

University of Florida's Implementation of Civil Discourse Recommendations July 2022

Recommendation 1: *Leadership at each university will operationalize the Board's commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse by promoting, supporting, and regularly evaluating adherence to the principles set forth in the Board's Statement of Free Expression and cultivating a culture of civil discourse in all campus interactions, including academic administrative, extracurricular, and social dealings.*

Key Groups: UF Board of Trustees (Mark Kaplan, Government and Community Relations; Melissa Orth, Government Relations); Provost's Office (Joe Glover, Provost); Division of Student Life (D'Andra Mull, VP Student Life); UF HR (Melissa Curry, Asst. VP HR); Faculty Senate (Amanda Phalin, Chair); UF Student Government (Lauren Lemasters, Student Body President)

Milestones and Timelines:

- The **Board of Trustees** discussed its commitment during its retreat on September 9 – 10, 2021. That discussion included senior leaders from across UF's administration.
- During its April 21-22, 2022, committee and board meetings, the **Board of Trustees** reaffirmed its commitment to civil discourse and free expression. The UF Board reaffirmed its endorsement of the Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression dated April 15, 2019 and of the UF Freedom of Expression Statement dated April 12, 2019. The Board further said that it would continue its work to ensure a climate of free expression and civil discourse according to those statements and the Board of Governor's Civil Discourse Final Report.
- The university has formed the new **Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education**, as authorized during the 2022 legislative session. One of the initial areas of focus of the Hamilton Center during the upcoming academic year is to launch a public event series to promote the values of civil discourse and viewpoint diversity.
- [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#), also known as the **UF Conduct Code and Honor Code**, has clearly carved out free expression as protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The referenced language is found in Section 4C ("4. VIOLATIONS OF THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE
C. DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT").
- The UF **Student Senate** allows designated time before each weekly meeting for Public Comment, during which every member of the Student Body is able to speak if they wish. There is an outline procedure for signing up for Public Comment for students to utilize.
- Per **UF Student Senate** codes 810.2 and 810.3, registered student organizations will receive funding each semester on a first-come, first-served basis as to ensure the personal biases of the Budget Committee or any other officer of UF Student Government are not the determining factor of funding decisions.

Recommendation 3: *Leadership of each university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government annually review and endorse the Board's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse. Note the first review should be completed during the 2022-2023 academic year.*

Key Groups: Board of Trustees Chair (Mark Kaplan, Government and Community Relations; Melissa Orth, Government Relations); Faculty Senate Chair (Amanda Phalin); Student Body President (Lauren Lemasters)

Milestones and Timelines:

- During its April 21-22, 2022, committee and board meetings, the **UF Board of Trustees** reaffirmed its commitment to civil discourse and free expression. The UF Board reaffirmed its endorsement of the Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression dated April 15, 2019 and of the UF Freedom of Expression Statement dated April 12, 2019. The Board further said that it would continue its work to ensure a climate of free expression and civil discourse according to those statements and the Board of Governor's Civil Discourse Final Report. This is planned to be an annual occurrence.
- **UF Faculty Senate** has charged the Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards (AFTPRS) Committee with the task of reviewing the statement and providing recommendations on adopting it to the Welfare Council, which will review and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. At that point, the Steering Committee will determine if/when the Senate will take action on the matter. This should be completed during the fall term of the upcoming academic year.
- In the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year, the **UF Student Government** intends to propose to the UF student senators to submit legislation that endorses the Board's Statement of Free Expression after the senators have reviewed the statement.

Recommendation 4: *Each board of trustees conducts a thorough review of current student orientation programs, student codes of conduct, and employee policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression, the principles of free speech and civil discourse and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.*

Key Groups: UF Board of Trustees (Mark Kaplan, Government and Community Relations; Melissa Orth, Government Relations); Division of Student Life (D’Andra Mull, VP Student Life); Office of Undergraduate Affairs (Angela Lindner, Associate Provost); UF HR (Melissa Curry, Asst. VP HR)

Milestones and Timelines:

- The University of **Florida Board of Trustees** approved all changes to [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#).
- In response to the Florida Statute 1004.097 and Florida HB 233, **UF Division of Student Life** updated the [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#) in June 2021. The updates were subsequently approved by the University of Florida Board of Trustees in December 2021.
- A committee created by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee in **UF Division Student Life**, including student representatives, will review [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#) at least every three (3) years. Any additional updates are subject to UF Board of Trustees evaluation and approval.
- The **UF New Student Orientation** conducted a formal program review in Fall 2021, and Division of Student Life leadership reviews content of presentations on an annual basis.

Recommendation 6: *University academic, student affairs, and administrative leaders review student orientation programming, student codes of conduct, and employee personnel policies and procedures to ensure that they contain clear and unambiguous support for the Board’s Statement of Free Expression, and the principles of free speech and civil discourse, and that may be included in the plans to implement Recommendation 4 above.*

Key Groups: UF Preview (Will Atkins, Assistant VP Student Life; Kris Klann, Student Life; Lynn O’Sickey, AAC); SCCR (Heather White, UF Dean of Students; Pam Malych, SCCR); UFHR (Melissa Curry)

Milestones and Timelines:

- In response to the Florida Statute 1004.097 and Florida HB 233, **UF Division of Student Life** updated the [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#) in June 2021 by amending definitions in Section 2, “Class,” “Lecture,” “Faculty,” “Publish,” and “Recording.” The updates were subsequently approved by the University of Florida Board of Trustees in December 2021.
 - The [UF Honor Code](#), Section 3(g)1-3 and Section 5c.(m)2, details the above updates related to Unauthorized Recordings and Invasion of Privacy and Unauthorized Recording.
 - In compliance with Florida Statute 1004.097, the University of Florida Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution website was updated to include a frequently asked questions and responses related to changes to the [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#). The resource may be found at the following web address, <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/code-change-faq/>.
 - A committee created by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee in **UF Division Student Life**, including Student representatives, will review [University of Florida Regulation 4.040](#) at least every three (3) years. Any additional updates are subject to UF Board of Trustees evaluation and approval.
- **UF Human Resource’s** New Faculty Orientation includes a section pointing faculty to trainings (like those noted below) that help support skills and practices to promote engaging productively across different perspectives.
- The **UF New Student Orientation** conducted a formal program review in Fall 2021, and Division of Student Life leadership reviews content of presentations given in the **UF New Student Orientation** on an annual basis.

Recommendation 7: *Implementing the best practices outlined on pages 6 and 7 of the attached report based on the Board's review of university programs and initiatives that effectively promote and support civil discourse.*

Key Groups: UF Division of Student Life, UF HR, UF Office of Undergraduate Affairs, Bob Graham Center for Public Service, UF Center for Teaching Excellence

Instill the importance of civil discourse, academic freedom, and free speech from day one, utilizing student and employee orientation sessions, public assemblies, and official university documents and communications.

-The **UF Division of Student Life** includes in UF's orientation program, Preview, an emphasis in its discussion on the code of conduct on civil discourse, academic freedom, and free speech.

-The **UF Bob Graham Center for Public Service** recently hired a Civic Engagement Coordinator. In addition to playing a primary role in facilitating UF's voter engagement initiatives, she will serve as our civic literacy coordinator helping to provide synchronous opportunities for students in asynchronous courses to discuss difficult issues, help facilitate candidate forums and similar events as noted below and advise mock trial groups for the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Schedule and host ongoing, campus-wide forums, dialogues, and debates on various issues and perspectives to promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities.

-The **UF Bob Graham Center for Public Service** continues to offer public and student programming that stretches across the political spectrum, including hosting an event last January on what to expect in the spring 2022 legislative session with both Republican and Democratic representation and moderated by UF's VP for Government and Community Relations Mark Kaplan. These types of programs will continue and will be connected to opportunities for synchronous conversations for asynchronous students.

- The **UF Faculty Senate** intends to invite conservative and liberal experts on academic freedom to discuss HB 7 and other laws that address speech in higher education.

-In an effort to continue to foster open dialogue among stakeholders at UF and thus promote civil discourse, the **UF Faculty Senate** will include the UF Board of Trustees and UF Student Government leadership more frequently in Faculty Senate meetings.

Provide targeted educational and professional development opportunities for university administrative employees to reinforce free expression and open-minded debate norms.

-[UF Human Resources](#) delivered the trainings that cultivate skills and practices important for civil discourse for UF faculty and staff in Spring 2022 and will be offered in the Summer and Fall 2022. Examples of trainings include [Communication Confidence](#), [Now Hear This](#), [Making Meetings Work](#), [Inclusive Leadership](#), [Conversations for a Culture of Inclusion](#), and [Transforming Conflict](#).

-The **UF Bob Graham Center for Public Service** also continues to offer professional development opportunities such as internships in political and lobbying offices across the political spectrum.

Encourage faculty to establish and maintain a learning environment in their classrooms and offices that supports open dialogue and the free expression of all viewpoints and create processes to evaluate the strength of such environments.

-[UF's Center for Teaching Excellence](#) offers a variety of resources and trainings for faculty that nurture skills to create inclusive classroom environments that respectfully manage difficult classroom conversations open to all viewpoints.