

Freedom of Expression at Washington and Lee University

Washington and Lee University values the central importance of freedom of expression in a vibrant and intellectually challenging university community. Our commitment to honor, civility, and the free exchange of ideas defines who we are as an educational institution. These commitments often mean discomfort, challenge, and vigorous debate about ideas and the implications of ongoing thought and interpretation. We are committed to the civil and unfettered exchange of ideas, confident that a vibrant intellectual community can withstand disagreement and debate and find common ground even where we disagree.

In December 2015, the University Committee on Inclusiveness and Campus Climate unanimously approved the University of Chicago 2015 "Statement on Freedom of Expression" and the AAC&U 2006 "Statement on Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility" as guiding documents for how we think about freedom of expression on our campus

- [University of Chicago Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression](#)
- [AAC&U Board of Directors' Statement on Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility](#)

In addition, the Faculty Handbook affirms and describes "Academic Freedom" as follows:

1. A member of the Faculty at Washington and Lee is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of his or her other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon a written understanding with the relevant Washington and Lee administrative offices.
2. Members of the Washington and Lee Faculty are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of the institution. When speaking or writing as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As persons of learning and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge the profession and the institution by their utterances. Hence at all times they should be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they do not speak for the institution.

