

Dear Members of the DePaul Community,

On Friday, May 12, the university's Speech and Expression Task Force unanimously endorsed a document enshrining a series of principles that guide controverted questions of free speech on campus. They crafted the document after much debate and research on the practices of other institutions and used the existing Guiding Principles on Speech and Expression, developed by the university and approved in 2009, as a starting point. Today, I am writing to formally accept their work and adopt this document as DePaul's practice on such matters.

The document is [attached](#), so I will not repeat it here. Instead, please permit me a few observations.

1. First, my gratitude. The Task Force consists of faculty, staff and students *and was* intentionally chosen for their diversity of opinions on the matters to be debated. The reports I received of their deliberations were that they were spirited, thoughtful, and truly collegial, even in moments of difference. The Task Force could not have represented more effectively the ideals that we seek for all speech and expression at DePaul. Allow me to thank them by name:

- Laura Hartman, Chair
- Jay Braatz, Senior Administration
- Peggy Burke, Student Affairs (nonvoting)
- Jeff Carrion, Staff Council
- Stephanie Halaska, Staff Council
- Lawrence Hamer, President's Diversity Council
- Debbie Harris, Staff Council
- Scott Kelley, Mission & Values
- Maria Lozano-Corona, Student Government Association
- Mark Moller, Faculty Council
- Marla Morgen, Office of the General Council
- Scott Paeth, Faculty Council
- Jack Piazza, Student Government Association
- Amira Proweller, Faculty Council
- Francesca Royster, Faculty Council
- Abdul-Malik Ryan, Student Affairs

- Lynn Safranek, Office of Public Relations & Communications (nonvoting)
 - Megan Scoville, Student Government Association
 - Neda Shaheen, Student Government Association
 - Karen Tamburro, Office of Institutional Diversity & Equity
 - Rico Tyler, Student Affairs
 - Julie Widholm, DePaul Art Museum
 - Shajuan Young, Staff Council
2. As you read through the new Guiding Principles you will see a strong preference for free speech at DePaul, even when that speech is one-sided, uncomfortable or contradictory. A number of our colleagues and students have called upon DePaul to reject speakers who do not hold values and opinions consonant with our Vincentian and Catholic mission. These principles utterly reject that standard and, in fact, welcome those who disagree.
 3. The university may determine matters of time, place and manner, as well as reserve judgments on matters that affect campus safety. The Guiding Principles also note that speech that “serves only to threaten and intimidate” is not protected by these principles. This establishes a high standard, and was written intentionally so.
 4. The Guiding Principles also make abundantly and intentionally clear that individuals who disrupt speech are acting in opposition to the institution’s commitment to open dialogue. Protestors are welcomed and encouraged by these principles, but directed to register their disagreement in ways that do not disrupt the speech in question.

Because the new Guiding Principles are strong and clear, it is particularly impressive that the Task Force eventually came to unanimity on them. I am accepting these principles and implementing them effective, today, May 26, 2017.

I am also, by this email, changing the Task Force to a standing committee, the Speech and Expression Advisory Committee, reporting directly to the provost. While the committee’s membership will be reconstituted next academic year, we will invite a number of members from the present task force to remain for consistency’s sake. This committee will be charged with providing education on the Guiding Principles and consultation regarding how they could be further integrated into university activities, policies, and procedures. The committee will also be asked to review these principles annually, to see how they might be improved even further. I invite Faculty Council, Staff Council and the Student Government Association to provide their own feedback as part of that annual review process.

Questions of speech and expression are being debated across the nation at this moment in time. I am proud of DePaul's new principles, and grateful for the thoughtful process that has brought us to this moment.

Respectfully,

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.
President

Guiding Principles for Speech and Expression at DePaul University

©2017 | DePaul University | 1 E. Jackson, Chicago, IL 60604 | Disclaimer