

Resolution on the Commitment to Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression

To: Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

A 2014 statement by the University of Chicago regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech has been adopted by over 50 universities, including the University of Chicago, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Georgetown, and the University of Maryland. CSU Channel Islands adopted it in October 2017. UCSC has the opportunity to be the first University of California location to adopt it, and by doing so, state that our campus is in favor of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

The full statement from the University of Chicago can be found at:

<https://provost.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/reports/FOECommitteeReport.pdf>

A list of universities that have adopted or endorsed the statement can be found at:

<https://www.thefire.org/chicago-statement-university-and-faculty-body-support/>

Be it resolved:

Whereas the University of California, Santa Cruz is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. Except insofar as limitations on that freedom are necessary to the functioning of the University, UCSC fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community “to discuss any problem that presents itself.”

And whereas all members of the University community share in the responsibility for 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 our community. The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The University may restrict expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University. The University may also reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the University, but these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression. These exceptions will never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the University’s commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas.

And whereas the University’s fundamental commitment to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Fostering the ability of members of the University community to engage in such debate and

deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission.

And whereas, as a corollary to the University's commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the University community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. Although members of the University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe.

Therefore be it resolved that UCSC commits to promoting and protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech – not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it. Without a vibrant commitment to free and open inquiry, a university ceases to be a university. The University of California, Santa Cruz's commitment to this principle lies at the very core of our University's greatness. That is our inheritance, and it is our promise to the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethan L. Miller