

Guidelines Regarding Offensive Content in Classroom Learning

1. We recommend that the University does *not* adopt punitive speech codes or any form of censorship but instead use guidelines to promote honesty and integrity in the educational experience of students and faculty.

2. We recommend that all SU members recognize and acknowledge that teaching difficult, traumatic, sensitive subjects is essential to providing students with an honest and inclusive education. The intention of including potentially offensive sources is always to enhance the learning experience, never to demean anyone. Avoiding difficult topics or teaching whitewashed history is itself a form of censorship because it denies students the right to listen to the whole story.

3. We recommend that while teachers should be free to discuss their topic(s) in the classroom, they should avoid

9. The committee strongly recommends that SU adopt in full the following statement that was approved at UMD-College Park:

Statement of Free Speech Values

The primary purpose of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, and service. To fulfill these functions, a free exchange of ideas is necessary not only within its walls but with the world beyond. The history of intellectual discovery and growth clearly demonstrates the need for freedom, the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable. Whenever someone is deprived of the right to state unmentionable views, others are necessarily deprived of the right to listen to and evaluate those views. Few institutions in our society have this same central purpose. It follows that a university must protect and guarantee intellectual and academic freedom. To do so, it must promote an environment in which any and all ideas are presented. Through open exchange, vigorous debate, and rational discernment, the campus community can evaluate ideas.

Every member of the campus community has an obligation to support the right of free expression at the university and to refrain from actions that reduce intellectual discussion. No member shall prevent such expression, which is protected under the constitutions of the United States and the State of Maryland.