



Plans for Implementing BOG Civil Discourse Recommendations: Interim Update

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. *[Limit interim update to 1 page using font size 11]*

Interim Update

President Rhea Law formed a university-wide workgroup to implement the Board of Governors' civil discourse recommendations and recent higher education policy changes.

For each recommendation, the workgroup must provide:

- Implementation guidelines, strategies, and best practices
- Key stakeholders
- And critical milestones and timelines.

The items are due to President Law no later than August 1 in anticipation of the USF Board of Trustees' approval before the final report is submitted to the Board of Governors.

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. *[Limit interim update to 1 page using font size 11]*

Interim Update

- USF Board of Trustees – Statement approved at the March 8, 2022 board meeting.
- USF Faculty Senate – A faculty senate-designated workgroup is currently reviewing the statement and will make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Senate for action in September.
- USF Student Government – Student Government will have a resolution that endorses the BOG Statement of Free Expression presented to the Legislative body by September 9, when the full legislative body is back in session.

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. *[Limit interim update to 1 page using font size 11]*

Interim Update

President Law has assembled a university-wide workgroup to prepare implementation guidelines, strategies, and best practices, identify key stakeholders, and critical timelines for implementation in anticipation of formal review by the USF Board of Trustees and Board of Governors.

An overview of completed program reviews was presented to the Board of Trustees Academics and Campus Environment (ACE) Committee on May 31, including the following items:

- Student Orientation Program Review
 - Content includes an introduction to the freedom of expression, classroom discussion, public space expression, and residential posting guidelines.
- Constitution Day Program Review
 - Constitution Day is an annual on-campus event, and themes for fall 2022 are still being discussed. As an example, past events have emphasized principles of the U.S. Constitution and values-based civic leadership, common purpose, and action as conscientious and engaged citizens.
- Review of relevant policies and regulations such as:
 - USF Policy 6-028 (Events, Signage, and Space Management) was reviewed to confirm an explicit expectation of supporting the open exchange of ideas and ensure compliance with the Campus Free Expression Act (Section 1004.097, Florida Statutes).
 - USF Regulation 3.025 (Disruption of Academic Process) was reviewed and explicitly states disagreement is not disruptive or prohibited in class discussions.
- Student Code of Conduct Review
 - Reviewed the USF Student Code of Conduct policies related to disruptive content, harassment, threats of violence, and classroom disruptions
- Housing Policy Review
 - Reviewed the policy for Posting/Advertising Materials for student housing.
- Employee Policies and Procedures Review
 - A link to the full Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression has been added under the Human Resources 'Important Resources' section This area also includes links to related material, including collective bargaining agreements, applicable policies and procedures, and the USF Strategic Plan.
- Employee Orientation
 - The module on "USF Culture" links to the Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression and Human Resources, and we will continue to explore enhancements to orientation further address civil discourse consistent with the Board's statement.

- Additional Resources to promote civil discourse
 - Event Support Team
 - The Event Support Team at the University of South Florida helps support the success of events and free expression on all USF campuses. Members of the team are often seen at on-campus protests, vigils, demonstrations, and programs with speakers with controversial material or other risk factors.
 - First Amendment Forum (student organization)
 - Group mission: Each student has the right to speak their mind. On a large and diverse campus, the academic value of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution cannot be understated. We have civil discussions, advocate for student rights policy reform, host events and workshops, and help cultivate a community that embraces the merit of the First Amendment.

These items will continue to be reviewed and revised to meet the needs of the campus community and to ensure a commitment to the principles of free expression outlined in the Board's Statement of Free Expression.

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 they comply with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes. NOTE: This recommendation may be included in the plans to implement Recommendation 4 above. [*Limit interim update to 1 page using font size 11*]

Interim Update

An internal review of the following items has been conducted. This progress update has been communicated to the Board of Trustees Academics and Campus Environment (ACE) Committee and will be included in the recommendations report due to President Law on August 1 and subsequently to the USF Board of Trustees for their review in anticipation of submitting the report to the Board of Governors on October 3.

Initial changes were made to ensure compliance with section 1004.097 of the Florida Statutes and will continue to be reviewed and implemented. Further details are available under Recommendation 4.

- Student Orientation Program
 - The initial review has been completed; see answer under Recommendation 4.
- Student Code of Conduct Review
 - The initial review has been completed; see answer under Recommendation 4.
- Employee Policies and Procedures Review
 - The initial review has been completed; see answer under Recommendation 4.

- Human Resources Information
- Employee Orientation; see answer under Recommendation 4.

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. For each best practice implemented, or to be implemented, include a timeline. *[Limit interim update to 1 page using font size 11]*

Interim Update

The university-wide workgroup will prepare a report with recommendations due to President Law on August 1 and subsequently to the USF Board of Trustees for their review in anticipation of submitting the report to the Board of Governors on October 3.

Recommended Best practices

- 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.
 - Student Orientation
 - Preliminary changes have been made to affirm commitments to civil discourse; see Recommendation 4 for more information.
 - Employee orientation
 - Preliminary changes supporting free expression have been made, and Human Resources will continue to explore enhancements to orientation and further address civil discourse consistent with the Board's statement.
 - University Documents
 - Human Resources materials, USF policies, and USF regulations have been reviewed and revised to articulate free speech and academic freedom.
 - Constitution Day Programming
 - Constitution Day is an annual on-campus event, themes for fall 2022 are still being discussed, past events have emphasized principles of the U.S. Constitution and values-based civic leadership, common purpose, and action as conscientious and engaged citizens.
- Schedule and host ongoing, campus-wide forums, dialogues, and debates on various issues and perspectives to promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities.
 - The workgroup is discussing workshops, programs, and public lectures/discussions for the coming year.
- The President's Cabinet and University Leadership Council are committed to fostering intellectual diversity.
- Avoid disinvitations by developing clear, viewpoint-neutral policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of campus speakers.

- Review and implementation in progress.
- Provide targeted educational and professional development opportunities for university administrative employees to reinforce free expression and open-minded debate norms.
 - Review and implementation in progress.
- 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.
 - We are continuing to work with faculty, faculty senate, and college leadership to strengthen best practices related to open dialogue and free expression. For example, guidance was developed to summarize key points of Florida House Bill 7 (the “Individual Freedom Act”), including how an employer may or may not discuss certain topics when conducting diversity training in the workplace and how certain topics may or may not be discussed as part of any instruction or training to which a student or employee is “subjected.”