



CHAPMAN
UNIVERSITY



Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

Chapman University's Commitment to Free Speech and Academic Freedom

Academic Freedom and Free Speech are hallmarks of the Chapman University academic community. While not exhaustive in definition or scope, we provide this information to establish a framework for how these tenets influence our open exchange of ideas. We are steadfast in our defense of both Academic Freedom and Free Speech. This commitment is unwavering and immutable. As a community of knowledge workers, it is imperative that we also decouple the personal views of members of the faculty from the values and beliefs formally expressed on behalf of the university.

Academic Freedom

The formally recognized definition and scope of academic freedom is outlined in the well-established [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#). Academic freedom is defined within this statement as the following:

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results.

2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.
3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

Academic freedom exists to allow the pursuit of knowledge without fear of retribution from the educational setting to which faculty belong. This differs from freedom of speech, which also provides protection to faculty, not as members of an academic community, but rather as citizens of the United States.

Freedom of Speech

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Freedom of Speech is a constitutionally protected right within the [First Amendment](#) and prevents Congress—which the Supreme Court interprets as pertaining to all of the federal government—from establishing laws that impede free speech and free expression. California went further in 1992 (amended in 2006) and passed the [Leonard Law](#), which extends the First Amendment to private and public colleges in addition to high schools and universities.

In September 2015, Chapman faculty governance, student governance, and our Board of Trustees voted on and adopted a Statement on Free Speech (below) that further articulates the commitment to free and open inquiry on our campuses. Based on the widely adopted [University of Chicago Principles of free expression](#), Chapman’s statement emphasizes the value of free and open debate and highlights the principle that debate may not be suppressed by the university even if the ideas put forth are thought by some to be offensive or unwise. The responsibility lies within the community itself to contest the ideas it opposes.

Just as with academic freedom, faculty should be aware that their affiliation with Chapman University can influence perception and they should make it clear that they are not speaking or acting on behalf of the university.

Chapman University Statement on Free Speech

Because Chapman University (the “University”) is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to

speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. The University fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community to engage in robust, uninhibited discussion and deliberation on any and all topics.

Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often not coincide and may quite naturally conflict. It is not the proper role of the University, however, to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.

The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The University may restrict expression, for example, that violates the law, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment against a specific individual, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University. In addition, the University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the essential activities of the University. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

In a word, the University's fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the University community to engage in thoughtful debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission.

As a corollary to the University's vibrant commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the University community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. While members of the University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct, intimidate, or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe in a manner which renders them substantially unable to express their views. To this end, the University has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others may attempt to restrict it.

Additional Resources

1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure

California Leonard Law

University of Chicago Free Expression

Academics
Graduate Education
Undergraduate Education
Academic Calendar
● Academic Freedom
Academic Integrity
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