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Our Mission

When Grinnell College framed its charter in the Iowa Territory of the United States in 1846, it set forth a mission to educate its students “for the different professions and for the honorable discharge of the duties of life.” The College pursues that mission by providing an

education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas. As a teaching and learning community, the College holds that knowledge is a good to be pursued both for its own sake and for the intellectual, moral, and physical well-being of individuals and of society at large. The College exists to provide a lively academic community of students and teachers of high scholarly qualifications from diverse social and cultural circumstances. The College aims to graduate individuals who can think clearly, who can speak and write persuasively and even eloquently, who can evaluate critically both their own and others' ideas, who can acquire new knowledge, and who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good.

Core Values





Excellence in Education for Students in the Liberal Arts

- Varied forms of learning, in and out of the classroom and beyond the campus.
- Creative and critical thinking stimulated by the free, open exchange of ideas.
- Education that reflects on its own process.
- Excellent teaching as the highest priority of the faculty.
- Active scholarship in traditional and interdisciplinary fields.
- Need-blind admission of students with strong academic potential.



A Diverse Community

- A wide diversity of people and perspectives.
- A residential campus in a setting that promotes close interactions.
- Personal, egalitarian, and respectful interactions among all members of the college community.
- Meeting full demonstrated financial-aid need of admitted and continuing students.
- Support for professional well-being of all whose work contributes to the college.



Social Responsibility

- Our strong tradition of social responsibility and action.
- Our strong tradition of self-governance and personal responsibility.
- Learning from and communicating with the world beyond the campus.
- Life-long connections that support friendship, work, and learning.
- Continuing to build institutional strength for educating tomorrow's students.

Free Speech, Inclusion, and Community: Guiding Principles

Grinnell College's mission is to provide "an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas." Free inquiry and open exchange require exposure to a diversity of perspectives and respectful engagement with those perspectives across our differences. Indeed, such engagement is vital for an intellectual community committed to the production and sharing of knowledge. This requires providing a learning environment that is both tolerant of disagreement and committed to civil dialogue that respectfully embraces our shared humanity. Grinnell must support and encourage free speech and expression, while creating an environment free from harassment and discrimination. As we endeavor to balance these multiple responsibilities, several principles guide us:





Freedom of Speech and Dialogue Across Difference

Because we value a diversity of peoples and perspectives, our campus environment must be an inclusive space that cultivates both critical thinking and dialogue across difference. Since education and learning are our focus, we must be willing to tolerate the discomfort of having our views respectfully challenged. We must also be willing to confidently share our own perspectives without stifling the rights of others to do so. Inclusive teaching practices and effective communication skills are essential to creating a positive learning environment for our students.





Freedom of Speech and Expression as a Civil Right

Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are rights protected by the U.S. Constitution, and these rights belong to all domestic and international Grinnellians. The College has a responsibility to respect these rights but may establish rules governing the time, place, and manner of speech, expression, and protest. The College is also responsible for dealing with those who engage in behaviors that infringe upon the rights of others. Behaviors designed to intimidate or hinder others from accessing the benefits provided by the College are strictly prohibited. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary outcomes and/or legal consequences.





Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

Academic freedom supports freedom of inquiry and exchange, a fundamental value of the educational enterprise and our institutional mission. In addition to constitutional free-speech protections, Grinnell College faculty members are entitled to academic freedom in their teaching, research, and publishing, as defined in the Faculty Handbook. This entitlement comes with the duty to maintain professional ethics and uphold College policies against discrimination and harassment.

In summary, Grinnell College endeavors to balance multiple responsibilities as we prioritize student learning and serving the common good. These responsibilities include providing a lively, rigorous, educational experience that supports diversity as a core value, upholding the parallel and complementary ideals of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and academic freedom, and protecting our community members from harassment and discrimination.

The policies which implement these principles include but are not limited to:

[Student Handbook](#)

[Harassment, Threats, and Disruption to Community Policy](#)

[Protest and Demonstration Policy](#)

[Hate Crimes and Bias Motivated Incident Policy](#)

[Grinnell College Policy, Procedures, and Guide to Preventing, Reporting, and Responding to Sexual Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#)

[Nondiscrimination Policy](#)

[Discrimination and Harassment Grievance/Complaint Procedure](#)

Principles of Academic Freedom and Faculty Responsibility (*Faculty Handbook*, Part 8)