



Statement of Principles Regarding Expression on Campus

Utica University is a community committed to the pursuit of knowledge, meaningful academic experiences, and intellectual growth. In order to serve these goals, we recognize that we have a responsibility to create an inclusive community in which all of its members feel valued, as well an obligation to build a community that affirms, cherishes, and sustains freedom of expression.

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We acknowledge that this balance is sometimes difficult to maintain and that, even though there are some clear legal precedents regarding protected forms of expression, the boundaries of allowable expression are nonetheless sometimes unclear, situation-specific, and subject to contestation, particularly in moments of crisis. Further, we contend that it is frequently precisely those ideas that challenge, frustrate, trouble, and offend some members of the community that may most advance the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, the faculty and students, the administration and staff, and the Board of Trustees of the University have a duty both to maintain a system of tolerance and civility so that all of us feel empowered to participate in the sometimes-difficult discourse of an academic community, and to protect the precious heritage of freedom of thought and expression.

As an institution of higher education Utica University has a mission and a responsibility to encourage the widest possible discussion of ideas that bear on the development of our students and the enhancement of the larger society. In the classroom this principle is essential to the academic enterprise. Outside of the classroom, in both curricular and extracurricular venues, the goals of our purpose as an academic institution are best served by breadth of discussion and tolerance for

controversy and disagreement. We embrace the intellectual challenge of confronting difficult, complex, and controversial ideas. This must be balanced with the necessity of providing an environment that is free of harassment to members of our student body and our larger community, so that a sense of marginalization and powerlessness does not frustrate the very goals we pursue. As we recognize and seek to expand the rich diversity of our students and employees and the varying cultures, backgrounds, and experiences we bring to the University, we find it essential to articulate our commitment to creating, maintaining, and promoting an environment where our similarities and differences are respected and valued.

In all of our principles we should also be mindful of the fact that we are an academic community that exists for the specific purpose of developing, testing, and teaching advances of knowledge and understanding. While we must be tolerant of the purveyors of a wide array of views, the College has no good purpose to be served by the advancement of factually inaccurate information. Ideas, beliefs, values, and aesthetic judgments that are offered up to the College community, or that are current in the wider public discourse, will be scrutinized and judged by the College community according to the standards of evidence and reason, and may be subject to repudiation and rejection based on that evaluation.

To these ends Utica University urges community members to recognize the following principles:

We must encourage the widest possible discussion of ideas, with the understanding that the ideas with which some members of the University community disagree should not be silenced but are best met by other viewpoints and engaged argumentation;

Speech or other forms of expression intended to harass, threaten, cause fear of physical injury, or otherwise incite violence or other criminal action against an individual or group will not be tolerated and may be subject to sanction;


The University's mission is best served by proactively creating opportunities through which community members can engage more fully on topics of curricular and societal interest and are empowered to do so in forums and through processes that allow for discussion and debate.

We know that our understanding and use of these principles will necessarily evolve over time as our experiences as a community and as individuals change and grow. We put forth this Statement of Principles not as an end in itself, but as a dynamic document intended to reflect and affirm the values and principles most integral to who we are as an educational institution and the experiences we believe all of our members deserve to have.

Utica University, in adopting this Statement of Principles, also acknowledges its duty to take steps to protect the physical safety of our community. Nothing in this Statement shall serve to limit the college's ability to make decisions designed to meet that obligation.

Contact Us

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Video: Statement of Principles

Experience our Statement of Principles regarding Expression as read by members of the Utica College community.

