

Statement on Academic Freedom

The goal of the university is to seek, create and disseminate knowledge for the benefit of society and humanity. The protection of academic freedoms is a fundamental prerequisite for fulfilling those goals. These freedoms include freedom of research, freedom of education, and freedom of expression.

Freedom of research

Freedom of research refers to the researcher's obligation and privilege to engage in free and independent inquiry, guided by a commitment to the highest scholarly and disciplinary norms, standards and ethics within their respective research fields. The university shall ensure that such investigations are not inhibited solely because some find them controversial, offensive, immoral, or misguided.

Freedom of education

This principle extends to freedom of education. Both the educator and the student are bound by the education's purpose and framework and engage with the curriculum. But the pursuit of knowledge happens through openness to critique, respect for correctness, and pluralism, as well as for different disciplinary methods and epistemological traditions. The exposure to new ideas and methods, as well as interactions with other students, can fundamentally challenge established doctrines as well as political, philosophical, and religious beliefs. In fact, both teachers and students must expect free and critical thinking and debate to occur at the university. The foundation is trust in the educator's ability to teach based on their own academic and pedagogical choices in respect for academic values.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression including open critique of ideas and states of affairs is a fundamental principle both to liberal democracy and academia. Freedom of expressions extends to everyone at the university. Some limits are set by the law as well as the scholarly obligations of professionalism and codes of conduct. Employees are obliged to share research insights and results and are encouraged to participate in public debates. In doing so they are expected to maintain a culture of civility and informed discourse in their public appearances. However, the right to free expression cannot be subsumed to what is considered good conduct or polite behavior. Protest is viewed as a legitimate means of free expression, but the distinction between non-disruptive and disruptive protest is essential. Limiting the rights of others to engage in free expression, academic pursuits, and open discourse is a violation of the university's commitment to free expression.