

Free Speech on Campus Resolution

Whereas, the Ohio Faculty Council firmly supports academic freedom and free speech on campus; and

Whereas, multiple events on university campuses, and especially, political speakers and demonstrators who have made visits to such campuses over the past several years, have raised questions about the status of free speech on American university campuses; and

Whereas, the free speech policy statement produced by the Committee for Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago has become a model for many universities' affirmation of free speech and academic freedom across the country since its publication in 2015; and

Whereas, the Chicago Statement¹ has been adopted or endorsed by a large number of faculty bodies and institutions across the United States including institution of higher education in Ohio; therefore

Be it resolved that the Ohio Faculty Council endorses the following statement on freedom of expression, adapted when italicized from the University of Chicago statement:

Because the Ohio Faculty Council is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. Except insofar as limitations on that freedom are necessary to the functioning of the University, [insert institution name] fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community to discuss any problem that presents itself.

Of course, the ideas of different members of the collegiate community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.

The institutions of the Ohio Faculty Council may restrict expression that: violates the law, falsely defames a specific individual, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or is otherwise directly incompatible with the University's functioning. The institutions of the Ohio Faculty Council should retain the commensurate right to regulate reasonably the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt any ordinary university

activities. But these regulations and exceptions cannot ever compromise each institution's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

As a corollary to the Ohio Faculty Council's commitment to protect and promote free expression, communities associated with institutions of the Ohio Faculty Council must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. Although members of the university communities are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campuses, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campuses, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, universities have a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.

Each member institution of the Ohio Faculty Council has and will continue endeavor to ensure the safety and security of its communities. This includes those invited guest speakers who have the right to express their views without obstruction or threats of harm regardless of whether or not their speech is perceived by some to be morally repugnant or socially harmful. Freedom of expression is at the heart of education and democracy and the Ohio Faculty Council is committed to the protection of this right in accordance with Constitutional law and its commitment to provide a high-quality education.

¹ For the full text of the Chicago Principles, please see the following:
: <https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/reports/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>