

Guiding Principles for Speech and Expression at DePaul University

DePaul University's Mission is built upon the Vincentian ideal of universal dignity in which each person is invaluable and worthy of respect. That dignity depends in no small measure upon an individual's freedom and opportunity to give voice to their beliefs and on each individual's freedom and opportunity to choose whether and how to respond. DePaul therefore aspires to be a community marked by mutual respect and a community in which we never lose sight of the potential effects, both beneficial and harmful, of our words and of our expressive conduct. In this spirit, we affirm the following principles of speech and expression:

1. We deem free and open expression as essential to intellectual inquiry. We affirm that, as a university, we have a responsibility to provide a setting in which a broad and diverse range of ideas can be exchanged civilly and respectfully.
2. We affirm the right of members of the DePaul community to engage in speech and expression consistent with the values of academic freedom, free inquiry, and civil discourse.
3. We affirm our responsibility to foster a respectful and inclusive learning environment. We recognize that part of DePaul's Mission is to continuously and actively amplify marginalized voices and to create opportunities for conversations that advance social justice.
4. We affirm the right of individuals to express their viewpoints, even at the risk of controversy.
5. We affirm the right of individuals to choose whether and how to respond to speech and expression. This may include responding with additional speech and expression, such as protests that respect the right of individuals to express their views.
6. We affirm that the primary goal of speech and expression in a university context is to advance and enliven the intellectual life of the community. The University is committed to the principle that it may not restrict speech and expression simply because the ideas put forth are controversial. Rather, the role of the University is to create the conditions in which members of the University community have the opportunity to critically engage with a diversity of viewpoints. At the same time, we also recognize that speech and expression that serves only to threaten or intimidate does not further these goals.
7. We affirm a presumption in favor of permitting speech and expression as essential to the pursuit of knowledge in the University setting. University policies and procedures will be interpreted and applied consistently with this presumption.

Consistent with the Guiding Principles above, and mindful of its commitment to fostering an educational community that welcomes free and open discourse, the University may also reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of speech and expression for a variety of reasons, including to allow for the continuance of University business or to ensure the safety and security of the campus and members of the DePaul community.

In no case should any form of expression taking place at DePaul University be construed as an endorsement of the particular ideas or expression in question by the University, except when officially stated otherwise.

Several University policies and procedures set forth specific standards for conduct in a variety of circumstances that could involve speech and expression. These Guiding Principles inform the application of those policies. Community members are encouraged to consult sources such as the University Policies and Procedures website for further information on specific policies.

In support of these Guiding Principles, DePaul University has established the Speech and Expression Advisory Committee (SEAC). SEAC increases consistency as to how various policies and procedures are aligned with the Guiding Principles by providing a forum through which a standing group of community representatives routinely engages with the Guiding Principles. SEAC is charged with educating the DePaul community about the Guiding Principles. SEAC is also charged with reviewing the Guiding Principles on an annual basis, and providing consultation regarding how the Guiding Principles could be further integrated into university activities, policies, and procedures. More detailed information regarding SEAC [can be found here](#).

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