



UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

# Civil Discourse Plan

**2022**

***Recommendation 1: Leadership at each university will operationalize the Board's commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse.***

Leadership at the University of West Florida has long promoted the principles of civil discourse both in and outside the classroom. The tenants of such are entwined in professional development, programs, services, and activities offered across campus.

During the spring 2022 semester, a central [webpage](#) devoted to Civil Discourse and free expression was created that highlights the University's commitment and outlines standards of practice.

UWF has also recently convened its first Civil Discourse campus-wide stakeholder meeting. The meeting included representatives from: the Provost's office, the office of Equity and Diversity, Student Engagement, the Dean of Students (including the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Case Management, and Student Government Association), Student Ombuds, Undergraduate Admissions (including Orientation programs), the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Institutional Communications, Faculty Senate, and Human Resources.

Beyond discussing activities and initiatives already in practice, these representatives will also serve as an ongoing Civil Discourse and Freedom of Expression working group. The work group exists to foster a meaningful learning environment on campus through the promotion of civil discourse and the freedom of expression. This working group recognizes the inherent value of civil discourse and free expression in creating a robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on campus. As such, the working group is dedicated to providing resources and guidance to the campus community to promote a strong and inclusive "marketplace of ideas" for all. The work group began meeting summer 2022 and will provide oversight of respective initiatives, the implementation of activities contained within the UWF Civil Discourse plan, and assess the degree to which civil discourse and free expression are built into the campus culture.

***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.***

At its June meeting, the UWF Board of Trustees approved the proposed 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes the addition of a strategic direction focused on creating a culture of Inclusion and Civility. This strategic direction includes the goal for ensuring a commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse. A stated indicator of success is the endorsement of the Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression by the University's boards and leadership.

During the fall 2022 semester, the Board's Statement of Free Expression will be brought before UWF's Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association for review and endorsement. This presentation will set the foundation for an annual review and endorsement of the Statement. Information regarding the review and endorsement and a link to UWF's Civil Discourse and Free Expression webpage will appear on each respective Board's website. Members of the Civil Discourse and Free Expression work group will provide regular updates to each governing board regarding respective initiatives and the implementation of new activities.

***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.***

At its June meeting, the UWF Board of Trustees approved the proposed 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes the addition of a strategic direction focused on creating a culture of Inclusion and Civility. This strategic direction includes the goal for ensuring a commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse. Indicators of success include annual reviews of student orientation programs, codes of conduct and employee policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the Board's Statement of Free Expression, consistency with the principles of free speech and civil discourse, and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.

Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, a thorough review of student orientation programs, the Student Code of Conduct and pertinent employee policies and procedures will be presented to the UWF Board of Trustees by members of the Civil Discourse and Free Expression working group.

***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 are in compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.***

At its June meeting, the UWF Board of Trustees approved the proposed 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes the addition of a strategic direction focused on creating a culture of Inclusion and Civility. This strategic direction includes the goal for ensuring a commitment to open-minded and tolerant civil discourse. Indicators of success include annual reviews of student orientation programs, codes of conduct and employee policies and procedures to ensure consistency with the Board's Statement of Free Expression, consistency with the principles of free speech and civil discourse, and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.

University academic, student affairs, and administrative leaders regularly review student orientation programming, student codes of conduct, and employee personnel policies and procedures. Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, the Civil Discourse and Free Expression work group will formalize these actions and conduct a systematic review of 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. The work group will commit to an annual review of these and other respective activities and initiatives.

***Recommendation 7: Implementing best practices that effectively promote and support civil discourse.***

An environmental scan of current practices was conducted summer 2022. Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, the Civil Discourse and Free Expression work group will continue to create opportunities to promote and support civil discourse. These initiatives include:

- Creating a syllabus statement supporting Civil Discourse and Free Expression on campus
- Creating an incident response plan and process
- Identifying additional best practices from peer and aspirant institutions

**Best Practice 1:**

- Student orientation programs include the principles of civil discourse and free expression as campus community standards. The summer 2022 virtual new student orientation program includes direct reference to the Board’s Statement of Free Expression.
- The Office of Human Resources will enhance the new employee Onboarding Portal to include UWF’s endorsement of the Board’s Statement of Free Expression and a link to the UWF Civil Discourse web page. Expected implementation is November 2022.
- Training for student staff in various campus departments includes the principles of civil discourse. For example, Resident Assistant training offered through the office of Housing and Residence Life includes sessions regarding facilitating Conflict Resolution and “Courageous Conversations.” These practices will be expanded to other student staff training programs. Expected implementation is fall 2022.

**Best Practice 2:** The environmental scan identified many ongoing programs and activities that promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities. Attendance at these activities include students, staff, faculty, University leadership, and community members. Some examples include:

- Campus Conversations series
- The Seligman First Amendment lecture series
- The Pace Lecture Series
- The Experience Downtown Lecture series

**Best Practice 3:** Several University policies and regulations include the University’s commitment to diversity, equal opportunity, and free expression. They promote viewpoint diversity, open-minded discussion, and prohibit programming that excludes participation based on race or ethnicity. For example, University policy P-13.09-02/20 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harrassment, and Retaliation clearly states UWF’s commitment to ensuring each member of the University is permitted to work and study in an environment free from discrimination and harrassment based on race or ethnicity.

**Best Practice 4:** Policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of campus speakers will be reviewed by University academic and student affairs administrators throughout the 2022-2023 academic year.

**Best Practice 5:** The Civil Discourse and Free Expression work group will continue to review educational and training opportunities throughout 2022-2023. Starting fall 2022, those already identified will be promoted through the Civil Discourse webpage.

**Best Practice 6:** This is currently accomplished through hallmark faculty training opportunities such as “New Chairs” and “All Chairs” programs and in utilizing faculty mentors as teaching partners. An Administrative Fellow in the Division of Academic Affairs also provides support for faculty development. Throughout 2022-2023, a faculty advisory group led by the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology will guide efforts to enhance respective training and aid in assessing the effectiveness of creating the environments described.

**The Board of Governors as Advocate – Recommendation I**

*The Board of Governors expects that the 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.*

Describe the operationalization of the Board's commitment to the Statement of Free Expression and cultivation of a culture of civil discourse under the appropriate category (in progress or implemented). If "in progress," please add the anticipated implementation date.

**Operationalization of the Board's commitment to the Statement of Free Expression and cultivating a culture of civil discourse**

UWF formed a Civil Discourse campus-wide Workgroup. The Workgroup includes representatives from: the office of Equity and Diversity, Student Engagement, the Dean of Students (including the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Case Management, and Student Government Association), Student Ombuds, the Provost's office, Undergraduate Admissions (including Orientation programs), the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, Institutional Communications, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Graduate Student Council, and Human Resources. This group began meeting summer 2022 and will provide oversight of respective initiatives, the implementation of activities contained within the UWF Civil Discourse plan, and assess the degree to which civil discourse and free expression are built into the campus culture.

A central webpage devoted to Civil Discourse and free expression was created that highlights the University's commitment and outlines standards of practice.

**If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:**

**University Planning – Recommendation II**

*The Board of Governors recommends that each university's Accountability Plan and Strategic Plan include a specific endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free Expression, as well as a clear expectation for open-minded and tolerant civil discourse throughout the campus community. The Board of Governors will include similar statements and principles in its Strategic Plan for the State University System.*

Use the drop-down arrows in columns A and B to indicate if the university's Accountability Plan and Strategic Plan include a specific endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free Expression, as well as a clear expectation for open-minded and tolerant civil discourse throughout the campus community. If "in progress," please add the anticipated completion date.

**Accountability Plan**

**Strategic Plan**

In Progress

Completed

**If "in progress," anticipated completion date:** Will be included in UWF's 2023 Accountability Plan. The plan will be presented to UWF BOT for approval March 2023. **If "in progress," anticipated completion date:**

**University Leadership – Recommendation III**

The Board of Governors recommends that the 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.

Use the drop-down arrows in columns B, C, and D to indicate if the university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government are in progress or have completed the review and endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free Expression and committed to the principles of civil discourse. If "in progress," please add the anticipated completion date.

	University Board of Trustees	Faculty Senate	Student Government
<b>Review and endorse the Board's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse</b>	Completed If "in progress," anticipated completion date:	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: At November 2022 Faculty Senate meeting.	Completed If "in progress," anticipated completion date:

**University Leadership – Recommendation IV**

*The Board of Governors recommends that 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.*

Use the drop-down arrows in columns B, C, and D to indicate if the reviews of student orientation programming, student codes of conduct, and employee personnel policies and procedures for consistency with the Board's Statement of Free Expression, principles of free speech and civil discourse, and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes are in progress or have been completed. If "in progress," please add the anticipated completion date.

	<b>Board's Statement of Free Expression</b>	<b>Principles of Free Speech &amp; Civil Discourse</b>	<b>section 1004.097, Florida Statutes</b>
<b>Student orientation programming</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>November 2022.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>November 2022.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>November 2022.</b>
<b>Student codes of conduct</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>May 2023.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>May 2023.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>May 2023.</b>
<b>Employee personnel policies and procedures</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>February 2023.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>February 2023.</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>February 2023.</b>



**Academic, Student, and Administrative Affairs – Recommendation VI**

The Board of Governors recommends that **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 are in compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes.

Use the drop-down arrows in columns B, C, and D to indicate if the reviews of student orientation programming, student codes of conduct, and employee personnel policies and procedures for support for the Board's Statement of Free Expression, principles of free speech and civil discourse, and compliance with section 1004.097, Florida Statutes are in progress or have been completed. If "in progress," please add the anticipated completion date.

Review by Academic Affair Leaders	Board's Statement of Free Expression	Principles of Free Speech & Civil Discourse	section 1004.097, Florida Statutes
<b>Student orientation programming</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>
<b>Student codes of conduct</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>
<b>Employee personnel policies and procedures</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>

Review by Student Affair Leaders	Board's Statement of Free Expression	Principles of Free Speech & Civil Discourse	section 1004.097, Florida Statutes
<b>Student orientation programming</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>
<b>Student codes of conduct</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>
<b>Employee personnel policies and procedures</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>

Review by Administrative Leaders	Board's Statement of Free Expression	Principles of Free Speech & Civil Discourse	section 1004.097, Florida Statutes
<b>Student orientation programming</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>October 2022</b>
<b>Student codes of conduct</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>March 2023</b>
<b>Employee personnel policies and procedures</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>	In Progress If "in progress," anticipated completion date: <b>December 2022</b>

**Best Practices for Civil Discourse – Recommendation VII**

The Board of Governors recommends implementing the following best practices based on its review of university programs and initiatives that effectively promote and support civil discourse.

Describe the best practices the university has implemented or is in the process of implementing. If "in progress," please add the anticipated implementation date.

	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>Implemented</b>
<p><b>1. 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.</b></p>	<p>The Office of Human Resources will enhance the new employee Onboarding Portal to include UWF’s endorsement of the Board’s Statement of Free Expression and a link to the UWF Civil Discourse web page.</p> <p>If "in progress," anticipated implementation date: <b>November 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student orientation programs include the principles of civil discourse and free expression as campus community standards. The summer 2022 virtual new student orientation program includes direct reference to the Board’s Statement of Free Expression.</li> <li>● Training for student staff in various campus departments includes the principles of civil discourse. For example, Resident Assistant training offered through the office of Housing and Residence Life includes sessions regarding facilitating Conflict Resolution and “Courageous Conversations.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Schedule and host ongoing, campus-wide forums, dialogues, and debates on various issues and perspectives to promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities.</b></p>	<p>If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:</p>	<p>UWF hosts many ongoing programs and activities that promote open discussion, understanding, and learning opportunities. Attendance at these activities include students, staff, faculty, University leadership, and community members. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Campus Conversations series</li> <li>● The Seligman First Amendment lecture series</li> <li>● The Pace Lecture Series</li> <li>● The Experience Downtown Lecture series</li> </ul> <p>All will continue throughout 2022-2023.</p>
<p><b>3. Foster intellectual diversity by encouraging university leadership to: (1) promote viewpoint diversity and open-minded discussion and debate, and (2) highlight and enforce policies that prohibit programming that excludes participation based on race or ethnicity.</b></p>	<p>If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:</p>	<p>Several University policies and regulations include the University’s commitment to diversity, equal opportunity, and free expression. They promote viewpoint diversity, open-minded discussion, and prohibit programming that excludes participation based on race or ethnicity. For example, University policy P-13.09-02/20 Prohibition of Discrimination, Harrassment, and Retaliation clearly states UWF’s commitment to ensuring each member of the University is permitted to work and study in an environment free from discrimination and harrassment based on race or ethnicity.</p>
<p><b>4. Avoid disinvitations by developing clear, viewpoint-neutral policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of campus speakers.</b></p>	<p>Policies and procedures governing the invitation and accommodation of campus speakers will be reviewed by University academic and student affairs administrators.</p>	

**If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:  
May 2023.**

Several educational and professional development opportunities for university administrative employees already exist. These opportunities are offered by the office of Human Resources in conjunction with the office of Equity and Inclusion, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, and the Dean of Student's office. An audit of offerings is conducted annually and new opportunities are created based on an assessment of the campus culture.

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

**If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:**

**6. 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.**

Throughout 2022-2023, a faculty advisory group led by the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology will guide efforts to enhance respective training and aid in assessing the effectiveness of creating the environments described.

**If "in progress," anticipated implementation date:  
May 2023**

This is currently accomplished through hallmark faculty training opportunities such as "New Chairs" and "All Chairs" programs and in utilizing faculty mentors as teaching partners. An Administrative Fellow in the Division of Academic Affairs also provides support for faculty development.