



Free Speech Policy

This document is the parent policy for any College procedures or regulations. Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to the identified Policy Administrator.

Policy Statement:

The Board of Governors is committed to supporting and protecting freedom of expression within the college community and all others present at the College.

Sponsor:	Board of Governors
Policy Owner:	Board of Governors
Policy Administrator:	Executive Assistant, President & CEO and Board of Governors
Approved By:	Board of Governors
Approval Date:	October 9, 2024
Effective Date:	October 9, 2024

Objective:	The purpose of this policy is to support and protect freedom of expression as essential to discovery, critical assessment, effective dissemination of knowledge and ideas and social and economic advancement. This applies to the entire college community as well as guests and all others present at Northern Lakes College.
Guidelines:	<p>Northern Lakes College is a place that allows and encourages open discussion and diverse and free inquiry. It is a learning environment where ideas and viewpoints can be explored, discussed freely and debated openly without fear of reprisal – even if these are considered to be controversial or conflict with the views of some members of the college community. Members of the College Community will have the broadest latitude to speak, write, listen, and, challenge ideas and learn.</p> <p>Although the College greatly values civility and all college community shares the responsibility to maintain a climate of mutual respect, it is not the role of the College to shield members of the college community from ideas and opinions that they may find disagreeable or offensive. It is up to individuals and not the College to make such judgments for themselves and to debate and challenge ideas that they find unacceptable.</p> <p>Members of the college community are free to criticize and contest the views of others; however, they may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views. The rights of others to express or hear ideas must also be respected. The College may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of freedom of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt normal operations and ordinary activities nor endanger the safety of others.</p> <p>Speech that violates the law, including the Alberta Human Rights Act, is prohibited. Speech that constitutes harassment, a threat or hate speech is also not allowed. Other context-specific boundaries to freedom of expression may also apply, such as those arising out of the terms of employment and collective agreements.</p>

	Existing college mechanisms and processes will be used to handle complaints and ensure compliance with the policy. Complaints that remain unresolved may be referred to a member of the Executive Team. Existing disciplinary measures will apply to those whose actions are contrary to this policy.
Definitions:	<p>College community includes all members of the Board of Governors, employees, students, designated contractors, alumni, retirees and guests.</p> <p>Free Speech is the freedom of expression; meaning the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn.</p>

Related Northern Lakes College Documents:	Governance – Board Communication Policy Governance – Board of Governors Code of Conduct Policy Governance – Safe Disclosure Policy Human Resources – Employees Code of Conduct Policy Human Resources – Respectful Workplace Policy Student Services – Student Conduct Policy Facilities and Ancillary Services – Use of College Facilities by External Users Procedure Student Services – Student Appeals Procedure
Related External Information:	Alberta Human Rights Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter A-25.5
Stakeholders Consulted:	Deans’ Council: May 30, 2024 Policy Review Committee: Oct 8, 2019 (defunct) President’s Advisory Team: Sep 11, 2024 Senior Leadership Team: Sep 3, 2019
Next Review Date:	October 8, 2029
Revision History:	November 21, 2019: New February 24, 2020: New template October 9, 2024: Renewal