



DIVISION	ADOPTION DATE
III Student Services	1972
POLICY NAME	REVISIONS
03.11.00 Freedom of Expression	Revised: 1972, 05/1988, 11/1993, 11/1999, 01/2007, 01/2008, 04/2018, 08/2022 Reviewed:

03.11.00 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Joliet Junior College (College) has a long and proud history of commitment to free and open inquiry, deliberation and debate in all matters, and the untrammelled verbal and nonverbal expression of ideas. It is one of the College’s guiding principles to provide all members of the College community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn.

The ideas of different members of the College community will often and naturally conflict, and some ideas will even conflict with the College’s values and principles. But it is not the proper role of the College to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. Although the College greatly values civility, and although all members of the College community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.

The freedom to debate and discuss the merits of competing ideas does not mean that individuals may say whatever they wish, wherever they wish. The College may restrict expression that violates the law, falsely defames a specific individual, constitutes a genuine threat or unlawful discrimination, or unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests. In addition, the College may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the College or endanger safety. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the College’s commitment to a free and open discussion of ideas.

As a corollary to the College’s commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the College community and visitors of the College must also act in conformity with the

principle of free expression. Although individuals are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the College has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.

The College's fundamental commitment is to the principle that viewpoints may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the College community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. Controversial speech and robust debate are expected and valued on college campuses and in our society. Moreover, the right to engage in such expression is one of our most cherished rights, protected by the United States Constitution. Without unwavering protection of that right, our society would suffer, and the vulnerable in our society would suffer the most. Progress such as civil rights movements and the resulting gains would not be possible.

It is for the individual members of the College community, not for the College as an institution, to judge the value of ideas, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting those arguments and ideas that they oppose. Fostering the ability of members of the College community to engage with each other in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the College's educational mission.

Consistent with these core values, the College is authorized to implement one or more sets of procedures that protect the free expression rights of students, faculty and other members of the College community and visitors to the College. The procedures adopted by the College also should describe the obligations associated with the exercise of free expression and may include reasonable regulation of the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the College, impair the free expression rights of others or endanger safety. The College also is authorized and directed to construe, interpret and apply the College's policies and procedures in a manner consistent with the values expressed in this Policy.