



RESOLUTION NO. 2022-6-3

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER'S
STATEMENT ON FREE EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan State University of Denver ("MSU Denver") Board of Trustees desires to affirm its commitment to free expression and inquiry; and

WHEREAS, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees believes that the search for and dissemination of knowledge must occur through open inquiry; and

WHEREAS, MSU Denver's civic mission is to educate students and prepare them to take their part in civic life and maintain the institutions of our pluralistic democracy; and

WHEREAS, free expression and academic freedom are indispensable to fulfilling these academic and civic missions; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the above stated goals and its mission, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees desires to adopt the MSU Denver Statement on Free Expression and Inquiry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the MSU Denver Board of Trustees hereby adopts the MSU Denver Statement on Free Expression and Inquiry attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

APPROVED this 3rd day of June, 2022.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF
DENVER**

By: 
Russell Noles, Chair



ATTEST
By: 
David Fine, Board Secretary

MSU DENVER STATEMENT ON FREE EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY

MSU Denver is committed to the search for and dissemination of knowledge through open inquiry. MSU Denver's civic mission is to educate students to take their part in civic life and maintain the institutions of our pluralistic democracy. Free expression and academic freedom are indispensable to fulfilling these academic and civic missions. In fact, MSU Denver's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community demands an equally strong commitment to freedom of expression. The commitments to free expression and open inquiry are consistent with MSU Denver's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Free expression, including the ability to speak freely, allows our community members to test ideas through open debate and critique. Free inquiry allows community members to ask questions in search of new knowledge, refine and refresh accepted ideas, and challenge conventional wisdom. Free expression and inquiry help our students to become independent thinkers, consider contrary viewpoints, and find ways to work constructively with those with whom they have principled disagreement.

"The right to free expression extends to most speech — both in and out of the classroom — but not to all speech, including, for example, that which is slanderous, or incites another person to violence. Per the guidelines established by the American Association of University Professors, professors may choose to restrict engagement in controversial topics during class time that is unrelated to course content."

At the same time, members of the MSU Denver community owe one another the basic respect of human beings engaged in a common or mutual endeavor. These obligations reflect three basic community values: 1) respect for the freedom of other community members to inquire and express themselves fully; 2) the need to exercise freedom of expression and inquiry in ways that respect the human dignity of others; and 3) the importance of a climate at MSU Denver that is conducive to learning and in which all community members, regardless of background, are free from behavior that interferes with their ability to study, grow, and attain their full potential. The University seeks to promote a campus culture in which all community members can participate in and benefit from the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. In this respect, an affront against any member of our community is an affront to the entire community. By affirming our collective values, we build a stronger, more cohesive, and more vibrant community where differences are respected, and an effort is made for all to feel welcome.

When community values are not respected, or members of the community are not mindful about how we express differing perspectives and who we share campus community space with, whether verbal or non-verbal, harm could occur and feelings of marginality can be evoked, compromising institutional efforts to cultivate welcoming and educational atmosphere. When this happens, members of the MSU Denver community are encouraged to respond, and to speak out clearly against speech that violates our principles and commitment to nurture a diverse, inclusive, and safe learning community where all members are empowered to express themselves. Those who are the target of such speech should not and must not bear the burden of responding alone.