

STATEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO SENATE AFFIRMING FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Among the cherished freedoms guaranteed by the first amendment of the United States Constitution is the provision that *Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech*. In its 1940 statement on academic freedom, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) established a complementary principle for academic communities in its statement that “*Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.*”

The Senate of the University of Illinois at Chicago affirms its commitment to the principle of freedom of speech as laid out in the Constitution and by the AAUP, and to the rights of expression that they guarantee to the University community. Within the University of Illinois at Chicago’s mission of providing its students with an education that is broad and deep, and to prepare them for responsible citizenship, is the implicit understanding that members of our community may comment on any issue within an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect. The success of this institution and of our democratic society depends on the ability of all of its members to question, challenge, speculate, investigate, and contradict without fear of physical harm, harassment, intervention, or obstruction. We recognize that sometimes ideas are advanced that others find objectionable, abhorrent, blasphemous, or simply wrong. However, a civilized society permits such expression, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, its students, staff, and faculty, under provision of the first amendment, the principle of academic freedom, and in fulfillment of its commitment to the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge has the responsibility to create and maintain an environment where such expression may take place. We affirm our belief that the customary good sense and courtesy that members of our community show one another during the course of their university lives will extend to situations, some contentious, at which the right of freedom of speech is exercised.

Conjoined with the right of free speech is the right of freedom of association. This right extends to individuals cooperating in groups. All members of a group have the freedom to communicate in reasonable ways, to hold and advertise meetings, to debate and to engage in peaceful assemblies and demonstrations, to organize groups for lawful activities, and to make use of university facilities. In order to provide for the orderly expression of opinion for individuals and groups, the University of Illinois at Chicago has adopted a policy on campus demonstrations (Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, 15 December 2003). This statement of “when” and “where” provides guidelines and policies for demonstrations.