



December 13, 2019

## **Statement on Free Expression**

The University of Calgary operates as a public comprehensive academic and research university under the authority of Alberta's *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

Our purpose as a university is to contribute to the body of world knowledge while simultaneously engaging our students and communities in learning guided by processes of discovery, creativity and innovation. The knowledge we create benefits society. It promotes cultural understanding and social justice, improves quality of life, and helps to secure a prosperous and sustainable future.

The University depends upon an environment of respect and civility to fulfill its purpose, an environment where all voices have an opportunity to be heard and multiple viewpoints can be advanced. All members of the University need, and have a right to, a research, teaching, learning and work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. The University of Calgary strives to create a campus culture that is inclusive and respectful – one that values diversity and the dignity of every person.

All members of the University have the right of free expression, which means the freedom to investigate, comment, listen, gather, challenge and critique subject to the law and, on our campuses, to University policies and procedures related to the functioning of the University. Thus, we may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the institution.

The University does not attempt to shield any of its members from debates or opinions that they may disagree with or that are perceived to be unwelcome, controversial, offensive, unwise, immoral, or objectionable, nor should debates or deliberations in these instances be suppressed. It is for individuals, not the institution, to make those judgments for themselves and to act not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas they oppose.

Free expression is subject to limitations imposed by law and, on our campuses, by University policies and procedures related to the functioning of the University. Expression that constitutes hate speech, a genuine threat or harassment, discrimination, defamation, an unjustified invasion of privacy or reveals confidential information are examples of expression that are prohibited by law.

The right to free expression does include the freedom to critique and contest the expression of others – but it does not extend to efforts to obstruct or prevent the free expression of others. In research, teaching, learning, and other settings, the University expects that the freedom to critique and contest the expression of others will be exercised in a manner that is in keeping with the University's environment of respect and civility.

While all members of the University community have the right to free expression, this does not imply that the University endorses opinions and views expressed by its members.

This Statement applies to individuals and organizations on our campuses in Canada, including individuals and organizations external to the University. The use of University facilities for activities or events does not imply that the University itself has endorsed the views which may be expressed during the activities or events.

This Statement on Free Expression does not modify the University's commitment to academic freedom.