

POLICY STATEMENT

April 29, 2010

Title: Freedom of Inquiry

Purpose: To describe University policy and commitment regarding academic freedom and freedom of inquiry.

The University of Oregon values and supports free and open inquiry. The commitment to free speech, academic freedom, and freedom of inquiry described in this policy extends to all members of the UO community: Faculty, staff, and students. It also extends to all others who visit or participate in activities held on the UO campus.

Free speech is central to the academic mission and the central tenet of a free and democratic society. The University encourages and supports open, vigorous, and challenging debate across the full spectrum of human issues as they present themselves to this community. Further, as a public institution the University will sustain a higher and more open standard for freedom of inquiry and free speech than may be expected or preferred in private settings.

Free inquiry and free speech are the cornerstones of an academic institution committed to the creation and transfer of knowledge. Expression of diverse points of view is of the highest importance, not solely for those who present and defend some view but for those who would hear, disagree, and pass judgment on those views. The belief that an opinion is pernicious, false, and in any other way despicable, detestable, offensive or “just plain wrong” cannot be grounds for its suppression.

The University supports free speech with vigor, including the right of presenters to offer opinion, the right of the audience to hear what is presented, and the right of protesters to engage with speakers in order to challenge ideas, so long as the protest does not disrupt or stifle the free exchange of ideas. It is the responsibility of speakers, listeners and all members of our community to respect others and to promote a culture of mutual inquiry throughout the University community.

Access to UO facilities and space is governed by a complementary policy [Scheduling Use of Facilities].

*The UO recognizes the contribution made by the University of Michigan policy statements and practice guides in this formulation of UO Policy.

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