

The University of North Dakota's Resources and Programming on Academic Freedom and Free Speech Spring 2025

Prepared in collaboration between the University Senate Leadership, DEI Committee, TTaDA leadership, and VPAA Office.

Part I. Resources

The protections of academic freedom and free speech are vital to the work we do, as educators and researchers, but these concepts can be abstract and difficult to define. For information on Free Speech and Academic Freedom, faculty and staff can access resources from the University of North Dakota and external organizations like the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The University of North Dakota [Policy on Academic Freedom](#) and [Policy Statement on Discrimination and Harassment](#):

The policy on Academic Freedom states that the primary responsibility of the academic community is to provide for the enrichment of intellectual experience. Essential to the realization of this ideal is a free and open academic community, which takes no ideological or policy position itself. The responsible academic community welcomes those who do take an ideological or policy position and jealously guards their right to do so. Conflict of ideas cannot occur unless there is opportunity for a variety of viewpoints to be expressed. Toleration of what may be error is an inescapable condition of the meaningful pursuit of truth. The academic community must be hospitable even to closed minds, and it must welcome the conflict of ideas likely to ensue. Academic responsibility to provide opportunity for expression of diverse points of view generates academic freedom.

The University of North Dakota (University/UND) is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. UND does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, sex, sex stereotypes, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, marital or parental status, veteran's status, political belief or affiliation, participation in lawful activity off the employer's premises during nonworking hours, or any other status protected by law or UND/North Dakota University System/State Board of Higher Education policy. UND prohibits discrimination, harassment, student-on-student discriminatory harassment, and student-on-student harassment, as defined by this policy. UND also prohibits retaliation by its employees and students against a person who exercises their rights or responsibilities under any provision of state or federal law, including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the North Dakota Human Rights Act, or the Discrimination and Harassment policy.

If you have experienced discrimination or harassment based on a protected characteristic, please contact the [Equal Opportunity & Title IX Office](#).

External Resources:

These key organizations and resources provide policy guides, philosophical framework, and practical recommendations on navigating campus speech issues and defending academic freedom rights. These resources define academic freedom as a fundamental feature and set of principles of higher education

in the U.S. and offer legal resources to understand protections and limitations in exercising academic freedom and free speech rights on college campuses.

1. **American Association of University Professors (AAUP):** [Academic Freedom: A General Field Guide](#) lists several links to the foundational documents. The Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, as originally articulated by the American Association of University Professors in 1915 and later amended and interpreted, guide the purposes and objectives of academia (see [Declaration of Principles](#) (1915); [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), with 1970 Interpretative Comments). Additionally, [Committee Statement on Extramural Utterances](#): This is a specific guidance on various aspects of academic freedom, including extramural utterances and classroom teaching. A report on [Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications](#) (2004) clarifies that the protections of extramural speech “fully applies in the realm of electronic communications, including social media.”
2. **Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE):** [Faculty Network](#) is a platform for faculty to engage in discussions and receive updates on free speech issues. [Guide to Campus Speech Codes](#) is a platform with information on legal challenges to restrictive campus speech policies.
3. **Other Relevant Organizations:** [National Coalition Against Censorship \(NCAC\)](#) is an advocacy group promoting free speech across various contexts. [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) offers legal representation and education on First Amendment rights, including campus free speech. [Researcher Support Consortium](#) provides resources for researchers facing challenges to their research freedom.

Recommended Readings:

[Academic Freedom Alliance](#) offers a rich list of recommended readings and historical examples. In addition to the above list, UND’s faculty have engaged in the small group reading activities to read and discuss Erwin Chemerinsky & Howard Gillman (2017) *Free Speech on Campus*, which we do recommend as a first book in the reading series related to academic freedom and free speech.

Part II. UND Programming and Activities

We invite our faculty and staff to participate in various new activities where collectively we can read, discuss, apply, challenge, and reflect on the rights and responsibilities granted to us educators, by academic freedom and free speech.

Brown Bag Lunch Series:

In a series of three brown bag lunches sponsored by University Senate, faculty will read and discuss the documents that tend to get cited most often in discussions of academic freedom and free speech on university campuses well as UND’s academic freedom policy and related documents.

The purpose of these discussions is to enhance understanding of faculty rights and responsibilities related to academic freedom and free speech. The lunches and discussions will be held in-person and will be limited to 25 participants; lunch will be provided by Faculty Affairs.

- **February 21** Topic and Readings: [AAUP Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) Facilitator: TBA
- **March 21** Topic and Readings: [The Kalven Committee Report](#) Facilitator: TBA
- **April 11** Topic and Readings: UND Policy on Academic Freedom in [UND Faculty Handbook](#) , [SBHE Policy](#), [University Senate Resolution Defending Academic Freedom](#) Facilitator: TBA

TTaDA Teaching Skills Workshop:

TTaDA will offer a Teaching Skills Workshop on Teaching Controversial/ “political” content.
Date and Time TBD. Facilitator: Anne Kelsch