

STUDENT FREEDOM OF SPEECH

06/23

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy and statement is to protect the right of freedom of speech for Bellin College students.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

Section I

As an educational institution, we support the freedom of expression of ideas and, statement, we affirm the worth and dignity of all people and the limitless value of their intellectual potential; the commitment to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment illustrated through the beliefs and actions of our workforce and student body; lifelong learning; innovation; broad vision, effective communication, a sense of the inter-relatedness of all knowledge, sensitivity to the human condition, and a global perspective; the value of a lifelong commitment to service; and the value of ethical leadership that is inclusive, collaborative, directed towards effecting change for the greater good.

The College recognizes that some ideas will be viewed as offensive and disagreeable by some, perhaps even most, members of the community. However, it is not the role of the College to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, uncivil, or even deeply offensive. Rather, we encourage students of the College community to act according to the principle that the best response to ideas that they find offensive is speech, not censorship. Participating in a community where there is a diverse range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences is rewarding for all of our members and the College is committed to nurturing and celebrating this experience. We expect that diverse views and opinions will create conflict and disagreement among us at times, but the genuine sharing of ideas, perspectives, and values presupposes both freedom and responsibility. Consequently, we expect all members of the community to engage in civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive participation. The freedom to express ideas, exchange views, and engage in protest is essential to the life of the College.

The College encourages students to make independent judgments about the worth and validity of ideas and to contest ideas with which they disagree. Any effort by members of the College community to limit openness in this academic community is a matter of serious concern and hinders the freedom of expression and the discovery of truth. All students are therefore free to express their points of view on, or opposition to, any issue of public interest within reasonable restrictions of time, place, and manner. Each member of the community is also expected to encourage and facilitate the ability of other community members to express themselves freely. No group or individual has the right to interfere with the legitimate activity of other authorized persons and groups, as such activity compromises the College's goal of creating an environment where issues can be openly discussed.

Section II

The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not, of course, mean that students may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. Bellin College has obligations to

protect the dignity and security of all members of the College community from those who would seek to use speech primarily to deprive others of their freedom to learn, their freedom to contribute, and their freedom to participate in our community. Thus, the College may seek to restrict expression that: 1) violates state or federal law; 2) constitutes slander, threats, or harassment; 3) unreasonably invades individual privacy or violates confidentiality interests; or, 4) is directly incompatible with the functioning of the College as dedicated to the public good. In addition, the College may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the College. However, these are limited exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions not be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the College's ideals relating to the free and open discussion of ideas.

If students were to express or conduct themselves in ways that consist of hatred, hurtful actions or words, unethical behavior, or are not consistent with the college's mission, vision, values, campus policies, and foundational behaviors, are then subject to disciplinary action against the student such as the Student Behavior Conduct Hearing Procedures, the Student Performance Notification (SPN) Policy, the Bias Incident Policy, and other policies and procedures that may apply.

The College is committed to the principles of the free expression of ideas and providing an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect.