



# Faculty Senate

## Steering Committee

Agenda for meeting of Thursday, March 12, 2026, 3:00 pm

Location: In person in the Charge on Chamber, Student Union Room 340

*For those unable to make the in person meeting due to travel, distant locations, or health issues, there is a Zoom option:*

<https://ucf.zoom.us/j/94825335687?pwd=dgAWd6FaDT0XrN1gPlcKKBDGWi50UO.1>

Passcode: 404310

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call via Qualtrics
3. Approval of Minutes of February 5, 2026
4. Recognition of Guests
5. Announcements
6. Report of the Senate Chair
7. Report of the Provost
8. Unfinished Business
9. New Business
  - a) Nominating Committee Update: Bill Self, Chair of Nominating Committee
  - b) Discussion of Policy 4-403.5 Required Elements of the Course Syllabus: Tim Letzring, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
  - c) Collaboration and Engagement Committee Final Report: Stephen King, Chair of the Collaboration and Engagement Committee (materials forthcoming)
  - d) Senate Agenda for March 26
  - e) UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement Regarding Civil Discourse and Free Expression
10. Committee Reports
  - a) B&A committee, Jim Gallo, Steering liaison
  - b) IT committee, Crystal Maraj, Steering liaison
  - c) Personnel committee, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
  - d) Research Council, Linda Walters, Research Council chair
  - e) Undergraduate Council, Nicole Lapeyrouse, Steering liaison
  - f) Graduate Council, Reid Oetjen, Steering liaison
11. Other Business
12. Adjournment



# University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## University of Central Florida Draft Policy Submission Cover Memo Form

Policy No. and Title:

Initiating Authority:

Initiating Authority Approval Date:

Date of Submission for Review:

Submitted by:

Department:

New Policy

Existing Policy (5-year Review)

Existing Policy (Out of Cycle  
Review)

**Summary of Revisions:** (For a new policy, please provide a summary of the policy. For an existing policy, please provide a summary of the revisions made to the policy.)

**Stakeholders included in the Review Process:** (Provide a list of departments involved in the review/revision process.)

Stakeholder feedback must also be requested from the [Faculty Senate](#) and the [College Policy Liaisons](#). By checking the boxes below, you are confirming that feedback from these groups was requested, received, and considered in the draft policy.

College Policy Liaisons

Faculty Senate

**Regulatory Requirements** (if applicable): (Provide information on regulatory requirements pertaining to the policy, including specific statute or regulation number.)

**Presenters:** (Provide the name(s), position title(s), and email address(s) for all individuals who will be presenting the policy to the university's Policies and Procedures Committee.)



# Draft - Required Elements of the Course Syllabus

<b>Policy Number</b>	4-403.45
<b>Responsible Authority</b>	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
<b>Initiating Authority</b>	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
<b>Effective Date</b>	
<b>Date of Origin</b>	7/13/2005

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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An effective syllabus provides an overview of the purpose of a course, outlines course requirements, and defines expectations for student performance. Faculty members are responsible for developing course content and selecting pedagogical approaches for their courses. Leveraging this policy to develop them will provide a consistent approach for presenting essential information that supports learning, creates a centralized syllabus repository, and ensures that UCF complies with the standards set forth by the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\) Higher Learning Commission \(HLC\)](#) and other accrediting bodies.

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## POLICY STATEMENT

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All UCF instructors, regardless of course modality, must post their ~~official~~ syllabus for each course section ~~they teach to their published Webcourses~~ using the Simple Syllabus tool ~~located within Webcourses~~. ~~All syllabi must be publicly posted 45-days before the start of the semester in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.003. Individualized courses, such as directed individual studies, internships, thesis, dissertation hours, and performance, are exempt from this requirement and may use a learning contract in lieu of a syllabus. If these courses use a learning contract, by the first day of the session in which the course is taught. For GEP core courses, syllabi must be publicly posted 45-days before the full semester begins in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.003. The syllabus within the Simple Syllabus tool is the official UCF syllabus for grade appeals and other academic decisions. For courses using a contract in lieu of a syllabus, that contract must be completed within the first two weeks of the semester.~~

The university will maintain a centralized syllabus repository and ~~publicly post store~~ syllabi for

[a minimum of](#) five [academic](#) years. Departments are encouraged to hold regular discussions with all instructional personnel about policies relevant to their student populations to promote consistent communication of expectations to students and to support student and faculty success.

Each syllabus must include the sections outlined in detail below. Some of these sections are automatically populated in Simple Syllabus.

## GENERAL POLICY

### REQUIRED SYLLABUS CONTENT

#### 1. Information from the official Schedule of Classes

This information will be automatically imported into the syllabus from the UCF schedule of classes and will include the following:

- Course number, section, and name
- Semester and year
- Prerequisites, co-requisites, and any other enrollment requirements
- Meeting dates, times, and place(s) and/or description of course modality

#### 2. Instructor and/or GTA contact information; (DO NOT INCLUDE PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION IN SYLLABI)

- Name(s) of instructor(s) and Graduate Teaching Assistant(s) (GTA)
- UCF email addresses and/or Webcourses messaging
- Department location and university phone number, if applicable

#### 3. Explicit, public description of the course

- Information published in Undergraduate Catalog or Graduate Catalog. The official UCF catalog description will be automatically imported into the syllabus from the appropriate UCF catalog.

For GEP Core courses, the course description in UCF catalog and in syllabus must match the State Course Numbering System course description.

- Overview of the scope and purpose of the course

#### 4. Student learning outcomes

All course syllabi must articulate student learning outcomes that:

- are consistent with the scope and purpose of the course.
- tie as clearly as possible to course assignments and activities.
- reference or link with specific program, department, college, and/or accreditation

standards.

For GEP Core courses, the course student learning outcomes must match those in the State Course Numbering System.

## 5. ~~Sequence of course activity~~ Course Activities and Assigned Readings

### Required readings

- Sequence of course topics
- Due dates for major assignments and exams/assessments
- Method(s) for submitting assignments
- Date and format of final exam

Note: To promote student success, faculty members are encouraged to post at least one major course grade prior to the course withdrawal deadline.

## 6. Assessment and grading procedures

- Explanation of the grading scheme, weight of course assignments, projects, exams/quizzes, participation, and other components proportional to the overall grade for the class
- Course policies on attendance, make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, and missed assignments, including specific exam policies and procedures.
- Course policies on communication expectations, including preferred communication methods and time in which students can expect to receive a response.
- ~~Make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, including those regarding participation in university activities and religious holidays (See UCF Policy 4-401 and Regulation 5-020.)~~
- To ensure students have prompt feedback, and knowledge of their progress, faculty members must record all grades in Webcourses, and follow student data classification and security standards as addressed in UCF Policies 4-007 and 4-008 when distributing any grade-related information.

## 7. Course Materials and Resources

- Required and recommended instructional materials ~~the student must acquire.~~

In accordance with Florida BOG Regulation 8.003 and UCF Regulation 2.032, the syllabus submission process contains an attestation that the instructor of record, department, team of faculty, and/or lead faculty has or will review all required materials for appropriateness prior to assigning them to students.

- Specific information about items such as classroom response systems, online tools, and other items that are required or recommended
- Clear explanations of where and how students may access materials and resources provided by the university to all students

## 8. Core policy statements

Each syllabus will contain policies regarding each of the following topics. Essential policies and faculty resources are available in Webcourses. and will be automatically included in the syllabus template.

- Academic integrity statement.
- [Artificial Intelligence Use policy.](#)
- Statement regarding students needing accommodations.
- Statement regarding emergency procedures and campus safety.
  
- Statement regarding accommodations for active-duty military students
- Title IX Policy Statement
- Reporting an Incident
- ~~Make-up exam and assignment policies and procedures, including those policies regarding participation in university activities and religious holidays (See UCF Policy 4-401 and Regulation 5.020.)~~

## LEARNING CONTRACTS

For special courses, such as independent study, directed research, thesis or dissertation hours, the course instructor may elect to use a learning contract in lieu of a syllabus. If an instructor chooses this option, a written agreement that outlines the conditions, course requirements, and expectations must be created and signed by both the student and the faculty member by the second week of the semester in which the course is taught. A Restricted Registration Form may serve as this type of agreement if it contains the required elements listed below. When completed, that agreement must be submitted to the department or program and should be retained by the department or program for a minimum of five years. Faculty are not required to post these agreements to Webcourses.

A learning contract must include the name of the student, the name and number of the course, the semester offered, course learning outcomes, a list of assignments or activities to be completed during the semester, and the due dates for each assignment. For courses taken for a grade, the contract must clearly articulate what must be accomplished to obtain specific grades. For pass/fail courses, the contract must articulate what must be completed to earn a passing grade. Faculty should rely on the elements of these contracts when determining the final grade for students.

## CHANGES ~~IN COURSE ELEMENTS~~ TO COURSE SYLLABI

Faculty members must sometimes make changes to course elements such as schedules or assignment details in response to student needs as well as external events (e.g., severe weather or public health emergencies). Except for extreme circumstances, this policy discourages substantial changes to a class syllabus after ~~distribution~~ the first day of classes. Instructors of record should consult with their department chair, school director, or program coordinator before instituting any significant changes to the core elements of a course

syllabus so that the process can be appropriately documented, thereby mitigating the risk of student complaints or grade appeals.

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## CONTACTS

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| History: 4-403 7/13/2005; 4-403.1 2/16/2018; 4-403.2 5/30/2023; 4-403.3 4/5/2023; 4-403.4 6/6/2025

## **AGENDA ITEM:**

UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement Regarding Civil Discourse and Free Expression

### **Excerpts From the BOG Civil Discourse Final Report-2022 (whole report attached)** **University Leadership**

State university boards of trustees have the powers and duties necessary for each university's operation, management, and accountability. University civil discourse policies, programs, and initiatives should be viewed as strategic priorities by each board of trustees. The Board of Governors also believes that university faculty senates and student governments have a vital role and should participate early and often in the development, implementation, evaluation, and support of civil discourse programs and initiatives.

**Recommendation III. The Board of Governors recommends that the leadership of each university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government annually review and endorse the Board's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse.**

### **2025 UCF Faculty Senate Leadership Statement** *approved by the Steering Committee Feb 27, 2025:*

The University of Central Florida Faculty Senate Steering Committee has examined and reviewed civil discourse and freedom of expression within the Faculty Senate. We find that the Faculty Senate has continuously shown support for both civil discourse and freedom of expression as outlined in the University System Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression. The Faculty Senate, via resolution, has endorsed freedom of expression and civil discourse, and our support for both civil discourse and free expression will continue. A fundamental purpose of an institution of higher education is to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated. It is equally important not to stifle the dissemination of any ideas, even if other members of our community may find those ideas abhorrent.

*Stephen J. King, Ph.D.*  
*Chair, UCF Faculty Senate*

## **Appendix A: State University System of Florida Statement of Free Expression**

The State University System of Florida and its twelve public postsecondary institutions adopt this Statement on Free Expression to support and encourage full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on our respective campuses. The principles of freedom of speech and freedom of expression in the United States and Florida Constitutions, in addition to being legal rights, are an integral part of our three-part university mission to deliver a high quality academic experience for our students, engage in meaningful and productive research, and provide valuable public service for the benefit of our local communities and the state. The purpose of this Statement is to affirm our dedication to these principles and to seek our campus communities' commitment to maintaining our campuses as places where the open exchange of knowledge and ideas furthers our mission.

A fundamental purpose of an institution of higher education is to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated. Through this process, often referred to as the marketplace of ideas, individuals are free to express any ideas and opinions they wish, even if others may disagree with them or find those ideas and opinions to be offensive or otherwise antithetical to their own world view. The very process of debating divergent ideas and challenging others' opinions develops the intellectual skills necessary to respectfully argue through civil discourse. Development of such skills leads to personal and scholarly growth and is an essential component of the academic and research missions of each of our institutions.

It is equally important not to stifle the dissemination of any ideas, even if other members of our community may find those ideas abhorrent. Individuals wishing to express ideas with which others may disagree must be free to do so, without fear of being bullied, threatened or silenced. This does not mean that such ideas should go unchallenged, as that is part of the learning process. And though we believe all members of our campus communities have a role to play in promoting civility and mutual respect in that type of discourse, we must not let concerns over civility or respect be used as a reason to silence expression. We should empower and enable one another to speak and listen, rather than interfere with or silence the open expression of ideas.

Each member of our campus communities must also recognize that institutions may restrict expression that is unlawful, such as true threats or defamation. Because universities and colleges are first and foremost places where people go to engage in scholarly endeavors, it is necessary to the efficient and effective operations of each institution for there to be reasonable limitations on the time, place, and manner in which these rights are exercised. Each institution has adopted regulations that align with Florida's Campus Free Expression Act, section 1004.097, Florida Statutes, and with the United States and Florida Constitutions and the legal opinions interpreting those provisions. These limitations are narrowly drawn and content-neutral and serve to ensure that all members of our campus communities have an equal ability to express their ideas and opinions, while preserving campus order and security.

## **Appendix B:**

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

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

**Whereas**, multiple events on university campuses across the country over the past several years, but especially 2017, have raised questions about 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 university affirmations of free speech and academic freedom across the country since its publication in 2015; and

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

**Be it Resolved** that the Faculty Senate endorses the following statement on freedom of expression, adapted from the University of Chicago statement:

Because the University of Central Florida 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, the University of Central Florida 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 University of Central Florida 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 freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The University of Central Florida may restrict expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or that is otherwise directly incompatible

with the functioning of the University. In addition, the University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the University. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

The University of Central Florida's fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the University community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission.

As a corollary to the University of Central Florida's commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the University community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. Although members of the University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the University has 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.

*Approved by the Faculty Senate on October 19, 2017.*

# Civil Discourse Final Report

2022



# **CIVIL DISCOURSE INITIATIVES**

## **in the**

# **STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As members of many different societal groups and communities, people thrive on the personal interactions that occur every minute of every day. These ongoing interactions provide the foundation for learning, discovery, and growth in a university setting. More specifically, open-minded, tolerant, and respectful discourse among campus community members is critical to enabling students to learn and pursue their educational goals, faculty to effectively teach, and staff to pursue fulfilling work.

To promote civil discourse in the State University System, the Board of Governors, the presidents of Florida's twelve public universities, adopted a "Statement of Free Expression" in 2019. The Board's statement directly aligns with the well-established "Chicago Principles" that originated at the University of Chicago in 2014 to articulate the university's overarching commitment to free, robust, and uninhibited debate. Universities have widely adopted the Chicago Principles throughout the U.S.

The Board's Statement of Free Expression was endorsed by the twelve state universities as a vehicle to establish, maintain, and support a full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on all university campuses (See Appendix A). The statement reinforces that a critical purpose of a higher education institution is "to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions, and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated."

Board of Governors Chair Syd Kitson established the Board's Civil Discourse Initiative during his January 2021 "State of the System" address. Chair Kitson expressed concern regarding the steady decline in respectful discourse among those with differing viewpoints. He stated that the university setting could provide a foundation for understanding, learning, and growth in this area. Chair Kitson tasked Governor Tim Cerio to lead the initiative through the Strategic Planning Committee. Governor Cerio has stated that "Civil discourse, conducted civilly without fear of reprisal, is critical to free speech and ensuring academic and intellectual freedom – not just on our university campuses, but throughout our country."

The 2018 Legislature established the Campus Free Expression Act in section 1004.097, Florida Statutes. This statute provides direction and relevance to the Board's initiative as it codifies an individual's right to engage in free-speech activities at public higher education institutions. It also prohibits a public institution from shielding students, faculty, or staff from expressive activities while authorizing a public institution to create and enforce reasonable restrictions under specified conditions.

# CIVIL DISCOURSE: BEST PRACTICES

## The State University System

The state universities provided information on activities and initiatives promoting and supporting civil discourse in their campus communities. Best practices gleaned from a review of their submissions were highlighted within the following four categories.

1. Workshops & Professional Development: Presentations, lectures, workshops, or training designed to provide opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and campus partners to learn how to engage in and facilitate dialogue respectfully.
2. Speakers, Dialogue & Debate: Events or programs that provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in, observe, or facilitate conversations and encourage civil discourse.
3. Outreach (on and off-campus): Programs, workshops, and or campaigns with external partners help cultivate a campus culture of civil discourse.
4. Research and Academic Affairs: Research-based initiatives, web tools, and courses designed to provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in and learn about issues related to civil discourse in a formal setting.

Additionally, the committee researched established national programs addressing civil discourse and interviewed prominent authorities in this area. Interviews were conducted with Dr. Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence & Director, James Madison Program at Princeton University; Dr. Lynn Pasquerella, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities; Dr. Diana Hess, Dean, University of Wisconsin School of Education; Ms. Liz Joyner, Founder & C.E.O., the Village Square; Dr. Bill Mattox, Director, James Madison Institute's Marshall Center for Educational Options; Dr. Tim Chapin, Dean, FSU College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, and Dr. Jonathan Haidt, founder of the Heterodox Academy.

## National Models

A review of the national postsecondary system and institutional civil discourse programs identified a number of highly regarded initiatives and strategies that promote and support civil discourse. Examples include the following.

- The Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Brigham Young University: The Center's primary focus is conflict resolution. Through mediation, arbitration, training workshops, research, conferences, academic courses, and consultations, the Center assists both the university and the community in building skills and promoting understanding of peace, negotiation, communication, and conflict resolution.
- Heterodox Academy: Heterodox Academy is a nonpartisan international collaborative of professors, administrators, and students committed to enhancing the quality of research and education by promoting open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in institutions of higher learning. The

Heterodox Academy was founded in 2015 by scholar Jonathan Haidt. He was prompted by his views on the negative impact that the lack of ideological diversity has had on the quality of research within the Academy.

The Academy collaboratively engages with universities throughout the U.S. to promote rigorous, open, and responsible interactions across lines of difference as essential to separating good ideas from bad and making good ideas better. Heterodox scholars view the university as a place of collaborative truth-seeking, where diverse scholars and students approach problems and questions from different points of view in pursuit of knowledge, discovery, and growth.

- The Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, Kansas State University: The Institute pursues theories and practice in civic discourse that are identified to advance improvements in all campus and community interactions. The Institute supports public conversation to elevate specific qualities of civic discourse, including inclusiveness, equality, reciprocity, reflection, reason-giving, and shared decision-making. The Institute offers certificates and degrees through the university's communication studies department; and offers workshops, facilitator training, and research opportunities through the Kansas Civic Life Project.
- The James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions: The James Madison Program is a scholarly institute within the Department of Politics at Princeton University and is dedicated to exploring enduring questions of American constitutional law and Western political thought. The James Madison Program was founded in 2000 by Dr. Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, and follows the University of Chicago's principles on freedom of expression.

The James Madison Program promotes teaching and scholarship in constitutional law and political thought and provides a forum for free expression and robust civil dialogue and debate. The Program hosts visiting postdoctoral and undergraduate fellows and offers various activities, courses, summer programs, and other related activities promoting free expression.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

All 12 universities in the State University System have voiced a commitment to civil discourse and have provided numerous examples of programs and policies to establish, maintain, and support civil discourse throughout their living, learning, and working environment.

In recent years, there have been incidents of unacceptable behaviors and violations of codes of conduct and personnel policies relating to civil discourse by administrators, faculty, and students in the system. When such incidents occur, universities must respond to grievances with rapid response, thorough review, and adjudication according to their established policies. This process is most valuable when the conflict is resolved,

the impacted individuals are redressed, and all involved can learn and grow from the experience.

Moreover, programming restricting participation based on race or ethnicity, and in violation of existing university policies, has occurred with more frequency on Florida campuses. Although perhaps well-intentioned, often the effect of these programs is to further divide and disenfranchise, rather than promote understanding through civil discourse.

## The Board of Governors as Advocate

The Board of Governors, responsible for the management and operation of the State University System, is unequivocal in its support of civil discourse throughout its 12 campus communities. The Board believes that each campus community member has a unique and critical role in the adherence to civil discourse and the ongoing support of the establishment, maintenance, and evaluation of civil discourse initiatives.

The Board of Governors' "Statement of Free Expression" remains an integral part of the Board's three-pronged mission for state universities: to deliver a high-quality academic experience for students, to engage in meaningful and productive research, and to provide a valuable public service for the benefit of local communities, metropolitan regions, and the state.

- I. **The Board of Governors expects that the leadership at each university will operationalize the Board's commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse by promoting, supporting, and regularly evaluating adherence to the principles set forth in the Board's Statement of Free Expression and cultivating a culture of civil discourse in all campus interactions, including academic, administrative, extracurricular, and social dealings.**

## University Planning

In its 2025 Strategic Plan, the Board of Governors sets forth its mission for the State University System and further states that the state universities will "*support students' development of the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed for success in the global society and marketplace.*" The Board strongly believes that the state universities are well-positioned to provide the foundation for civil discourse learning, understanding, and growth for all campus community members.

Each university's Accountability Plan is an annual report of specific accountability measures and strategic plans.

- II. **The Board of Governors recommends that each university's Accountability Plan and Strategic Plan include a specific endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free Expression, as well as a clear expectation for open-minded and tolerant civil discourse throughout the campus community. The Board of Governors will include similar statements and principles in its Strategic Plan for the State University System.**

## **University Leadership**

State university boards of trustees have the powers and duties necessary for each university's operation, management, and accountability. University civil discourse policies, programs, and initiatives should be viewed as strategic priorities by each board of trustees. The Board of Governors also believes that university faculty senates and student governments have a vital role and should participate early and often in the development, implementation, evaluation, and support of civil discourse programs and initiatives.

- III. **The Board of Governors recommends that the leadership of each university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government annually review and endorse the Board's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse.**
- IV. **The Board of Governors recommends that each board of trustees conducts a thorough review of current student orientation programs, student codes of conduct, and employee policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression, the principles of free speech and civil discourse, and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.**

## **The University President**

The university president has primary responsibility for establishing the campus culture and setting the day-to-day living, learning, and working environment for all university community members. The president directs and monitors these efforts and is ultimately accountable for the civil discourse climate in the campus community.

Board of Governors Regulation 1.001, University Board of Trustees Powers and Duties, states that the annual evaluation for university presidents addresses "responsiveness to the Board of Governors' strategic goals and priorities."

- V. **Beginning in the 2022 presidential evaluation and contract renewal cycle, as a part of a president's evaluation, the Chair of the Board of Governors will consult with the board of trustees chair to review the university's campus free speech climate, including adherence to the principles set forth in the Board's Statement of Free Expression, the occurrence and the resolution of any issues related to the university's compliance with substantiated violations of section 1004.097, Florida Statutes, and the implementation of best practices promoting civil discourse.**

## **Academic, Student, and Administrative Affairs**

Board of Governors Regulation 1.001, University Boards of Trustees Powers & Duties, directs each board of trustees to adopt regulations or policies for a student code of conduct and establish a personnel program for all university employees. These policies are required to include standards for performance and conduct as well as disciplinary actions, complaints, appeals, and grievance procedures.

A university's personnel policies, orientation programs, and student code of conduct are critical to setting the tone for a climate of open-mindedness and tolerance for civil discourse. More specifically, all university campus areas, including classrooms, lecture halls, offices, and extracurricular, residential, and social locales, offer opportunities for learning, tolerance, and growth. Academic deans and directors, student affairs administrators, faculty, and students share responsibility for establishing and reinforcing tolerant, open-minded, and respectful discourse on a university campus.

- VI. **The Board of Governors recommends that university academic, student affairs, and administrative leaders review student orientation programming, student codes of conduct, and employee personnel policies and procedures to ensure that they contain clear and unambiguous support for the Board's Statement of Free Expression, and the principles of free speech and civil discourse, and that they are in compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.**

## **Best Practices for Civil Discourse**

- VII. **The Board of Governors recommends implementing the following best practices based on its review of university programs and initiatives that effectively promote and support civil discourse.**

- **Instill the importance of civil discourse, academic freedom, and free speech from day one**, utilizing student and employee orientation sessions, public assemblies, and official university documents and communications.
- **Schedule and host ongoing, campus-wide forums, dialogues, and debates** on various issues and perspectives to promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities.
- **Foster intellectual diversity** by encouraging university leadership to: (1) promote viewpoint diversity and open-minded discussion and debate, and (2) highlight and enforce policies that prohibit programming that excludes participation based on race or ethnicity.
- **Avoid disinvitations** by developing clear, viewpoint-neutral policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of campus speakers.
- **Provide targeted educational and professional development opportunities** for university administrative employees to reinforce free expression and open-minded debate norms.
- **Encourage faculty to establish and maintain a learning environment in their classrooms and offices that supports open dialogue and the free expression of all viewpoints and create processes to evaluate the strength of such environments.**

# **Appendix A**

## **State University System of Florida**

### **Statement of Free Expression**

**April 15, 2019**

The State University System of Florida and its twelve public postsecondary institutions adopt this Statement on Free Expression to support and encourage a full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on our respective campuses. The principles of freedom of speech and freedom of expression in the United States and Florida Constitutions, in addition to being legal rights, are an integral part of our three-part university mission to deliver a high-quality academic experience for our students, engage in meaningful and productive research, and provide valuable public service for the benefit of our local communities and the state. The purpose of this statement is to affirm our dedication to these principles and to seek our campus communities' commitment to maintaining our campuses as places where the open exchange of knowledge and ideas furthers our mission.

A fundamental purpose of an institution of higher education is to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions, and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated. Through this process, often referred to as the marketplace of ideas, individuals are free to express any ideas and opinions they wish, even if others may disagree with them or find those ideas and opinions to be offensive or otherwise antithetical to their own worldview. The very process of debating divergent ideas and challenging others' opinions develops the intellectual skills necessary to respectfully argue through civil discourse. Development of such skills leads to personal and scholarly growth and is an essential component of each of our institutions' academic and research missions.

It is equally important not to stifle the dissemination of any ideas, even if other members of our community may find those ideas abhorrent. Individuals wishing to express ideas with which others may disagree must be free to do so without fear of being bullied, threatened, or silenced. This does not mean that such ideas should go unchallenged, as that is part of the learning process. And though we believe all members of our campus communities have a role to play in promoting civility and mutual respect in that type of discourse, we must not let concerns over civility or respect be used as a reason to silence expression. We should empower and enable one another to speak and listen, rather than interfere with or silence the open expression of ideas.

Each member of our campus communities must also recognize that institutions may restrict unlawful expression, such as true threats or defamation. Because universities and colleges are first and foremost places where people go to engage in scholarly endeavors, it is necessary to the efficient and effective operations of each institution for there to be reasonable limitations on the time, place, and manner in which these rights are exercised. Each institution has adopted regulations that align with Florida's Campus

Free Expression Act, section 1004.097, Florida Statutes, and the United States and Florida Constitutions and the legal opinions interpreting those provisions. These limitations are narrowly drawn and content-neutral and serve to ensure that all members of our campus communities have an equal ability to express their ideas and opinions while preserving campus order and security.



# STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA





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