

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MOTION

Submit this form to the Faculty Senate President

SUBJECT: Formation of an Ad Hoc Committee/Working Group to Strengthen Freedom of Expression, Academic Freedom, Belonging, and Viewpoint Inclusion

SENATOR PROPOSING MOTION: Mary DiBartolo

SENATOR SECONDING MOTION: Mia Waldron

MOTION (this section alone will be recorded in the minutes):

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate requests that the Faculty Senate President for the 2026-2027 academic year bring to the Consortium Coordinating Committee the need to consider forming an Ad Hoc Consortium Committee charged with strengthening campus practices related to freedom of expression, academic freedom, civil disagreement and viewpoint inclusion as part of a more concrete action plan to facilitate free speech, belonging and inclusion on campus for all students, faculty and staff. **It is requested that this ad hoc committee consider** a plan for the campus community regarding principles of freedom of speech (including examples of free speech vs. compelled speech) along with strategies to enhance inclusion for all, **independent of ideological views.**

This committee shall include the VP of Inclusion, Access & Belonging (VP IAB) as an **ex officio member** of the committee, as well as several representatives (suggested minimum of 2 each) from the student body, faculty, staff, etc. with the goal of the first meeting being held in the fall semester of the upcoming academic year.

The proposed committee's work should include reviewing existing University Policies and reporting mechanisms, gathering input from students, faculty, staff and other relevant campus constituencies as determined through the Consortium process, identifying needs related to freedom of expression and inclusion, and developing recommendations to support a campus climate in which all members of the community can engage in open inquiry and respectful disagreement without fear of retaliation or exclusion, including individuals across the range of political, philosophical, religious, and ideological viewpoints. Any recommendations must not violate academic freedom, and the Faculty Senate will need to approve any plan item regarding academic freedom.

JUSTIFICATION:

As a USM institution, Salisbury University subscribes to and posts detailed statements on its website supporting freedom of speech/expression, as well as valuing inclusion and belonging. However, many faculty, staff and students feel this is not the case, particularly if one has conservative beliefs/values. Students report feeling oppressed, ridiculed and/or fear retribution (including being verbally chastised and/or graded differently) if viewpoints do not align with those of the professor. Faculty and staff have voiced similar concerns.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

Negative: None

Positive: If adopted, this motion will go a long way to foster critical inquiry, academic freedom, and the open exchange of diverse ideas essential for a functioning democracy and intellectual growth.

Is this a recommendation to the Provost? Yes _____ No X

Is this a recommendation to someone else? No _____ Yes, to Faculty Senate President (AY 26-27)

VOTE: Number of Senators Present: _____ Motion Passes or Fails: _____