



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WORKING GROUP**

In December 2022, President Ed Seidel formed a Working Group made up of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and a trustee to develop recommendations on articulating, addressing and enhancing freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom and constructive dialogue at the University of Wyoming. Over the course of the Spring 2023 semester, the Working Group (chaired by Dr. Martha McCaughey and Dr. Nevin Aiken) met weekly to explore and develop a framework for addressing these critical issues in a manner inclusive of multiple perspectives represented at the University of Wyoming. This included significant engagement with diverse members of the University community as well as key external stakeholders from across the state of Wyoming.

Through these efforts, the Working Group sought to clearly define and articulate a set of core principles in the areas of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and constructive dialogue. Further, the Working Group also examined how these principles might be operationalized and implemented to meaningfully inform future policy and practice at UW. The Working Group also explored how to effectively communicate our commitment to these principles, policies and practices with both internal and external constituencies and position the University of Wyoming as a national leader on these issues.

In this Report, the Working Group offers recommendations to the President that identify opportunities for action and engagement on issues of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and constructive dialogue at the University of Wyoming. These include policies and initiatives designed to foster an institutional culture of free expression and respectful dialogue that encourages critical inquiry and welcomes the open exchange of ideas. UW already has a strong culture of free expression and respectful dialogue that reflects Wyoming's inspiring history of equality, independent thought, and civic connection. These recommendations, therefore, are intended as nutrients for an already fertile ground.

The Working Group recognizes that decisions about whether to carry out any given recommendation will be based on its relative feasibility as determined by the President, members of his Cabinet, and others he opts to consult. The Working Group Co-Chairs will assist the President with the evaluative and collaborative process required for the initial implementation of selected recommendations through December 2023.

The following recommendations are provided by the Working Group to President Seidel in four main categories:

- 1. *Articulating the Principles:*** The Working Group recommends adopting a "Statement of the University of Wyoming Principles" that both reflects the unique spirit of Wyoming and supports the University's academic mission of discovering and disseminating knowledge by articulating UW's core commitments in the areas of:
  - Institutional neutrality;
  - Intellectual freedom;
  - Academic freedom;
  - Freedom of expression; and
  - Civil discourse and constructive dialogue.
  
- 2. *Operationalizing the Principles:*** The Working Group recommends reviewing, revising, or adopting policies, procedures, and initiatives at UW so as to reflect, or avoid conflict with, the proposed University of Wyoming Principles, including but not limited to:
  - Academic hiring, dismissal, and other personnel policies;
  - Curriculum approval processes;
  - Student Code of Conduct;
  - Campus speakers/visitors/art/events policies; and
  - Procedures for making and responding to complaints.
  
- 3. *Communicating the Principles:*** The Working Group recommends pursuing multiple opportunities to communicate and offer information about the University of Wyoming Principles and related policies to both internal and external audiences, through:
  - Orientation, onboarding, and training materials for students and employees;
  - General education courses;
  - Institutional marketing efforts;
  - Careful framing of speakers and other events;
  - Materials helping students and employees understand their rights and responsibilities; and
  - Wayfinding guides to help students find supportive resources and appropriate methods for sharing concerns and complaints.
  
- 4. *Practicing the Principles:*** The Working Group recommends initiatives designed to cultivate a culture of civil discourse and constructive dialogue at UW, including:
  - Creating a focal point to coordinate, such as a nonpartisan Center for Free Expression and Respectful Dialogue, to implement university-wide initiatives;
  - Developing a "Wyoming Way" statement that encourages constructive dialogue and respect for open inquiry and free expression among all members of the UW community;
  - Providing skills-based training in civil discourse and constructive dialogue; and
  - Offering resources to members of the campus community on how to navigate difficult conversations on contentious issues inside and outside of the classroom.

## **ABOUT**

### **THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WORKING GROUP**

Drs. Martha McCaughey & Nevin Aiken,  
Co-Chairs of the Working Group  
June 7, 2023

### **Formation and Charge of the Working Group**

On November 8th, 2022, President Ed Seidel announced a plan to form a working group to “examine issues of freedom of expression at the University of Wyoming in order to articulate and refine our principles of freedom of expression and to find practical ways to operationalize respectful discourse on campus.” As he stated in that communication to the campus community:

In our current climate, genuine, respectful discourse from people with sometimes widely different viewpoints seems to be more difficult to achieve. This is a national and international problem. We are all following recent ugly events and attacks on political and other leaders, as well as on average citizens, verbal and physical, sometimes on the right or the left, sometimes racially motivated, sometimes without clear explanation. It is a growing problem of our age -- and may manifest itself even on our own campus.

In December 2022, President Seidel formed the “Freedom of Expression, Intellectual Freedom and Constructive Dialogue” Working Group. As President Seidel noted, this Working Group would seek to build on Wyoming’s long history of leadership in equality and principled discussion to position the University of Wyoming as a national leader on these critical issues by enhancing the university’s commitments to freedom of expression and respectful discourse and ensuring UW remained a space where a multitude of different ideas and perspectives could be expressed, explored, and debated.

As President Seidel stated in the Working Group’s charge, “I, with the help of Dr. Martha McCaughey and Dr. Nevin Aiken, would like to engage the University community and external constituencies in exploring and developing a framework for addressing critical issues in a civil manner that is inclusive of all perspectives.” The 18 members of the Working Group were selected by President Seidel to leverage the collective expertise and insights from a diverse membership of the university community. The members of the Working Group were charged with developing recommendations to address freedom of expression and intellectual freedom and to enhance civil discourse and constructive dialogue at UW.

### **Members of the Working Group**

The membership of the Working Group included representation from a diverse range of perspectives and positions from across the University community, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and a trustee.

The Working Group consisted of the following members:

Nevin Aiken (Co-Chair), Associate Professor, School of Politics, Public Affairs & International Studies  
Martha McCaughey (Co-Chair), Visiting Researcher, Criminal Justice & Sociology  
Vladimir Alvarado, Faculty Senator and Professor, Chemical Engineering  
Christi Boggs, Lecturer, LeaRN  
Bradley Bonner, UW Board of Trustees (Ex-Officio)  
Allison Brown, Student and President of Associated Students of UW  
Kevin Carman, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Casey Frome, Assistant Lecturer, Management & Marketing  
Zebadiah Hall, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Mollie Roselle Hand, Staff Senator and Manager, LeaRN Programs  
Stephen Feldman, Professor, College of Law  
Janice Grover, Associate Librarian, Libraries Education and Research Services  
Jennifer Harmon, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences  
Tammy Heise, Assistant Professor, Philosophy & Religious Studies  
Catherine Johnson, Assistant Lecturer, LeaRN  
Daniel Laughlin, Professor, Botany  
Ryan O'Neil, Dean of Students  
Gabe Saint, Student

### **Process and Procedure of the Working Group**

The Working Group started meeting weekly in January 2023, both in subcommittees and as a full group, to develop a framework of recommendations to meet the charge delivered by President Seidel. This work focused on four key areas:

1. Articulating a statement of core principles for the University of Wyoming outlining key institutional commitments in the areas of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, institutional neutrality, and constructive dialogue;
2. Examining how these principles might be meaningfully operationalized in University policies, procedures, and practices;
3. Exploring how to effectively communicate the University's commitment to these principles to constituent groups both inside and outside of the University as well as best practices for engaging a broad spectrum of students, staff, faculty, and community members from around the state on these issues; and
4. Identifying initiatives designed to cultivate a campus culture of civil discourse and constructive dialogue among members of the University community.

In line with President Seidel's charge, the process of developing these recommendations included a review of key books, articles, and statements. These included:

- [University of Wyoming’s current “Statement on Free Speech”](#)
- [UW Regulation 2-15 on Academic Freedom](#)
- [University of Chicago’s 2014 “Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression”](#)
- [1967 “Kalven Report” regarding institutional neutrality on political and social issues](#)
- AAUP’s [1915 “Declaration of Principles”](#) and [1940 “Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#)
- [Higher Learning Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation](#)
- [Constitution of the State of Wyoming](#)
- [“Code of the West,”](#) which was adopted as Wyoming’s State Code of Ethics in 2010

The Working Group also engaged in a detailed internal institutional mapping of existing programs and initiatives already underway at UW. While this review suggested potential areas for enhancement and improvement, it also illustrated the University’s strong existing institutional commitments to the principles of freedom of expression, academic freedom, and civil dialogue. It also served to highlight many excellent ongoing initiatives in these critical areas at UW that are fertile ground to be built-upon, encouraged, and supported in the Working Group’s recommendations.

In addition, the Working Group considered programs and policies at other higher education institutions in the United States. This review suggested the importance of adopting a whole-university approach involving students, staff, faculty, and administration through multiple and reinforcing initiatives to respect freedom of expression, academic freedom, and intellectual freedom, and cultivate constructive dialogue, in an effort to effect long-term institutional impacts in these critical areas at UW. These include recommendations for "top-down" University policy and communication on these issues as well as “bottom-up” initiatives designed to foster a culture and practice of free expression and respectful dialogue that encourages critical inquiry and welcomes the open exchange of ideas.

### **Consultation with Key Internal and External Stakeholders**

In an effort to ensure transparency and the development of a framework of recommendations that was inclusive of multiple perspectives, an essential component of the work included discussions with key stakeholders, both internally at UW and externally across the state of Wyoming. The Working Group also consulted with legal and policy experts in the area of free expression, and academic freedom before finalizing the recommended Principles statement.

#### **Internal Stakeholders at the University of Wyoming**

The Working Group membership included representatives from Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Associated Students of UW (ASUW) who provided regular updates to their organizations on the Working Group’s progress throughout the semester. During the Spring 2023 semester, the Co-Chairs also attended meetings with ASUW, Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, and the Dean of UW-Casper. During these meetings, key internal stakeholders had the opportunity to hear directly from the Co-Chairs about the process and progress of the Working Group’s activities and were invited to ask questions and share feedback and concerns.

## **External Stakeholders in the State of Wyoming**

As a key aspect of his charge, President Seidel identified various external stakeholders from throughout the state of Wyoming to be involved in conversations about addressing and enhancing freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue at the state's flagship public University. President Seidel then welcomed the members of the Working Group to suggest names of additional key external stakeholders for consultation. Approximately 20 total Wyoming stakeholders representing a diverse array of backgrounds and perspectives were then invited by President Seidel to engage in dialogue and discussion on these critical issues over the Spring 2023 semester.

Of all those invited, nine people agreed to speak one to three times in collaborative meetings together with the Co-Chairs and/or with the entire Working Group. These external stakeholders were asked to share thoughts on how the unique aspects of Wyoming's history, spirit, and culture might help to inform the University of Wyoming's Statement of Principles. They were also asked to share any specific concerns, challenges, or points of pride surrounding the current state of free expression, civil discourse, and academic freedom at the University of Wyoming for the Working Group to consider as it formed its recommendations. While these conversations with Wyoming stakeholders helped inform the Working Group's recommendations, this report should not be taken to indicate approval or endorsement by any individual stakeholder consulted.

Those key external Wyoming stakeholders who met with the Working Group were:

Eli Bebout, WY State Senator (former); WY State Representative (former)  
Sara Burlingame, Executive Director of Wyoming Equality; WY State Representative (former)  
Dr. Sandra Caldwell, Executive Director Wyoming Community College Commission  
Dr. Cathy Connolly, UW Professor (retired); WY State Representative (former)  
Harriet Hageman, Wyoming Congresswoman, U.S. House of Representatives  
Karen Kemmerer, UW Haub School Advisory Board; VP AT&T and Lucent Technologies (former)  
Matt Micheli, Partner, Holland & Hart LLP  
Dr. Maggi Murdock, UW Professor Emerita; UW VP Student Affairs & Dean UW-Casper (former)  
Jen Sieve-Hicks, Owner and Executive Editor, *Buffalo Bulletin* Newspaper

Discussions with these Wyoming stakeholders were commendable for modelling how to have civil and constructive dialogue on difficult issues across a diversity of perspectives. In particular, the external stakeholders emphasized the importance of Wyoming's history of equality and respect, as well as a deep sense of pride taken in the state's culture of neighborliness and civil connections across differences as well the strong historical bond between the state's population and the University. Some stakeholders expressed that the public, prospective students, and their parents could lose confidence in UW if it doesn't remain a space where intellectual openness and a diversity of ideas and perspectives are welcomed. Others expressed concern about the influence of partisan politics on the University. Nevertheless, stakeholders agreed that free and open inquiry, freedom of expression, and civility are vital to the success of the University of Wyoming.

## Survey of UW Students

The Working Group collaborated with ASUW to include several questions about free expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and constructive dialogue on their Spring 2023 survey of all UW students. Such data can serve as a baseline for measuring improvements in the coming years. All students (both undergraduate and graduate) received the survey and a total of 680 students responded. A majority of survey respondents indicated that they experience UW as a place that practices academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and constructive dialogue:

- **Academic Freedom: 69%** agreed or strongly agreed that UW promotes an environment of free and open intellectual inquiry in classes, labs, and during homework activities (*vs. 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed*).
- **Intellectual Freedom: 58%** agreed or strongly agreed that UW protects their access to spoken words, printed matter, symbolic messages, freedom of association, books, art, music, movies, television programs, and internet sites (*vs. 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed*).
- **Freedom of Expression: 55%** agreed or strongly agreed that UW promotes an open culture of tolerance, discussion, and debate surrounding controversial or sensitive topics on campus outside of classes (*vs. 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed*).
- **Constructive Dialogue: 93%** of students identified one or more sectors of campus life as having offered them opportunities to engage in respectful dialogue amid controversial or sensitive topics, with *classes within their major* most often mentioned (*vs. 7% who identified no such place*).

The survey also asked students where they have gone, or would go, to discuss a concern or complaint having to do with expression, offensive speech, or censorship. Students responded as follows:

- Friends (23%), Family (15%), Intimate Partner (13%), Roommate (10%)
- Faculty Members (8%), Advisors (8%)
- Dean of Students (4%), Counselor (3%), Office of DEI (3%), ReportIt, (3%)
- Didn't/Wouldn't Tell Anyone (3%)
- Campus Club/Organization (2%), Off-Campus Organization (2%), Post to Social Media (2%), Other (1%)
- UW Cares (<1%), Ombuds (<1%), Coach (<1%)

The above results show that “first responders” to expression-related concerns tend to be students’ peers and family, followed by faculty members and advisors. The survey results helped inform the Working Group’s recommendations as the data suggest where to target interventions. For instance, three times as many students identified a concern outside the classroom (25%) as compared to inside their classrooms (8%). Data also indicate which support services may be underutilized and could be better advertised to students.

**Consulting Legal and Policy Experts**

The Working Group collected reviews of our Statement of Principles from legal and policy experts at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WORKING GROUP

#### 1. Articulating the Principles

To provide a basis for recommendations on addressing issues of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue, the Working Group sought to clearly articulate and define core guiding principles for the University in these critical areas. In articulating these principles, the Working Group was also guided by the following aims and goals:

- To clearly delineate and define the University of Wyoming’s foundational commitments to institutional neutrality, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, freedom of expression, and related values of civil discourse and constructive dialogue among members of the University community (including students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus);
- To ensure these guiding principles are in line with the University’s distinctive academic mission as a public land-grant research institution and reflective of the unique values and culture of the state of Wyoming;
- To enshrine scholarly protections of academic freedom and intellectual freedom as central to the educational mission of the University and to support a continued climate of intellectual openness and free inquiry at UW;
- To recognize that while the free expression of ideas, beliefs, and criticism can be uncomfortable, legal free expression rights must be respected at a public university in accordance with the nation’s First Amendment protections and the right to free speech enshrined in the Constitution of the State of Wyoming; and
- To outline the legal limits of free expression to ensure the University’s educational, scholarly, and administrative functioning while reinforcing UW’s commitment to respecting the legal free expression rights of its students, staff, faculty, and visitors.

Based on these goals, the Working Group recommends the following “Statement of the University of Wyoming Principles” to help guide the University in addressing issues of freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue.

## Statement of the University of Wyoming Principles

From their very founding, both the State of Wyoming and University of Wyoming (UW) have regarded equality as a source of strength and pride. When Wyoming gained statehood in 1889, its Constitution enshrined this commitment to equal rights throughout the new "Equality State" and declared that UW "shall be equally open to students of both sexes, irrespective of race or color." The University's longstanding aspiration to be inclusive of and accessible to people from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives inspires UW's ongoing commitment to creating a supportive community of openness, tolerance, and respect.

As the state's flagship university, UW pursues excellence as a land-grant research institution dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding for the public good. Central to this mission is the University's nonpartisan and nonsectarian commitment to learning and creating knowledge with academic freedom and integrity, a respect for intellectual freedom and legal rights of equality and free expression, and the open, civil, and constructive exchange of ideas. Inspired by the Code of the West and Wyoming's unique spirit of rugged individualism, UW advances the frontiers of teaching, research, and creative activity through open inquiry independent from the undue influence of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.

The university plays a unique role in society by providing a forum for the deliberation and debate of public issues. UW embraces the understanding that "the university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic," as stated in the 1967 *Kalven Report* on institutional neutrality. Accordingly, while University leaders will make decisions about matters that further UW's educational mission, they do not, on principle, commit the University in ways that are outside of its core academic purpose. This adherence to impartiality reaffirms the intellectual freedom of all at UW to seek and receive information without restriction and enjoy unfettered access to all expression of ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored.

The fulfillment of the University's academic mission in the service of the common good rests upon the recognition of the value of scholarly expertise to society and the protection of faculty members' freedom in teaching, research, and deliberation. UW therefore adheres to the American Association of University Professors' 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. This includes providing academic personnel at the University with necessary freedom to pursue research and creative activities in their areas of expertise; participate in the governance of the University and express their judgments about matters that bear on the University's mission; share their thoughts through extramural expression; and teach their subject in the classroom. When academic personnel speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline.

Academic freedom helps preserve a climate of ongoing inquiry at UW where ideas are openly shared and rigorously examined. The role of the university teacher is not to indoctrinate. Students are responsible for learning in their course of study material reflecting scholarly standards, understandings, and expertise, including that which may challenge their

existing beliefs. At the same time, instructors must take care not to present untested or controversial claims as settled truth without letting students take reasoned exception. In both teaching and scholarly endeavors, partisan interests—whether those of University personnel or those of government, religious, corporate, or political groups—should never supersede sound academic judgment, principles, and procedures.

In accordance with the nation’s First Amendment protections and the right to free speech enshrined in the Constitution of the State of Wyoming, UW recognizes and respects the liberty of students, faculty, and staff as private citizens to express their opinions and identities, including concerns they may have about public institutions and the larger society. At a public university, it is inevitable that the ideas and beliefs of different members of the UW community or visitors to campus will conflict with one another. UW does not shield individuals from the free expression of ideas and criticism, including that which community members may find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. The expression of criticism must respect the legal right of others to express themselves without serving to obstruct, censor, or otherwise interfere with the rights of others to hear those ideas.

As stated in the University of Chicago’s 2014 *Principles on Freedom of Expression*, “the freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, whenever they wish.” Free expression has legal limitations, some examples of which include expression that is obscene or defamatory; constitutes a genuine threat or discriminatory harassment; incites imminent violence or other lawless action; unjustifiably invades privacy; interferes with the free expression rights of others; or otherwise stands in violation of the law. UW may reasonably place content-neutral limitations on the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure the University’s ordinary educational, scholarly, and administrative functioning. Nevertheless, these are narrow exceptions. In line with UW’s foundational commitment to cultivating an environment where even controversial ideas may be openly heard, scrutinized, and debated, the University is dedicated to respecting the legal free expression rights of its students, staff, faculty, and visitors.

The University of Wyoming strives to support and model a culture of respectful engagement in which even the most difficult or challenging of ideas can be expressed, received, and contested with grace through the practice of civil discourse and constructive dialogue. In so doing, UW encourages people with diverse backgrounds and values to speak, write, live, and learn together in a welcoming, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating environment that celebrates free expression and intellectual and academic freedom. This reflects Wyoming’s spirit of equality and civic connection across difference, allowing students, faculty, and staff to thrive as members of a vibrant university community where critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and independent thought can flourish.

## 2. Operationalizing the Principles

The Working Group was tasked with recommending initiatives to operationalize the University's commitments to freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue on campus. Policies translate principles into actionable guidelines that enable the University to comply with legal requirements, support decision-making, foster transparency, and empower employees and students. Campus units can review, revise, or adopt policies and procedures to reflect, or avoid conflict with, the recommended University of Wyoming Principles. In outlining recommendations for policy opportunities to operationalize these principles, the Working Group sought to:

- Protect the University's academic mission;
- Respect people's intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and free expression rights and ensure that policy language does not have an unintended chilling effect on open inquiry and debate;
- Ensure the academic integrity of the curriculum;
- Clarify when and where any given principle governs decision-making;
- Encourage clear procedures in key areas where employees and students experience conflict over expression;
- Provide a framework for decision-making when University leaders face pressure from internal or external groups;
- Foster both inclusion and respect for individual rights as complementary aims; and
- Establish transparent protocols that strengthen trust in procedural fairness and in the University more generally.

The Working Group did not have time for an in-depth study of all University policies, but examined and discussed common issues and best practices for any public university campus. In doing so, key areas of opportunity for building, enhancing, or adapting existing policies to align with the recommended University of Wyoming Principles were identified. Examples include:

- 2.1 **Protocol for Student Complaints:** Establish clear protocols for responding to student complaints against employees that ensure adherence to the Principles and due process. Help students understand procedures for making a complaint and protections in place against retaliation.
- 2.2 **Student Code of Conduct:** Examine the Code and revise as necessary to avoid any overly broad language so as to respect the legal free expression rights of students.
- 2.3 **Academic Courses and Curricula:** In line with the University's scholarly mission and the principle of academic freedom, ensure all curricular decisions and changes come from, and/or are vetted by bodies made up of credentialed faculty experts.

- 2.4 **Donor Relations:** Consider adopting a gifts acceptance policy to ensure faculty review of gifts with connections to the curriculum to reflect the University's commitments to institutional neutrality, academic freedom, and intellectual freedom.
- 2.5 **Institutional Marketing:** Review the social media posting policy disclaimer and practices for filtering comments in the University's social media forums to ensure these are viewpoint-neutral.
- 2.6 **External Speakers/Visitors/Art/Events:** Assemble and/or clarify content-neutral policies that assess risk, and content-neutral guidelines for poster distribution, exhibiting artwork, tabling, room reservations, displays in residence halls, etc.
- 2.7 **Title IX Policy:** Review policy to ensure that students' free expression rights are not restricted when they are expressing themselves as ordinary citizens outside of federally funded educational programs where Title IX applies.
- 2.8 **Employee Hiring and Related Policies:** Review guidance related to position descriptions and search procedures to ensure the integrity of the hiring process. Review guidance related to employee political activity for any unclear language regarding employees' free expression rights.
- 2.9 **Academic Personnel Dismissal Policy:** Consider whether the policy for dismissal of academic personnel aligns with Principles. Clarify language (e.g., about "collegiality," "safety") that could enable the substitution of academic criteria with expression-based criteria for dismissal.
- 2.10 **Responding to Expression-Related Controversies:** Review or establish protocol for University administration's response to expression-related controversies that occur at the University and/or over social media.

### 3. Communicating the Principles

The Working Group was asked to consider ways in which the University's commitments in the areas of free expression, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue could be communicated to constituent groups both inside and outside of the University and marketed to state, national, and international communities. Principles and policies communicated effectively can build trust and credibility, so that all stakeholders understand the University's purpose and methods of operation. Knowledge of clear policies and procedures regarding concerns over expression-related issues can prevent unnecessary potential confusion or conflict. The objectives behind recommendations for communicating the Principles are to:

- Prevent and resolve conflicts that sometimes stem from confusion about laws, principles, policies, or procedures surrounding freedom of expression, academic freedom, and intellectual freedom;
- Ensure consistency across the institution on these issues;
- Encourage compliance with laws and policies protecting free expression and academic freedom;
- Offer guidance to students and others for finding support when the legally protected expression of others is nevertheless unsettling;
- Convey the University's academic mission and Principles to internal and external constituents; and
- Celebrate the University as an inclusive and tolerant place of intellectual openness, critical inquiry, and constructive dialogue.

Multiple opportunities exist for both internal and external communication that convey our Principles, policies, and procedures. Examples include:

- 3.1 **Orientation and Onboarding Activities for New Employees:** Each new set of students, staff, and faculty could be introduced to the Principles in orientation and onboarding activities. For instance, an online training program for employees could be added to the UW Oracle Learning Cloud.
- 3.2 **Orientation and Onboarding for First-Year Students:** First-year students, specifically, could learn more about the University's mission and what it means to be a University citizen through a series of semester or year-long activities such as during Saddle Up, in First Year Seminar, with a common book experience, at a formal convocation ceremony, in a First-Year Interest Group (FIG), in the residence halls, and in UW's *Making College Count* Guide.
- 3.3 **General Education Curriculum:** Consider how aspects of the Principles can be covered in the Next-Generation General Education (NGGE) curriculum. This could include offering opportunities for students to learn about the constitutional protections of free expression in U.S. and Wyoming civics courses as well learning civil discourse and constructive dialogue skills through core communication, intercultural competency, or other general education courses.

- 3.4 **Syllabus Statement on Academic Freedom:** Academic course syllabi could offer a statement about the principle of academic freedom that governs the instructional setting. This could reassure students of the intellectual integrity, independence, and expertise of their instructors who serve as representatives of their community of scholarly inquiry.
- 3.5 **Centralized Website Hub:** A website could serve as a central resource providing showcase and provide information on for campus initiatives and resources (e.g., Principles, policies, trainings, events, workshops) for both internal and external audiences.
- 3.6 **Online Digital Resources:** An online resource library (including a series of dedicated LibGuides) linked through the centralized website hub could provide access to information resources on freedom of expression, academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and constructive dialogue to both internal and external audiences.
- 3.7 **Communicating with/in the Media:** Supportive guidance for faculty and staff conducting media interviews and using social media could reduce their uncertainty about what, and in what contexts or capacities, a faculty or staff member can freely and ethically express in the media.
- 3.8 **Public-Facing Materials:** Each academic and student support unit could examine their public-facing materials that communicate their mission and objectives to be sure they are clearly conveying how they perform or support the University's academic mission including its commitment to open inquiry.
- 3.9 **Oral History Documentary of Working Group:** A short video/video series could be created to provide an inside look at the process and discussions behind the Working Group's efforts to develop the Principles, which could highlight UW's national leadership on these issues and model a process of constructive dialogue.
- 3.10 **Institutional Marketing Efforts:** The Principles could be tied more explicitly to UW's brand promise in institutional marketing efforts, including videos that tell our story and a social marketing campaign that includes slogans such as: "Learn and Let Learn"; "The World Needs More Constructive Dialogue"; "Open Spaces, Open Minds"; "Many Views, One Community"; "It Takes All Kinds of Cowboys"; and "The UW Cowboys Are Curious, Fair-Minded, Complexity-Embracing, No-Bull-Accepting Independent Thinkers."

#### 4. Practicing the Principles

As reflected in President Seidel's charge, a key task of the Working Group was to consider innovative ways to engage the University community and external constituencies in exploring and developing frameworks for addressing critical issues – including those surrounding academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and free expression – through civil discourse and constructive dialogue that is inclusive of all perspectives. Accordingly, members of the Working Group investigated ways to articulate internal University values of civility and constructive dialogue and consider how best to engage a broad spectrum of students, staff, faculty, community members, and external stakeholders in this work, motivated by goals to:

- Foster, model, and encourage clear and concise core principles and guidelines to encourage civil discourse and constructive dialogue at UW;
- Help to enhance a supportive, welcoming, and inclusive environment at UW where all members of the University community are afforded the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, challenge, and learn in a civil and respectful manner;
- Support an academic and workplace environment where different ideas and opinions can be expressed within an inclusive culture of respect, civility, and constructive dialogue;
- Seek ways to encourage a commitment to civil discourse and constructive dialogue as a core part of UW's culture and practice; and
- Provide all members of the University community and external constituents with the necessary knowledge, skills, and opportunities to "get comfortable with being uncomfortable" with the exchange of difficult or challenging ideas and perspectives both inside and outside of the classroom.

Based on this review, to further enhance a culture and practice of civil discourse and constructive dialogue at UW, the Working Group recommends:

- 4.1 **“The Wyoming Way:”** Articulating a clear and concise core set of principles on the University's commitment to free expression and encouraging civil discourse and dialogue around difficult, sensitive, or controversial issues on campus. This could be used in campus-wide communications for students, faculty, and staff and could be read and reaffirmed at the beginning of on-campus events and speaker presentations. Outside speaker events could be followed by “talk backs” guided by the Wyoming Way to provide attendees meaningful opportunities to engage in constructive disagreement and dialogue.
- 4.2 **Center for Free Expression and Respectful Dialogue:** Provide a physical home and focal point on campus for nonpartisan University-wide activities on freedom of expression and constructive dialogue to help implement and operationalize the Principles and related recommendations. This would also serve as a central hub for physical and digital campus resources, student, staff, and faculty support, training services, events and other activities. Relatedly, consider hiring a Coordinator to oversee UW's implementation and practice of the Principles. The person in this position could also oversee a program of unit-level



liaisons or committees on Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and ASUW. However, given budget constraints, it is also possible for academic leaders to position the Principles as a quality improvement plan, with individual units on campus participating in the implementation of recommendations in a “bottom-up” fashion.

- 4.3 **Campus Community Cohort:** Create a cross-campus cohort of selected faculty, staff and students to serve as models and leaders around issues of civil discourse and constructive dialogue on campus. This cohort would receive additional training in facilitating and moderating civil discourse and dialogue around difficult issues and could be utilized to help facilitate campus programming in this area.
- 4.4 **Targeted Skills Development:** Bring internal and external experts to UW to provide workshops for administration, faculty, staff, and students to develop skills in civil discourse and difficult dialogue. Use these initial workshops to “train the trainers” at UW and build enduring institutional resources in these areas. Provide additional opportunities for the development of soft skills in the areas of conflict resolution, de-escalation, and mindfulness to prepare campus community members with real-world training in how to better handle disagreement and conflict in daily life and in the workplace.
- 4.5 **Direct Student Engagement:** Provide multiple reinforcing touchpoints for students with skills and practice of civil discourse and constructive dialogue. This could include incorporating aspects of this programming into existing programs, clubs, and organizations. It could also extend to residence life and learning communities, including targeted training in civil discourse and dialogue for residence hall advisors and other student support staff.
- 4.6 **External Speaker or Forum Series:** An ongoing series of external speakers could share insights and encourage reflection and skills-building around freedom of expression, academic freedom, constructive dialogue, dissent and protest, and/or the purpose of the University from a nonpartisan perspective. The Working Group noted, however, that a series like this would likely take an exceptional amount of resources and may have limited impact.
- 4.7 **Cross-Campus Engagement on Civil Discourse and Constructive Dialogue:** This includes cultivating and supporting existing initiatives such as UW’s Heterodox Academy Campus Community, the Good Mule’s “People’s Supper” or Restorative Justice “Community Circles.” It also includes considering the creation of new “Tough Talk,” “Cowboy Conversations,” or “Difficult Dialogues” forums where members of the campus community can come together to engage in mediated dialogue about sensitive issues impacting community members.
- 4.8 **Learning Opportunities for Faculty and Teaching Staff:** This would focus on faculty development through pedagogical and skills-based learning on best practices on civil discourse and dialogue inside and outside of the classroom through the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning (ECTL). This could include one-day workshops, faculty development

programming, ongoing “Learning Communities,” and book series. The ECTL could also host an online digital resource library focused on providing access to best practices and pedagogical tools to navigate and facilitate difficult dialogues around sensitive or controversial issues in the classroom.

4.9 **One-Day “Difficult Dialogues” Cross-Campus Event:** This would highlight student and faculty research, creative activities, and speakers on civil discourse and constructive dialogue across lines of difference on key issues.

4.10 **Malcom Wallop Civic Engagement Program Model:** Directly engage external community members in the collection of “Wyoming Profiles” exemplifying examples of civil discourse, constructive engagement, and civic connection across difference throughout Wyoming. Engage local Wyoming communities in “Community Conversations” and UW “Saturday University” events.