



University Statement on Free Speech

In 1869, the Wyoming Territory became the first government in the world to allow women to vote in unrestricted elections and to hold office. Eighteen years later, the Territorial Legislature created the University of Wyoming (UW) in Laramie, which was charged with educating “young men and young women, on equal terms.” When Wyoming became a state three years later, our first legislators went further by including the UW in the State Constitution and declaring “The university shall be equally open to students of both sexes, irrespective of race or color.” Thus, from their very founding, the UW and the State of Wyoming have dedicated themselves to equality as a source of strength and pride.

In our nearly 150 years of pursuing both our land-grant and flagship/research missions, we have sought to allow members of our community to better understand the ideas, assertions, arguments, customs, traditions, and beliefs of others. Our goal is the free and open exchange of ideas that (a) addresses the very real problems that confront the people of our state, country, and world, (b) leads to the creation of new knowledge and understanding, and (c) promotes progress. To accomplish these three goals, all members of the University community are afforded the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, challenge, and learn in a civil and respectful manner.

We are also committed to fostering civil discourse and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for people of all backgrounds. Within our culture of respect for students, staff, and faculty, we must support an academic and workplace climate where ideas and opinions can be expressed, debated, and protested openly. The entire campus is a “free speech zone”.

In this spirit of promoting educational excellence through the free expression of ideas, the University of Wyoming remains steadfastly committed to its focus on equality and its land-grant and flagship/research missions. Expression that (a) defames a specific individual, (b) truly threatens and/or incites violence, (c) infringes on the privacy rights of employees or students, or (d) interferes with the free speech rights of others does not pursue either of these goals. Such expression is not protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and is not welcome at UW.