



The Syracuse Statement on Free Expression and Free Inquiry

May 7, 2024

Syracuse University unequivocally affirms its commitment to free expression and free inquiry. Learning from a diversity of viewpoints, and from the rigorous deliberation, debate, and dissent that accompany them, is an essential ingredient of academic excellence. In service of its mission to produce, transmit, and advance knowledge and to foster creative expression, the University extends to all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. Freedom of expression is an indispensable component of an inclusive campus climate in which all community members are seen, heard, and valued.

The ideas of different members of the Syracuse University community will often and quite naturally conflict. We endorse principles of free expression and free inquiry not because every idea has equal merit. To the contrary, open deliberation allows individual community members to test and assess ideas every day, sorting good ideas from bad through research, expression, and inquiry. We embrace the guiding principle that the remedy for speech that some may find hurtful, offensive, or even hateful is not the disruption, obstruction, or suppression of the free speech of others, but rather more speech. Although members of the University community are free to criticize speakers who are invited to campus, they may not obstruct the freedom of others to hear or express views they reject or find offensive. The University has a responsibility to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it and to promote lively and fearless debate and deliberation.

We recognize freedom of expression is not without limits, and Syracuse University may restrict expression that is intended to incite violence, harass an individual based upon a protected characteristic, or which otherwise violates the law. The University may also reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression, for reasons unrelated to its content, to ensure it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the University. But these are narrow exceptions, and it is vitally important they be deployed in a manner that is consistent with Syracuse University's clear commitment to a free and open discussion of ideas.

Our commitment to free expression and inquiry has been critical to the University's history and success as an institution of higher learning. Since its founding in 1870, Syracuse University has consciously chosen to embrace a diverse community of scholars, steadily evolving while opening its doors to women, veterans, people from all nations, and people from varied religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Our diversity amplifies the importance of freedom of expression on campus. People from differing backgrounds bring a variety of experiences, perspectives, and cultures to the University community and as such, it is vital that the University nurtures an environment where all feel empowered to participate in the free exchange of ideas and opinions. We remain committed to fostering a culture of curiosity, tolerance, and respect, enriching our campus community by creating opportunities for understanding, learning, and growth.

Syracuse University is connected to a region with a rich history of diversity, inclusion, democracy, and human rights. Though we have incorporated this vibrant, multifaceted history into our vision and ethos, there have been moments and periods when we have fallen short of these ideals. In each of these cases, students, faculty, and staff have pushed the University to honor its commitments to all members of the campus community, and these individual and collective actions have strengthened the institution and moved us closer to our philosophical goals.

Free expression and academic freedom are essential to the mission of the university in equal measure. University research and teaching contribute to public well-being through the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. To perform these roles, universities require freedom in research and teaching for their faculty, defined here to include all those who are engaged in the research and

teaching mission of the university, including graduate students, post-docs, and adjunct and contingent faculty. Accordingly, the faculty may freely pursue any subject of intellectual or artistic inquiry within their subject expertise, broadly defined. While teaching, faculty are similarly free to determine the relevant content and manner of learning consistent with professional standards and delivery of assigned courses. Faculty also have a responsibility to strive to be accurate and to encourage their students to test ideas and express viewpoints relevant to course topics, even where they differ from those of the faculty. Students have a responsibility to develop and articulate such views using facts, research, and critical thinking. Academic freedom also protects faculty members' rights to speak publicly on matters within their scholarly expertise and on questions of institutional governance. The university affirms the principles of academic freedom and will publicly defend the faculty's right to pursue scholarly work without intimidation.

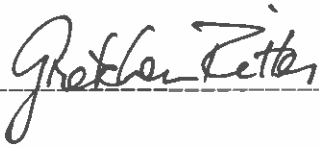
Except under the most extraordinary circumstances and with the sole purpose of protecting its mission of discovery, improvement and dissemination of knowledge, the University does not make institutional statements or pronouncements on current controversies. Nor does the University require students, faculty, or administrators to express a particular viewpoint on such matters. This commitment to institutional neutrality is meant to guarantee the free participation of all members of this scholarly community in public debates without fear of reprisal. At the same time, the University's commitment to institutional neutrality is not meant to restrict the free expression rights of individual members of the University community, but that expression cannot commit the University to positions that go beyond the University's stated academic mission or its protection.

Signatures of Syracuse Statement Working Group Members

Allen Groves, Co-Chair



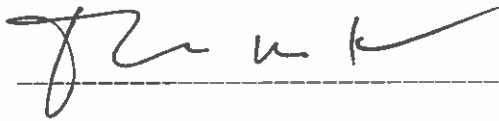
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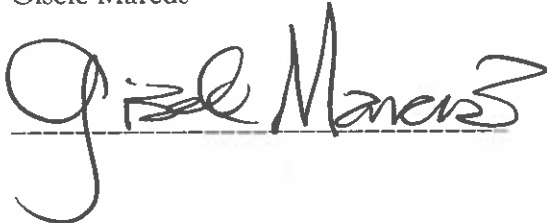
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