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# Freedom of Expression

Caltech's fundamental mission is to create knowledge for the ages, through research and by passing along insights from generation to generation. We create knowledge by bringing together people of diverse perspectives, of different backgrounds, of distinct sensibilities, and let them hone their conceptions of the world by expressing their views freely and, in colloquy, shaping each other's ideas.

We come to Caltech to learn and to grow. This process requires us to be open to changing our minds through the exchange of ideas and the questioning of our assumptions. There are times when this can be difficult, even uncomfortable, but we recognize that the answer to a poor or objectionable argument is to confront it with a better argument rather than to silence the speaker. We strive to fashion a robust, civic space, welcoming to individuals from all backgrounds, committed to rigorous inquiry, devoted to understanding the natural world and improving the human world. It is what universities at their best have represented for a thousand years. It is how the Institute can flourish and inspire.

Freedom of individual expression bears as well on the issue of formal institutional pronouncements. Caltech aims to create an environment where all members of our community are empowered to speak out about issues that matter to them, and we support their freedom and ability to do so. We want all members of our community to feel free to take stances that may be unpopular, but reflect who they are and what they believe, without an official Institute opinion quenching that ability. Hence, we confine official Caltech statements to issues that bear directly on our core missions of research and education. At the same time, we respond as an Institute to worldly challenges through tangible intercessions that advance our values and support at-risk members of our community.

*–Thomas F. Rosenbaum, Caltech President*

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