**SALISBURY UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MOTION**

Submit this form to the Faculty Senate President

SUBJECT: Freedom of Expression resolution

SENATOR PROPOSING MOTION: John A. Nieves

SENATOR SECONDING MOTION: Aaron Hogue

MOTION: The Faculty Senate adopting the attached Freedom of Expression resolution.

JUSTIFICATION: During these tense times on college campuses, as well as in the country at large, freedom of expression is under attack as many parties seek to restrict expression of others in order to avoid having to make coherent arguments for their own positions. This resolution will help protect free expression and fruitful debate in the marketplace of ideas. It will help protect the productive creation of knowledge instead of stifling discourse.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

Negative: Some members of the campus community may choose to be offended instead of engaging offending ideas.

Positive: Open discourse and debate over any issue will be able to be engaged in on campus.

VOTE:

Is this a recommendation to the Provost? Yes\_X\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ Is this a recommendation to someone else? No\_\_\_\_ Yes X to Policy Review Committee

**Freedom of Expression Resolution**

Salisbury University Faculty Senate Freedom of Expression Statement[[1]](#footnote-1)

Salisbury University (the “University”) supports the notion that the most effective response to ideas we oppose “lies through open discussion rather than through inhibition,” and that “education should not be intended to make people comfortable, it is meant to make them think.” Therefore, the University is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, and thus is committed to ensuring all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. The University fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the University community to engage in hard thought, strong disagreement, independent judgment and the questioning of assumptions and beliefs in such a way that creates a campus environment that flourishes with rich and open discussion.

Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often conflict. However, it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Nevertheless, the University greatly values civility, and believes that all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect. That being said, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.

In that regard, the freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The University may restrict expression that violates the law or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the operations of the University. Specifically, the University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the University. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the University’s commitment to the notions of free inquiry.

Although members of the University community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe.

The University’s fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, or immoral. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the University community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University’s educational mission.

1. This Statement draws extensively from The Chicago Principles created by the University of Chicago. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)