

A Resolution Concerning Free Speech, Expression and Academic Inquiry at Wichita State University:

WHEREAS, Wichita State University seeks to reaffirm its commitment to the First Amendment right of free speech and expression and to document our dedication to the free and open exchange of knowledge and ideas which furthers our mission.

AND WHEREAS, Wichita State University is committed to free and open inquiry and expression for all members of its campus community except as limitations on that freedom are appropriate to the functioning of the campus and permissible under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

AND WHEREAS the University respects and supports the freedom of all members of its campus community to express, discuss and debate knowledge, thoughts and ideas.

AND WHEREAS ideas of the diverse members of the university community often and naturally conflict, it is inappropriate for the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions that they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.

AND WHEREAS the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University share the responsibility of 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 the University family.

AND WHEREAS Wichita State University embraces the human imperative of transferring wisdom through time and recognizes the importance of legitimate diversity of thought and opinion in order to effectively refine thought and knowledge.

AND WHEREAS universities are central to defending free speech and expression in society, and the University respects and supports academic freedom in the classroom where faculty and students can engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship or retaliation.

AND WHEREAS higher education institutions cannot allow erosion of this essential commitment to free speech necessary for a free society and should explore the most challenging, complex and provocative ideas and debates in culture today.

AND WHEREAS college campuses across the United States wrestle with issues surrounding free speech, free expression and academic freedom and inquiry.

AND WHEREAS a university must establish a culture that welcomes and promotes the free, respectful and peaceful exchange of ideas in order to fulfill its role and mission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY supports preserving independent thought and critical inquiry and reaffirms that Wichita State University will not shy away from uncomfortable topics being explored or discussed on

campus but, rather, will foster an environment where difficult discussions can take place in order to challenge students and help them grow intellectually.

This statement has been endorsed by _____.

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2020.

This statement borrows from the Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression of the University of Chicago. In addition, free expression policies, statements and commitments from the following institutions was used to develop this document:

- University of Chicago
- Champlain College
- Colorado Mesa University
- Winthrop University
- Ball State University
- Cleveland State University
- University of Texas at San Antonio