

Tulane University Freedom of Expression: Philosophy

Updated August 9, 2023

Tulane University's purpose is to create, communicate, and conserve knowledge in order to enrich the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to think, to learn and to act and lead with integrity and wisdom. In service to this purpose, Tulane recognizes and commits to the essential role freedom of expression, thought, inquiry, speech, and lawful assembly serve in protecting and upholding our University purpose. From global, national, state, and local human rights, to the values of our shared Tulane community, freedom of expression leads to collective evolution and the common good.

Freedom of expression is often the catalyst for change. Our ability to practice the free exchange of ideas – even when we disagree – and stay in the discussion is a hallmark of a quality education. Freedom of expression includes the ability to engage with each other through expression or to choose not to engage, but it does not provide a right to disrupt someone else's expression or to prohibit others from engaging. Disturbance becomes antithetical to freedom of expression when it disrupts the rights of others. Therefore, Tulane is committed to creating and sustaining an environment in which we welcome and practice the free exchange of ideas, the critical examination and discussion of them, and respect the dignity and freedom of others.

Tulane Protocols are intended to protect freedom of expression, protest, and demonstration [Freedom to Demonstrate: Campus Demonstration Protocol], as well as promote the safety of all members and operations of the university community from disruption to learning, teaching, research, administrative procedures, and other activities [Freedom from Disruption: Campus Disruption Protocol]. In order to create this environment, Tulane's framework explicitly restricts expression that is unlawful, defamatory, or threatening, and includes reasonable regulations of time, place, and manner of expression.

Community members who disrupt individuals' freedom of speech and/or the university's ability to carry out its mission will be held accountable as outlined specifically in section VII.A.2, as well as VII.A.13 - 15, VII.A.18 of the Student Code of Conduct; and in section V.J. and VII.Q in the Staff Handbook.