

# STUDENT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY

## Preamble

As a private university primarily for women, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Mount Saint Mary's University is committed to the education, support and development of the whole person. Grounded by the Catholic intellectual tradition to engage in dialogue with respect and an openness to all, we believe that student freedom of expression across all spaces within the university environment is paramount to the learning experience and the University's overall mission of building the next generations of leaders.

The open exchange of ideas, even those that might be offensive to some, are an integral and necessary part of the University learning experience. Learning to disagree peacefully and to welcome disparate opinions is core to any democratic society. As part of our commitment to the development of a dynamic and diverse community, Mount Saint Mary's University values and encourages the expression and exchange of ideas.

## Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression applies to all forms of speech including, but not limited to, debates, speeches, posting of signs, posting on social media, petitioning, information dissemination, the formation of groups, participation in activities, artistic displays and the invitation of guest speakers to address the University community.

All expression should be understood to be that of the speaker alone and not that of the University. While the University shall not censure or punish student expression and communication based on viewpoint, expression that violates university standards surrounding harassment, sexual, racial, gender, sexual orientation, religious bigotry or discrimination, or results in damage to property is not so protected.

## Core Principles

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds (political or apolitical), regardless of the platform. This includes orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art or through any other form of expression or media of choice.

MSMU's mission reflects the teachings of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJs). In line with the Catholic intellectual tradition's embrace of rigorous debate, the University will not censor or punish student freedom of expression that some may find inconsistent with Catholic teachings or the values of the CSJs.

It is inevitable that students will be exposed to varying points of view and will encounter others who think differently, or whose views they believe to be wrong, distasteful, hateful and/or offensive. MSMU values rigorous debate, robust discussion, and even strong disagreement on issues. It is imperative that we enter into challenging conversations and vigorously engage ideas, while respecting those with whom we disagree, and welcome diverse voices and perspectives into the conversation.

## Demonstrations, protests, marches

The right to peaceful assembly is granted to all current students of Mount Saint Mary's University. The University may establish reasonable time, place and manner restrictions for the purpose of avoiding disruption to, or substantial interference with, the University's regular and essential operations and activities. The University retains the right to ensure the safety of all individuals,

the protection of property and the continuity of the educational process. Only reasonable time, place and manner restrictions will be enforced by the University. Students will not be censored based on content.

Student organizations should follow established campus event policies and procedures for reserving use of University grounds and facilities for demonstrations, protests and/or marches. The process serves to facilitate the timely use and organization of university space, parking, or other logistics.

### **Closing**

Mount Saint Mary's University is committed to the free expression of ideas and viewpoints. Students are encouraged to engage in discourse around issues and topics and to do so in ways that further their growth and development as leaders.

Freedom of expression is fundamental to the advancement of truth and learning. By adopting this policy, MSMU seeks to ensure the protection of freedom of expression for students, and embody the mission of the CSJs to support students to become all they are capable of being.

Questions or requests for additional information regarding this policy should be directed to the Division of Student Affairs.