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The Chalk Line: Where Academic Freedom Meets Campus Climate

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Overview

- Academic Freedom
- Recent Regulatory Action and Judicial Response
- Classroom Scenario
- Institutional Responses
- Next Steps and Changes
- Classroom Scenario, Revisited
- Wrap-Up and Q&A

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Academic Freedom

Evolution from 1940 to Present Day

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AAUP

"Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights."

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AAUP (2)

Academic Freedom Principles

- Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties…
- 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…

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AAUP (3)

Academic Freedom Principles

- 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.

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Kalven Committee Report, 1967

"The neutrality of the university as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints. And this neutrality as an institution has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest. It finds its complement, too, in the obligation of the university to provide a forum for the most searching and candid discussion of public issues."

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Kalven Committee Report

Principles

- Institutional Neutrality
- Protection of Academic Freedom
- University as a Place for Inquiry
- **Distinction between Institutional and Individual Speech**
- **Avoiding Institutional Coercion**
- University should Speak only when Necessary

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Kalven Committee Report (2)

"The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic."

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Kalven Committee Report (3)

Challenges with Adherence

- Silence can favor the status quo
- Social Responsibility of Universities
- Some issues directly affect University community
- Distinction between academic and political issues is often unclear

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The Woodward Report

"This committee's account has revealed instances of faltering, uncertainty, and failure in the defense of principle on the part of various elements in the University community. Within the community has appeared from time to time a willingness to compromise standards, to give priority to peace and order and amicable relations over the principle of free speech when it threatens these other values."

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The Woodward Report (2)

Principles - Majority

- Protection of Dissent
- Reinforcement of Institutional Neutrality
- University as a Marketplace for Ideas
- Open Debate, rather than Censorship

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The Woodward Report - Dissent

"If we extend the question from immoral motives to speech which is actually illegal, we find that the Majority has finessed the distinction between lawful and unlawful speech. Everyone must realize by now that the First Amendment, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, does not grant an absolute right to free expression; the right often depends upon the context of the situation. […]

As a Dartmouth discipline committee said after Shockly was disrupted there two years ago, 'A speech dealing with the slander of a racial group is not susceptible to academic discourse because verbal refutation cannot undo the damage caused by the utterance of this slander.'"

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The Woodward Report (3)

Principles - Dissent

- Free Speech is not absolute and institutions must consider social justice and power dynamics.
- University is not required to provide every speaker a platform.
- Political protest is not necessarily an attack on Academic Freedom

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Deliberate Indifference – Title IX

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)

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The Davis Standard

Established by the U.S. Supreme Court in Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999). Applies to student-on-student sexual harassment under Title IX

Recipients may be liable when harassment is “so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive” that it denies or limits a student’s access to educational opportunities

Recipients must:

- have actual knowledge of the harassment
- not respond with **deliberate indifference**—meaning its response is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances

The standard focuses on whether the harassment effectively deprives the student of access to education .

- Key takeaway: The Davis Standard sets a high threshold for when a school’s failure to respond to student-on-student sexual harassment can result in Title IX liability.

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Recent Regulatory Action and Judicial Response

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OCR Guidance

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U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Dear Colleague Letter: Protecting Students from Discrimination, such as Harassment, Based on Race, Color, or National Origin, Including Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics (May 2024)

- "The fact that harassment may involve conduct that includes speech in a public setting or speech that is also motivated by political or religious beliefs, however, does not relieve a school of its obligation to respond under Title VI …if the harassment creates a hostile environment in school for a student or students."
- "For instance, if students at a public university engage in offensive speech about members of a particular ethnic group and that speech contributes to a hostile environment within an education program about which the university knows or should know, the university has a legal obligation to address that hostile environment for students in school. The university may, however, be constrained or limited in how it responds if speech is involved."

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U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (Cont.)

Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions: Investigative Guidance (1994)

- Though the recipient may not be responsible directly for all harassing conduct, the recipient does have a responsibility to provide a nondiscriminatory educational environment.
- If discriminatory conduct causes a racially hostile environment to develop that affects the enjoyment of the educational program for the student(s) being harassed, and if the recipient has actual or constructive notice of the hostile environment, the recipient is required to take appropriate responsive action.

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HHS Guidance

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Dear Colleague Letter on Civil Rights Protections Against Antisemitic Discrimination (September 2026)

- "Where the alleged violation concerns a recipient's response to known protected-status harassment, deliberate indifference is one available basis for finding noncompliance."
- "Under the Davis-derived deliberate indifference framework, a recipient may be deliberately indifferent to a hostile environment when the harassment is sufficiently severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to deprive the affected person of equal access to a covered program or benefit; the recipient has actual knowledge of the harassment; the recipient has the authority to exercise substantial control over the harasser and the context in which the harassment occurs; and the recipient's response is clearly unreasonable in light of known circumstances."

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Dear Colleague Letter on Civil Rights Protections Against Antisemitic Discrimination (September 2026) (Cont.)

- "OCR may also consider whether the recipient delayed its response without justification, offered no meaningful response, failed to follow its own policies, treated comparable misconduct or protected-status harassment inconsistently, failed to restore equal access, or continued using the same "remedial" measures after learning that they were ineffective."

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UCLA

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U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (UCLA)

DOJ – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (May 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (July 2025)

DOJ found UCLA was in violation of Title VI, including the following factual findings:

- "Jewish and Israeli students at UCLA were subjected to severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive harassment that created a hostile environment by members of the encampment. Jewish and Israeli students were assaulted, verbally harassed, and physically prevented from accessing parts of UCLA's campus on the basis of their actual or perceived race, religion, and/or national origin."

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U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (UCLA) (2)

DOJ – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (May 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (July 2025)

- "UCLA had actual notice that Jewish and Israeli students were subjected to severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive harassment that created a hostile environment by members of the encampment."
- "UCLA was deliberately indifferent to the hostile environment for Jewish and Israeli students caused by the encampment…[and] took no meaningful action to eliminate the hostile environment for Jewish and Israeli students."

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U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (UCLA) (3)

DOJ Complaint in U.S. District Court

United States v. Regents of the University of California (May 2026)

- "The encampment was in clear violation of a number of existing content-neutral time, place, and manner rules issued by UCLA and the greater UC System regarding the use of campus spaces for expressive activities."
- "[E]ven if the protest encampment had initially complied with applicable time, place, and manner restrictions and was approved by UCLA as a lawful expressive activity, as early as April 26th, the second day of the encampment, the University was on notice that Jewish students had been physically assaulted by members of the encampment."

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U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (UCLA) (4)

DOJ Complaint in U.S. District Court

United States v. Regents of the University of California (May 2026)

"UCLA discriminated against Jewish and Israeli students via its **deliberate indifference** to the repeated and widespread hostile actions of campus agitators against

Jewish and Israeli students. UCLA created a culture where antisemitism and anti-Israeli bias could and did thrive. UCLA was aware of the harassment and discrimination that occurred in its programs and activities, yet it deliberately refused to take action, or else, took actions clearly insufficient in light of the known circumstances." (Emphasis added.)

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Harvard

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard)

HHS – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (April 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (June 2025)

HHS found Harvard was in violation of Title VI, focusing on the following legal standard:

- A school may be held liable for its **deliberate indifference** to student-on-student harassment under Title VI if its response is "clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances
- Proving deliberate indifference "requires more than a showing that the institution's response to harassment was less than ideal
- Deliberate indifference means "affirmatively choosing to do the wrong thing, or doing nothing, despite knowing what the law requires."

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard) (2)

HHS – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (April 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (June 2025)

HHS found Harvard was in violation of Title VI, focusing on the following legal standard:

- It must be pled that the school "either did nothing or failed to take additional reasonable measures after it learned that its initial remedies were ineffective."

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard) (3)

HHS – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (April 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (June 2025)

- A deliberate indifference claim requires meeting five elements:
  1. plaintiffs were "subject to 'severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive' … harassment";
  2. the harassment "caused the plaintiff to be deprived of educational opportunities or benefits";
  3. the school "knew of the harassment";
  4. the harassment occurred "in its programs and activities"; and
  5. the school "was deliberately indifferent to the harassment such that its response (or lack thereof) is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances."

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard) (4)

HHS – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (April 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (June 2025)

HHS found Harvard acted with ”deliberate indifference because its response to the discrimination and harassment Jewish and Israeli students experienced from October 7, 2023, through [June 2025] was clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.”

HHS focused on ”three key areas of repeated ineffectual action and inaction by Harvard…”

First, Harvard failed to establish clear procedures and practices to report and remediate antisemitic harassment.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard) (5)

HHS – Title VI Investigation

- Investigation Initiated (April 2025)
- Letter of Findings Issued (June 2025)

Second, Harvard failed to implement disciplinary measures with any uniformity, resulting in a patchwork application of sanctions and reprieves that had no value as a meaningful consequence or deterrent of antisemitic harassment.

Third, Harvard routinely allowed protesters to flout time, place and manner restrictions without consequence, predictably resulting in recurring unsanctioned protests that deprived Jewish students of full access to parts of campus where they studied and socialized.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Justice (Harvard) (6)

DOJ Complaint in U.S. District Court

United States v. President and Fellows of Harvard College (March 2026)

In its complaint, the DOJ alleged that "Harvard failed to protect its Jewish and Israeli students in at least two ways":

- By remaining "deliberately indifferent to a level of hostility on its campus so well-known across the nation that members of Congress were writing about it."
- By "intentionally refus[ing] to enforce its campus rules—rules it enforced against others—when the victims were Jews or Israelis. This sent the clear message to Harvard's Jewish and Israeli community that the indifference was not an accident; they were being intentionally excluded and effectively denied equal access to educational opportunities.

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Cooper Union

The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

Student Complaint in the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York

Gartenberg v Cooper Union (February 2025)

Jewish students attending Cooper Union alleged that they suffered a hostile educational environment on the basis of national origin when the institution was **deliberately indifferent** to antisemitic harassment on campus.

In February 2025, the federal court permitted the claim to proceed.

“Gartenberg also alleges numerous examples of deliberate indifference ..., Cooper Union did nothing to prevent a group of the October 25 protestors from trespassing into and occupying the Foundation Building, where they disrupted school activities and intimidated Jewish students, some of whom attempted to call the police for help.

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The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (2)

Student Complaint in the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York

Gartenberg v Cooper Union (February 2025)

Cooper Union also failed to check the student IDs of those individuals. And despite them likely violating Cooper Union's generally applicable policies against engaging in "disorderly, disruptive, or aggressive behavior," the school took no action to disperse the protestors as the demonstration spiraled out of control. Cooper Union's arguments to the contrary are unpersuasive."

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The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (3)

Student Complaint in the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York

Gartenberg v. Cooper Union (February 2025)

"Gartenberg plausibly alleges that Jewish students at Cooper Union were subject to antisemitic harassment that created an objectively hostile educational environment. She also alleges that Jewish students suffered emotional distress "including intense anxiety and panic attacks"; have "engaged therapists, missed and/or dropped classes, and failed to complete and perform on assignments"; and have avoided the Foundation Building's library, and that at that least one student delayed completing his or her degree, resulting in temporal and financial losses."

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The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (4)

Student Complaint in the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York

Gartenberg v. Cooper Union (February 2025)

"At the very least, these allegations plausibly demonstrate that Jewish students at Cooper Union were "deprived of a supportive, scholastic environment free of [discrimination] and harassment." Accordingly, they are sufficient to plead a deprivation of educational benefits or opportunities for purposes of Title VI. "

The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (5)

Student Complaint in the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York

Gartenberg v. Cooper Union (February 2025)

In February 2026, Cooper Union notified its community that it agreed to a resolution of all the students' claims.

Settlement terms include:

- Establishing a Title VI Coordinator
- Annual Reports regarding the resolution of Title VI complaints and disciplinary outcomes
- Policy provisions addressing student safety, safeguarding students' rights, prompt and thorough response to allegations of discrimination or harassment.
- Guidance on application of nondiscrimination, including a statement regarding "Zionism"
- Training

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Cases to Consider and Watch

Cases to Consider

Reges v. Cauce, 103 F.4th 684 (9th Cir. 2024).

University of Washingtons "investigated, reprimanded, and threatened to discipline a professor for contentious statements he made in a class syllabus," which mocked the University's model land acknowledgement statement.

The Court held that the "[U]niversity's actions toward the professor violated his First Amendment rights."

- December 2025: The Court reversed the lower court's decision and remanded for further proceedings.
- August 2026: The parties signed a settlement agreement, which preserved the Plaintiff's "parody land statement" and provided $600,000 in damages and attorneys' fees.

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Cases to Consider (Cont.)

Corlett v. Tong (S.D. Cal. Sept. 2, 2026).

San Diego State University ”investigated” a tenured professor’s repeated use of “unexpurgated n-word” in class and ultimately found the professor “ineffective in his teaching of undergraduate students” and that he “should be reassigned from those classes” for the remainder of the term.

The Plaintiff alleged:

- Retaliation violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments
- Application of the University’s non-discrimination policy violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments
- Free speech and academic freedom violations under First Amendment

The Court distinguished this case from the Ninth Circuit’s treatment in *Reges* and held that the Plaintiff’s interest in “deploy[ing] the unexpurgated n-word repeatedly” did not outweigh the University’s “interest in providing ‘effective instruction.’”

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Cases to Watch

Tex. Am. Ass'n of Univ. Professors-Am. Fed'n of Teachers v. Creighton, No. 3:26-cv-01845 (W.D. Tex. July 8, 2026).

The Creighton Memoranda, issued in December 2025 and April 2026, address race- and sex-based restrictions on speech in the classroom, as well as phase-out directives for academic programs based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Plaintiffs allege violations of the:

- First Amendment right to “speak free of viewpoint discrimination”
- Fourteenth Amendment right to “be free from impermissibly vague policies”
- Fourteenth Amendment right to ”be free from intentional racial discrimination”

The Plaintiffs filed a Motion for Preliminary Injunction on July 17, 2026, requesting that the court “immediately halt enforcement of university policies.”

AAUP President stated the injunction is “vital for the restoration of academic freedom at Texas Tech.” The Motion remains pending before the court as of September 2026.

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Cases to Watch (Cont.)

Am. Ass'n of Univ. Profs. v. Albritton, No. 4:26-cv-06268 (S.D. Tex. filed Aug. 3, 2026).

Texas A&M University System Policy:

- 08.01: “No system academic course will advocate race or gender ideology, or topics related to sexual orientation or gender identity.”
- 12.01: “[A] faculty member will not introduce a controversial matter that has no relation to the classroom subject or teach material that is inconsistent with the approved syllabus for the course.”

Alleges violations of the:

- First Amendment right to free speech, including “unconstitutionally vague, viewpoint discriminatory, prior restraints on First Amendment protected academic speech”
- Fourteenth Amendment right to due process

The case is currently pending before the court.

Classroom Scenario

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LABOR HISTORY CLASS

- A university labor history class examined the legacy of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. During the discussion, one student argued that Chavez's leadership represented one of the most important civil rights and labor movements in American history, while another criticized aspects of the union's tactics, arguing that some strikes and boycotts harmed small family farmers and farmworkers who disagreed with the union.
- The debate became more pointed when a student remarked that "many migrant workers were manipulated into supporting causes they didn't fully understand." Another student added that "had it been today we would not need to worry about them unionizing, because these workers would have been deported or prevented from entering the country."

LABOR HISTORY CLASS (2)

- Several Latino students later said they felt the comments relied on a stereotype that portrayed members of their community as uninformed, easily influenced, or only entering the country without permission. One professor viewed the discussion as an example of academic freedom in action: students critically examined a historical figure, challenged one another's interpretations, and debated competing historical evidence without directing insults at any individual.
- Another professor, having observed the same discussion, concluded that while criticism of Chavez and the union was entirely appropriate, the generalized comments about migrant workers could reasonably make Latino students feel that negative assumptions were being made about a protected group, potentially contributing to a hostile learning environment.

LABOR HISTORY CLASS (3)

- Dissatisfied with the classroom professor's view that the discussion was protected academic debate and did not constitute discriminatory conduct, the second professor publicly characterized the other professor's response as discriminatory.
- The second professor encouraged students to organize and participate in a protest alleging that the university had failed to adequately address discriminatory conduct arising from the classroom discussion.
- The second professor attended and supported the student protest, reinforcing the students' concerns that the classroom discussion reflected discrimination rather than protected academic discourse.
- After the protest, the second professor posted on social media criticizing the university for not taking action against the other professor, expressing dissatisfaction with the institution's handling of the incident and calling for greater accountability.

Institutional Responses

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Pedagogical Considerations

Initial Consideration

- Mandatory v Elective - Agency Theory
- How close topic is to subject matter (class on Physical Therapy discussing institutional racism)
- Protected Academic Speech loses protection when speech becomes personal

Cumulative Impact

- Meaningful participation inhibited = may have pervasive concern
- Point of discussion

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Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University (1)

Faculty Removal Following Student Video (Sept. 2025)



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Texas A&M University (2)

Faculty Removal Following Student Video (Sept. 2025)

University Policy 08.01 Civil Rights Protections and Compliance (Revised December 18, 2025)

2.1 (b): ”No system academic course will advocate race or gender ideology, or topics related to sexual orientation or gender identity.”

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Texas A&M University (3)

Faculty Removal Following Student Video (Sept. 2025)

University Policy 12.01 – Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure (Revised November 13, 2025)

1.2: “Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject that the faculty member teaches, but a faculty member will not introduce a controversial matter that has no relation to the classroom subject or teach material that is inconsistent with the approved syllabus for the course. Each faculty member is also a citizen of the nation, state, and community; and when speaking, writing, or acting as such, must be free from institutional censorship or discipline, subject to academic responsibility. In such instances, the faculty member should clearly state that the faculty member is not speaking for the system academic institution.

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The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC at Chapel Hill

State Law

Article 36. Campus Free Speech.

§ 116-300. Policies required.

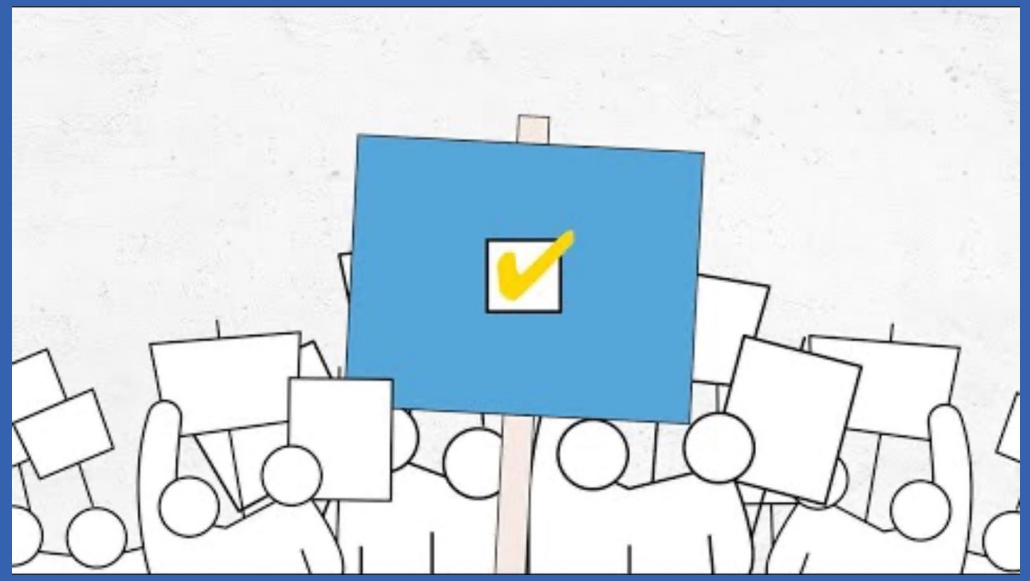
The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall develop and adopt a policy on free expression that states, at least, the following: (…)

(4) Students and faculty have the freedom to discuss any problem that presents itself, as the First Amendment permits and within the limits of narrowly tailored viewpoint- and content-neutral restrictions on time, place, and manner of expression that are consistent with this Article and that are necessary to achieve a **significant institutional interest**, provided that these restrictions are clear, published, and provide ample alternative means of expression. Students and faculty shall be permitted to assemble and engage in spontaneous expressive activity as long as such activity is lawful and **does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the constituent institution**, subject to the requirements of this section.

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UNC at Chapel Hill (2)

Free Speech at Carolina



[UNC System Policy Manual – Free Speech and Free Expression]

[UNC System Policy Manual – Academic Freedom and Tenure]

[UNC System Policy Manual – Institutional Neutrality and Equality]

[UNC-Chapel Hill Student Code of Conduct]

[Freedom of Speech and Free Expression Policy]

[Freedom of Speech and Expression Standard]

[Board of Governors Policy on Campus Gatherings and Related Student Conduct Matters]

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Brown University

Brown University (1)

Statement of University Values and Voice

- December 2024 – Ad Hoc Committee on University Values and Voice charged to lead process to “define the core values”
- March 2025 – Draft Statement of University Values and Voice shared with University community to provide feedback; received approximately 800 responses, in addition to attendance at town halls
- April 2025 – Issued revised Statement of University Values and Voice
- May 2025 – University’s highest governing body approved

Outlined four core institutional values of the University, including Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression.

- “Academic freedom is the freedom to investigate and learn without interference or censorship. Academic freedom is necessary for the production of knowledge and understanding and imposes responsibilities on those who exercise it."
- “Freedom of expression is the right to communicate ideas and engage in reasoned and informed protest, dissent, and criticism.”

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Brown University (2)

Statement of University Values and Voice

University Voice Defined

- “University ‘voice’ is defined as a public statement or action that intentionally expresses a position on an issue.
- Being necessary to advance and defend the mission and core values of the institution, use of University voice should concern only those issues that directly influence the University mission. The University has discretion in the use of its voice on such issues, informed by the principles of shared governance.
- The University must refrain from expressing positions on topics unrelated to its mission, because doing so risks undermining the public trust, damaging the conditions necessary for academic freedom, and preventing fulfillment of the University mission.”

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Indiana University

Indiana University (1)

State Law

Senate Enrolled Act 202 (Signed into law March 2024)

Requires public institutions to:

- Review and determine whether a faculty member has helped foster a culture of free inquiry, free expression, and intellectual diversity within the institution…and refrained from subjecting students to views and opinions concerning matters not related to the faculty member's discipline or assigned course.
  - Prohibits consideration of expressing dissent, criticizing institutional leadership, or political activity outside of teaching duties.
- Establish a procedure that allows both students and employees to submit complaints.

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Indiana University

Statement of Policy on Institutional Neutrality (as required by SEA 202)

University Community Members - Personal Views

- Free to express view on particular policy proposal, provided views are expressed in a personal capacity
- Must refrain from taking an official institutional position on behalf of the University
- Should assume they are representing the University when conducting official and assigned functions and responsibilities
- Must ensure comments are not construed as those made on behalf of the University
- Applies to communications from official University channels, including using University email accounts, websites, social media channels, public fora, and related channels of communication
- Must use due diligence to distinguish between official University position statements and individual viewpoints and opinions of University employees, students, and alumni

Indiana University (2)

University Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adopt the Chicago Principles as a “foundational expression of its academic mission” in February 2026.

- Following a November 2025 review which charged the University’s Faculty Council with ”examining the principles in context of IU’s long-standing commitments to academic freedom and free expression.”
- In response, the University “established a join implementation task force to design and coordinate efforts to educate the university community about the Chicago Principles.”
- In September 2026, the University named seven faculty to lead implementation efforts.

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Next Steps and Changes

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Proactive Considerations (1)

Pattern and Trend Analysis

- Centralized tracking
- Community partners to analyze data
- Implementation of a response plan for concerning patterns or trends
- Feedback mechanism to determine whether responses are effective

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Proactive Considerations (2)

Designated Coordinators

- Centralized office to provide consistent response
- Serve as expert to advise campus partners
- Central voice to speak with external organizations on behalf of institution
- Title IX (required by federal regulation); Title VI (required by some states)

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Proactive Considerations (3)

Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

- Allow for consistent application of institutional policies
- Provides for an objective evaluation
- Provides safety for parties
- Protects the learning environment
- Balances individual freedom of expression with institutional operational concerns
- Examples include:
  - On-campus Speaker Policy and Procedures
  - Right to Peaceful Assembly Policy

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Proactive Considerations (4)

Conduct Policies

- Applied consistently
- Enforcement, or lack thereof, impacts the educational environment
- Should include students, faculty, and staff

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Proactive Considerations (5)

Debate Across the Curriculum

The Debate Across the Curriculum (DAC) initiative cultivates a dynamic learning environment where critical thinking, open inquiry, and meaningful conversation thrive. By integrating debate across disciplines, DAC empowers students to engage thoughtfully with diverse perspectives, building a culture of intellectual curiosity, respectful discourse, and academic excellence that extends beyond the classroom.

- Interdisciplinary reach
- Engages multiple perspectives
- Structured debate
- Focus on research and evidence
- Benefits:
  - Improve public speaking
  - Develop critical thinking challenging one's beliefs

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Proactive Considerations (6)

Syllabus Review

- Premises:
  - Courses should be taught to syllabus
  - Students should have agency on the material they elect to engage
  - Consistency in what is taught at the institution
- Review:
  - Provide thorough academic inquiry
  - Identify and track systemwide and individual student gaps in content (effective review cycle)

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Classroom Scenario, Revisited

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How Could Proactive Steps Have Helped Here?

- Syllabus Review
- Time, Manner, Place Restriction
- Social Media Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Designated Coordinator
- Debate Across the Curriculum

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Wrap-Up and Q&A

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Questions?

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