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POLICY STATEMENT #95

"FIGHTING WORDS" HARASSMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte recognizes the right to freedom of speech as a fundamental tenet of the University and seeks to provide an environment for students, faculty, and staff which is fair, humane, and respectful, and from which violence or the threat of violence is eliminated. While the University is committed to allowing vigorous and open academic discourse and intellectual inquiry, including speech that espouses controversial or even offensive ideas, the University reserves the right to intervene when "fighting words," as defined in this Policy, are used in the University community.

This Policy prohibits the face to face use of "fighting words" by a student, faculty member, or staff member to harass any person or persons on the University campus or other property under University control. "Fighting words" are those personally abusive epithets which, when directly addressed to any ordinary person are, in the context used and as a matter of common knowledge, inherently likely to provoke an immediate and violent reaction, whether or not they actually do so. Such expressions include, but are not limited to, those terms or gestures widely recognized to be derogatory references to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other personal characteristics.

Members of the University community are subject to disciplinary action for violation of this Policy through applicable disciplinary procedures. Persons not faculty, students or staff, who engage in disruptive conduct, may be subject to penalties stipulated by civil and criminal law.

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