

1           **Resolution 2017-2018-6 Endorsement of University of Chicago Statement**  
2                                   **on Freedom of Expression**

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4   **Whereas**, the University of Central Florida firmly supports academic freedom and free speech on  
5 campus; and

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7   **Whereas**, multiple events on university campuses across the country over the past several years, but  
8 especially 2017, have raised questions about status of free speech on American university campuses;  
9 and

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11   **Whereas**, the free speech policy statement produced by the Committee for Freedom of Expression at  
12 the University of Chicago has become a model for university affirmations of free speech and academic  
13 freedom across the country since its publication in 2015; and

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15   **Whereas**, the Chicago Statement has been adopted or endorsed by a growing number of faculty bodies  
16 and institution across the United States; therefore

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18   **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Faculty Senate endorses the following statement on freedom of expression,  
19 adapted from the University of Chicago statement:

20   Because the University of Central Florida is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it  
21 guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write,  
22 listen, challenge, and learn. Except insofar as limitations on that freedom are necessary to the  
23 functioning of the University, the University of Central Florida fully respects and supports the freedom of  
24 all members of the University community to discuss any problem that presents itself.

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

32   The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that  
33 individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The University of Central Florida may  
34 restrict expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a  
35 genuine threat or harassment, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests,  
36 or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University. In addition, the  
37 University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not  
38 disrupt the ordinary activities of the University. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle  
39 of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner  
40 that is inconsistent with the University's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

41   The University of Central Florida's fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or  
42 deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most  
43 members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the

44 individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those  
45 judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by  
46 openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of  
47 the University community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible  
48 manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission.

49 As a corollary to the University of Central Florida's commitment to protect and promote free expression,  
50 members of the University community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression.  
51 Although members of the University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on  
52 campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they  
53 may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even  
54 loathe. To this end, the University has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless  
55 freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.

*Approved by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee on October 5, 2017.*