

February 8-10, 2023

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WILLIAM & MARY
SUPPORT OF ADVANCING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

WHEREAS, the Council of Presidents of public colleges and universities in Virginia has acknowledged that the skills involved in engaging in civil discourse across differences are foundational in the participation of citizens in a healthy, pluralistic democracy;

WHEREAS, the Council of Presidents has further recognized the need for higher education institutions across America to lead the way in teaching the skills of genuine and respectful discussion;

WHEREAS, the Council of Presidents has emphasized the central role that free expression and academic freedom play in higher education's mission of learning, discovery and engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Presidents has collectively affirmed the robust statements and policies formulated through shared governance processes at our institutions that promote this constitutional freedom; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of these priorities, the Council of Presidents unanimously approved the following statement which was published in a December 2022 column written by four presidents, including William & Mary President Katherine Rowe;

As presidents of Virginia's public colleges and universities, we unequivocally support free expression and viewpoint diversity on our campuses. Free expression is the fundamental basis for both academic freedom and for effective teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom. Our member universities and colleges are bound to uphold the First Amendment. We are committed to promoting this constitutional freedom through robust statements and policies that are formulated through shared governance processes and through actions that reflect and reinforce this core foundation of education. We value a scholarly environment that is supported by a diversity of research and intellectual perspectives among our faculty and staff. We pledge to promote and uphold inclusivity, academic freedom, free expression, and an environment that promotes civil discourse across differences. We will protect these principles when others seek to restrict them.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the William & Mary Board of Visitors hereby affirms the statement of the Council of Presidents and offers the Board's commendation for its ongoing implementation on campus, for all times coming.