

# STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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## STATEMENT OF DEPAUW UNIVERSITY VALUES ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

DePauw's statement of Freedom of Expression values has been developed through community conversations and by using model statements from other universities as a guide <sup>1</sup>

### OUR MISSION AND TRANSCENDENT PRIORITIES

The DePauw University Mission is to develop leaders the world needs through an uncommon commitment to the liberal arts. Our mission rests on transcendent priorities that include:

- An unparalleled student experience that, in the spirit of the best liberal arts tradition, intentionally integrates students' academic and co-curricular learning.
- A strong community of educators with a deep commitment to teaching, scholarship, creative expression and co-curricular learning.
- A campus culture in which every student, regardless of identity, background or financial circumstances, thrives at DePauw and has full opportunity to participate in all aspects of a DePauw education.
- Freedom of Expression for all members of our campus community. Freedom of Expression refers to the right to hold opinions without interference and includes the "freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds...orally, in writing, print, art or through any media. Also, verbal and nonverbal behaviors that express a person's opinion, point of view or identity." ([International Standards on Freedom of Expression Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19](#))
- A resolute commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion made explicit to those whom we invite to join our community; we should not be afraid to publicly state that these are aspirational values – that part of our mission is to figure out together what it means to study, work and live in a diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

DePauw University is committed to critical inquiry and the discovery and dissemination of knowledge through teaching, scholarship, and service. DePauw's Mission to "develop leaders the world needs" through "rigorous intellectual engagement" requires an environment in which everyone feels safe to present their diverse ideas, even those that may seem offensive or repulsive. Members of our community examine these ideas through thoughtful discernment and informed criticism, allowing our campus community to flourish in a dynamic world. All members

of the DePauw community have a duty to support free expression at the university, to refrain from actions that reduce intellectual exchange and to guarantee the rights of others to question, defend, and express a wide variety of beliefs and ideas.

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The heart of a liberal arts education is the free exchange of ideas as we engage in teaching, learning, scholarship, creative expression and service. This approach means an educational environment where members of our community are able to express, explore, challenge, refute and debate ideas with those who hold different views than their own, or when those ideas make us uneasy, uncomfortable or even angry. The ideas of different members of the University community will often quite naturally conflict but it is not the role of the University to shield individuals from ideas or opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. Viewpoint diversity is essential for rigorous collective inquiry as scholars seek deeper understanding. It is for the individual members of the community, not for the institution, to make judgments for themselves and act on those judgments, not by seeking to suppress speech but by openly contesting ideas they oppose. Free speech may expose one to truths and untruths, but to make a commitment to connect one’s claims to reliable evidence is the basis of scholarship.

This commitment to free and open inquiry in all matters guarantees all members of the DePauw community the broadest latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn<sup>2</sup>. Except for any legal limits on disruptive speech as described below, DePauw fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community to discuss, without fear of retribution, inside of and outside of the classroom, any issue that presents itself.

The open and respectful exchange of ideas, where every member of our community, including guests, are afforded the opportunity to share their ideas, experiences, and perspective, is the best way for us to strengthen our values as a liberal arts university and to develop in our students the skills and fortitude to study, live and work in the inclusive community we desire to build for DePauw and for the world.

## COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We expect all members of the DePauw community to uphold these values of freedom of expression. Indeed, we are each encouraged to do so in partial fulfillment of our responsibility as an institution of higher learning to seek the truth wherever it may lead. We also expect all members of the DePauw community to consider the great responsibility to our residential community these values confer. We must be ever mindful of the powerful duality of words. They can wound as well as illuminate and teach. We do not have a speech code at DePauw and we have protections for academic freedom for [faculty](#) and [students](#). We hope members of our community will consider carefully the use of words that may harm others. Some words and phrases may be particularly offensive or painful to members of certain groups and for those who have been historically marginalized. All community members are expected to embrace responsibility for their expression; anonymity can be a detrimental barrier to free and open exchange. Legal protections for free expression, including confidentiality, may sometimes

supersede the values of civility and mutual respect and we encourage members of the community to consider these values carefully in exercising their fundamental right to free expression.

## IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A commitment to free expression must be built on a foundation of inclusion and equity. Diversity is a necessary condition for the coexistence of different ideas and perspectives, a necessary condition for every member of our community to feel welcomed, affirmed, and respected. In a community marked by true inclusion and equity, even fierce debates about a range of differences of opinions and perspectives are not experienced as personal attacks on one's very humanity and sense of well-being and belonging.

## RIGHTS OF NON-DISRUPTIVE PROTEST

Speakers are frequently invited to lecture at DePauw by members of our community, and we will not restrict such invitations to speak at DePauw because some members of our community disagree with a speaker's subject matter. During such lectures, we are committed to providing opportunities for members of the audience to have the chance to question, or even contest, the views of the speaker at the conclusion of the program.

On occasions when members of the DePauw community strongly disagree with the speech of others or view the expression of certain ideas as harmful, members of our community may respond by openly and vigorously contesting ideas expressed that they oppose with [non-disruptive counterspeech or protest](#). Our community members may not suppress speech, obstruct events, or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to engage in their own permitted acts of expression. We have a solemn responsibility to protect lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation and also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it. The broad protection of freedom of expression is particularly necessary for speakers and messages who represent a minority, opposition, or unpopular opinions or challenge authority and the status quo.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

Our commitment to freedom of expression does not mean the University must itself remain neutral to ideas or beliefs expressed. As an institution, we have a responsibility and the autonomy to [communicate our values and principles](#).

To sustain our values of freedom of expression, we must regularly review and renew our commitment to these principles with our faculty, staff, student body, and alumni through ongoing discussion. Resources that deepen our understanding of freedom of expression will enable each of us to develop tools for engaging in robust and challenging dialogue.

It is also important that those who seek to join our community, as students, scholars, and employees or as visitors to our campus, understand these values.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Guided by [University of Maryland's Statement of Free Speech Values](#), [University of Chicago's Chicago Principles](#), and [University of Richmond's Statement on Free Expression](#).

2. Adapted from the [Report from the Committee on Freedom of Expression](#) at the University of Chicago, 2014.



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**DePauwU**

RT [@DrLoriDePauwU](#): Congrats to DePauw's own [@BCCoachStevens](#) '99 and his Boston Celtics on advancing to the NBA Finals! <https://t.co/kYll8ChNIR>

3 HOURS AGO

 **SCHEDULE A VISIT**

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