



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

May 18, 2023

Resolution on Freedom of Expression

For decades, institutions of higher education have served as the foremost marketplaces of ideas, fostering open debate on this country's most difficult and controversial issues. As recent national and local disputes regarding free speech on campus have brought renewed scrutiny and concern, the Board of Higher Education seeks to pass this Resolution on Freedom of Expression that affirms and preserves the principles of free expression for the Utah System of Higher Education.

This resolution upholds the following principles and directives:

- Institutions should nurture a true marketplace of ideas and grant their community members broad latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn.
- Institutions should not shield individuals from ideas or opinions that they find unwelcome, which includes canceling speakers whose views are divisive or distressing. Instead, institutions should foster a culture that encourages respectful discussion and debate of controversial or unpopular viewpoints.
- All campus community members must commit to respecting opposing viewpoints and expressing contrary ideas with civility. While all members of our campus communities share the fundamental responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect should not justify silencing ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be.
- The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. Institutions may restrict expression in accordance with constitutionally established exceptions.
- Although individuals are free to criticize and contest viewpoints or speakers who are invited to express their views on our campuses, they may not interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject. Institutions are responsible not only to promote the freedom to debate and scrutinize all ideas but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.
- Institutions shall orient all incoming students on their rights to free expression, their responsibilities in fostering the marketplace of ideas, and the consequences of interfering with the rights of free expression on campus.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Board adopt the Resolution on Freedom of Expression.

Attachment

