

**Policy No. & Title: C305 FREE SPEECH***Effective:* 2023-11-17*Next Review:* 2028-11-17*Policy Sponsor:* Executive Director, Reputation and Brand Management*Approvals:* 2018-12-17; 2019-01-01; 2023-11-17

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**1. PURPOSE**

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 the College.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

*College community:* Includes all members of the Board of Governors, employees, students, designated contractors, alumni, retirees and guests.

*Free Speech:* is freedom of expression; meaning the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn.

**3. POLICY**

Fanshawe 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.

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.

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.

Speech that violates the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, 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.

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 the College Ombudsman. Existing disciplinary measures will apply to those whose actions are contrary to this policy.

**4. REPORTING**

In accordance with Ministry requirements, the College shall prepare an annual report on the implementation of this policy.

**5. REFERENCES**

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

A128 STUDENT APPEALS

A130 STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

A135 DIRECTED WITHDRAWALS

C208 COLLEGE LOCATION CLOSURES AND HOURS

C308 COLLEGE GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

P103 SAFE COLLEGE CAMPUS

P207 EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

P208 RESPECTFUL COLLEGE COMMUNITY AND PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

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