

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AT F&M

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Overview

At Franklin & Marshall College, we are Diplomats who champion free expression. In and out of the classroom, we cultivate the skills to develop and articulate our own ideas, and ensure others feel equally empowered to share their voices. Explore our statement on freedom of expression and the policies and resources that reinforce our dedication to these fundamental principles.

F&M's Statement on Freedom of Expression

This statement of principle articulates Franklin & Marshall College's ideals relating to freedom of expression, respect for the opinions of members of the College community, and freedom from harassment and intimidation. It expresses the College's commitment to these core values, was developed by the Faculty with input from the administration and was approved for inclusion in the Faculty Handbook by the Board of Trustees on February 11, 2017. It is a statement of principle and aspiration that may inform policy, but in and of itself does not constitute policy.

[READ THE FULL STATEMENT](#)

An F&M education is not just about classroom learning; it is about preparing us all to handle real-world challenges with creativity and intellect. Throughout their F&M experience, students have ongoing opportunities to practice communication, conflict resolution, and mutual understanding and cooperation. Toward this aim, F&M has adopted the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI) program as an essential tool for our community.

CDI provides online programs and resources that teach key concepts from psychology to explain our differences in beliefs, worldviews, and values. Beginning in 2024, all first-year students are required to take the CDI program called Perspectives as part of their orientation program. We are pleased to also offer this tool for all students, faculty, and staff to learn research-backed principles and skills to help us navigate challenging conversations with confidence, respect, and sensibility.

Approach to Institutional Statements and Community-Wide Messages

At F&M, we strive to foster a campus environment where free expression and intellectual exploration thrive. As an educational institution, we believe that our role is to provide an environment that can hold diverse viewpoints rather than to take institutional stances on social, political, or cultural matters that do not directly affect the College's mission or operations.

Plurality of views and the free exchange of ideas are the foundation of the liberal arts. Healthy discourse – and even passionate disagreement – contribute to an academic culture of inquiry and greater understanding. We will always embrace human rights and human value. Beyond those bedrock principles, however, the institution's role is not to endorse or criticize ideas, but to provide an environment that allows for diverse opinions and lived experiences, and cultivates a sense of belonging for all. Scholars and students deserve to be able to pursue knowledge, engage in open dialogue, express their perspectives, and challenge one another's ideas without the influence of an overarching institutional position.

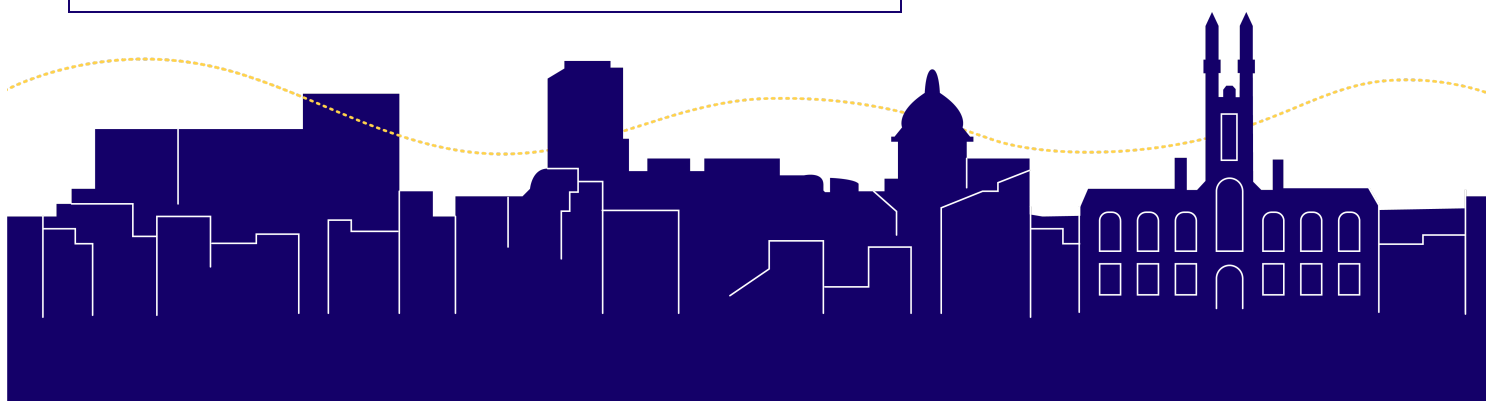
leadership. Otherwise, it is not the voices of college leaders that matter, but the voices of F&M's scholars, researchers and educators, and the students we are preparing to be the next generation of leaders.

This approach to institutional statements not only upholds our commitment to free expression but also strengthens our dedication to promoting a truly inclusive and dynamic learning community.

Our Differences Are Our Strength

We bring together people of all backgrounds and encourage them to share their diverse perspectives, values and ideas. In this way, our unwavering commitment to freedom of expression is directly intertwined with our dedication to inclusivity and belonging; together, they form the foundation of our liberal arts mission.

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P.O. Box 3003, Lancaster, PA [17604-3003](tel:717-358-3911)
General Information: [717-358-3911](tel:717-358-3911)



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