

NOVEMBER 5, 2019 St. Mary's University Freedom of Expression Statement

Mission — St. Mary's is an innovative teaching and research university that provides affordable, accredited and highly valued degrees in the Liberal Arts, Sciences and Education. Through the pursuit of knowledge and service to the community, we prepare our students to become lifelong learners, engaged citizens and compassionate members of society.

Vision — St. Mary's University will be a leader in post-secondary education, open to all, and focused on developing the whole person: mind, body and spirit. Founded on the Catholic intellectual tradition, St. Mary's will prepare its students to live with integrity, compassion and confidence.

University Statement on Freedom of Expression

St. Mary's University is a university in the Catholic intellectual tradition which affirms freedom of enquiry, research, and expression as essential in the pursuit of knowledge, its advancement and dissemination subject to the laws of Canada. It ensures the respect and inherent dignity of all human persons within its academic community in particular guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn.

This expression may be restricted when it violates or may violate the law, falsely defames an individual, constitutes a genuine threat of harassment, unjustifiably invades privacy or confidentiality interests, interferes with other persons' freedom of expression, which impacts or imperils the mission and purpose of the university. This restriction is not intended to shield members of the university community, employees and students, from opinions that they do not agree with or find offensive but rather to ensure that the purpose of the University is consistent with the Catholic intellectual tradition. Apart from these exceptions, debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forward are thought by some, or even most, to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong. While the University expects mutual respect and civility, lack thereof cannot limit freedom of expression.

The members of the University community, guests, speakers, and visitors have the right to free expression in representing academic research, data and arguments or in the questioning or critiquing of alternative lines of thought or debate subject to the above conditions. All members of the University community have the right to criticize and question other views without interfering or obstructing others' freedom of expression. Individuals should make their own judgements and challenge ideas they oppose, rather than acting to suppress free expression. It is the University's responsibility to ensure that its Catholic identity and mission are respected.

Lastly, the University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the university.

This formal statement informs and complements other policies of St. Mary's University pertaining to University activities, events, and the activities of all members of the St. Mary's University community, including but not restricted to all employees and students. This statement in no way modifies the University's commitment to academic freedom or the Collective Agreement between the University and its faculty and staff.