reference standard for balancing conflicting rights with each other, and with other compelling countervailing concerns; and

WHEREAS, we affirm our commitment to the Affirmative Statement regarding expressive activity in the preamble to the Rules of University Conduct, Section 440, and to the February 2, 2018 Resolution Concerning the Principle of Academic Freedom, which the Senate adopted to govern venues of teaching and learning, and which we now augment by addressing issues of freedom of expression in other University activities and venues; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the University includes its role as a forum to debate questions of concern to the whole university, including the nature of freedom of expression itself; and it is therefore our responsibility to establish a mechanism to discuss such issues publicly,

NOW, THEREFORE, we affirm that the First Amendment principles protecting and interpreting (as well as limiting) the rights of speech, assembly, and protest that govern the public sphere and public universities also apply, presumptively, in this University to similar activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, to foster vigorous discussions on issues of concern to the University community, including controversial topics, individuals, and events, the University Senate create and appoint a steering committee, composed of its major constituencies, with a substantial representation of students, and with the recommended administrative and financial support of the University, to organize town hall meetings to debate issues of special importance; and that such steering committee consider proposals for such meetings from campus groups, including those aggrieved by the inclusion or exclusion of a public speaker or event.

Proponents:

External Relations and Research Policy Committee
Student Affairs Committee