

Resolution in Support of Free Expression

Be it resolved that:

- (1) The Student Union recognizes that within the unique university context, the most crucial of all human rights are freedom of speech, academic freedom, and freedom of research. The Student Union affirms that these freedoms are meaningless unless they include the right to raise disturbing questions and provocative challenges to the values embraced by society at large, and even by the University itself. The right to engage in frank and open debate, to share controversial and unpopular ideas, and to challenge society's core beliefs, is essential for the pursuit of truth, and for preserving a free and democratic society.
- (2) The Student Union has a duty to actively support this human right to unfettered, critical teaching and research, because apart from the University, there is no other institution or office in our modern liberal democracy which is the custodian of this most precious and vulnerable right of the liberated human spirit.
- (3) The Student Union affirms that the principles of academic freedom, which protect the right of professors to pursue controversial areas of research and to express and disseminate unpopular ideas, apply equally to students. All students enjoy the freedom to explore, debate, and disseminate ideas, regardless of their popularity or public acceptance.
- (4) The Student Union accepts that the free and open exchange of ideas will generate controversy and disputes among members of the University, and in the wider community. In such cases, the Student Union will support and protect the free speech rights of all persons, including and especially those who adhere to unpopular beliefs or controversial opinions.
- (5) The Student Union recognizes that freedom of expression is limited to peaceful means and non-coercive methods. The Student Union expressly rejects the use of violence, physical force, and physical coercion as methods to express one's views, or as methods to prevent others from expressing their views. Controversial or unpopular ideas should be addressed through debate, reason, and argument, and not by silencing one's opponents through blocking, obstructing, disrupting or otherwise suppressing unpopular or controversial speech on campus.
- (6) The Student Union recognizes that the *Criminal Code of Canada* places certain restrictions on freedom of expression. Apart from these restrictions, the peaceful expression of ideas on campus should be supported and encouraged.
- (7) The right to free expression is complemented by the right to freedom of association, whereby individuals are free to cooperate in groups. All students enjoy the right to form and join the campus club (or clubs) of their own choosing, to hold and advertise meetings, to invite speakers on campus, to sponsor debates, to engage in peaceful assemblies and demonstrations, and to have equal access to Student Union facilities, rooms, spaces, and resources. No student, and no campus club, shall be discriminated against on the basis of belief, opinion, or viewpoint.
- (8) The Student Union will interpret and apply its rules, regulations, policies, by-laws, and Constitution in accordance with these principles.