



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

Protecting Free Speech on Campus 10 Questions College Trustees Should Ask

Academic excellence is predicated on the freedom to question, challenge, debate, and discuss.

It is the role and responsibility of the board of trustees to ensure that their institution protects and fosters freedom of speech and viewpoint diversity.

- Have we formally adopted the Chicago Principles of free expression or a similar statement?
- Do we emphasize free speech at orientation, in public presentations, and in course catalogs?
- Have we established clear policies safeguarding free speech in the student code of conduct?
- Have we established clear policies safeguarding free speech in the faculty handbook?
- Have we developed policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of controversial speakers?

- Have we defined the boundaries of appropriate and responsible dissent?
- Have we established clear and firm sanctions for disruptions of scheduled campus events?
- Does the administration inform the board when disciplinary action is taken?
- Have we established procedures to remind the campus community, prior to the visit of a controversial speaker, about our free speech policies and the consequences for disruption?
- Have campus personnel and police been trained to respond appropriately to threatened disruptions surrounding campus events?



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**Promoting academic freedom, academic
excellence, and accountability.**