


Interoffice Communication

Date: November 11, 2020
To: Iowa State University Faculty
From: Jonathan Wickert
Senior Vice President and Provost 
Subject: New required syllabus statement on free expression

Protecting the academic freedom of faculty and their scholarly activities is a foundational principle of higher education. As noted in the Faculty Handbook (Section 7.1.1), academic freedom “encourages and guarantees the right to inquiry, discourse, and learning that characterize a community of scholars.”

It is equally important that we recognize and protect the free expression rights of our students. With that in mind, I am writing to share a new, required syllabus statement that affirms Iowa State University’s commitment and existing policies:

Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of [freedom of speech](#) and the principle of [academic freedom](#) in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

I want to thank the Faculty Senate’s Executive Board for discussions and consultation in developing this syllabus statement, which is also available on the website of the [Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#). This statement is to be used verbatim for all Iowa State University courses beginning with the upcoming Winter Session.

I ask that department chairs share this information with graduate student instructors and teaching assistants.

JAW/jj

C: Wendy Wintersteen, President
Pam Cain, Senior Vice President for Operations and Finance
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