



Clark University Statement of Freedom of Expression and Community Values

This statement of principles articulates Clark University's commitments and ideals relating to freedom of expression and academic freedom, respect for each other within our campus community, and freedom from harassment and intimidation.

Clark University is committed to the principles of free speech, the free pursuit of inquiry and the free exchange of ideas. These fundamental tenets are central to our educational mission. As an institution, we strive to create a productive learning environment in which we can engage respectfully in public debate, ask difficult questions, discuss new ideas, and express opinions.

Clark was founded on the principle of free intellectual inquiry. This includes a broad latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. We are a community where the free and open exchange of thought, belief, opinion, and expression is highly valued because it promotes better knowledge and understanding. Our community is composed of people with diverse histories and cultural viewpoints and encompasses a wide array of disciplinary perspectives. The ideas of different members of our community may often and quite naturally conflict. Pursuing ideas freely and openly, allowing all ideas to be criticized and tested, we must manage this conflict in ways consistent with our mission as a community of learners.

We are committed, as a university, to promoting and protecting the rights of speech, inquiry, and expression to all members of our community. We also recognize that the right to free speech coexists alongside other rights described in our university policies and afforded under state, federal, and local laws. We must ensure that a commitment to freedom of speech is effectively sustained alongside policies that actively and categorically reject violence, harassment, discrimination, and intimidation. Historically, speech rights were developed to safeguard basic civil rights and civil liberties under the law. It is important to acknowledge that speech has been used to undermine these civil rights and civil liberties, especially for marginalized communities, thereby limiting their freedom to learn, their freedom to contribute, and their freedom to participate in the community.

The University recognizes that causing discomfort and even causing offense is not, of itself, a basis for limiting free speech. At the same time, all members of the University community should recognize that our community norms include respecting the dignity and safety of others, and acknowledging the right of others to express differing opinions. To this end, the University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of speech and expression; both for public safety, and to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the institution.

As an educational institution, we share a collective responsibility to support, safeguard and preserve these central freedoms of inquiry and expression. And as a community, we believe that lively freedom of debate and a vibrant commitment to

open inquiry is central to the values of our university.

Related Information

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