

Statement on Freedom of Inquiry and Expression

Furman University unequivocally affirms its commitment to free inquiry and free expression. These core values uphold the foundational belief that diverse views and perspectives deserve to be articulated and heard, free from interference.

All members of the Furman community have responsibilities to fulfill our commitment including

- a rigorous defense of all modes of investigation that produce, expand, and refine knowledge.

- Academic freedom, as defined by the American Association of University Professors, safeguards faculty from interference in their pursuit of teaching, research, and creative expression within their respective disciplines.

- a rigorous education with freedoms to speak, write, inquire, listen, challenge, and learn through exposure to a spectrum of ideas. Exposure to diverse points of view naturally follows from this commitment and is vital to the University's overarching goal of cultivating critical thinking. Free

expression, which supports but is also distinct from Academic Freedom, should be given the widest possible latitude [\(AAUP 2019\)](#).

not shielding individuals from the ideas and opinions of others, even when the ideas put forth are thought by some members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas, however, does not mean that individuals may say whatever they please, when and wherever they wish. The University administration may restrict expression that violates the law, that violates existing campus policies or regulations, or that is otherwise incompatible with the functioning of the University.

maintaining a climate of mutual respect as outlined in Furman's "Vision, Mission, and Values."

The University's commitment to free expression and free inquiry represents a living ideal, reflected in applicable policy and embodied in the actions of community members every day. In practice, this means that Furman faculty, staff, and students must also be prepared to listen, to engage, and, when appropriate, to walk away from counterproductive engagements. These actions reinforce our goal to uphold the privileges and responsibilities of a community

dedicated to fostering open dialogue between divergent perspectives.

If every member of the University community commits to engaging in free expression in a responsible manner and defends the ability of all others to do the same, Furman will model constructive engagement among those with differing perspectives on difficult issues. Modeling healthy dialogue for our community will sustain public trust in Furman and in the liberal arts.

Note: The preceding statement draws significantly from two sources:

University of Chicago. (2014).

“Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression”

; and University of Virginia. (2021).

“Statement of the Committee on Free Expression and Free Inquiry.”