

Iowa State University statement on the First Amendment and creating a welcoming and inclusive campus

January 4, 2020

Iowa State University does not punish individuals for their constitutionally protected rights to expression, nor do we have policies or practices that prohibit expression based on the content of the expression or the viewpoint of the speaker. As a public institution, Iowa State University fully embraces its role as a First Amendment campus and is deeply committed to constitutional protections of free expression. The protections afforded by the First Amendment and similar provisions in the Iowa Constitution are core values of the university and are foundational to the university's mission to create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place. Constitutional free speech provisions are designed to establish and protect the "free marketplace of ideas" that is a fundamental characteristic of university life.

In light of our commitment to these constitutional values, our campus has been and will continue to be a place where a diversity of ideas and thoughts will be expressed and debated. In this past semester, we have had numerous speakers and guests expressing a wide variety of thought. We have had political candidates and elected officials from all political parties on campus and held open forums where political issues were discussed and debated. Unfortunately, our campus has also experienced bigoted, hateful, racist, and anti-Semitic messaging that, while protected by the First Amendment, is also hurtful and harmful to many students.

Iowa State University also takes seriously its obligation mandated by federal law to create and maintain a campus that is free from illegal discrimination and harassment. Iowa State University will continue to champion the First Amendment in our efforts to create a campus where all individuals and ideas are welcome and included.