

Student Senate

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STUDENT SENATE BILL 2022-1040

TITLE: Resolution Affirming the Importance of Free Expression and Civil Discourse

AUTHOR(S): Judiciary Chairman John Brinkman, Judiciary Vice Chair Sean Harkins, Senator Shelby Schultz, Member-at-Large Jacey Cable

SPONSOR(S): Senator Mason Solomon

WHEREAS, Florida Board of Governors Chair Syd Kitson established the Board's Civil Discourse Initiative at an address in January 2021, where he expressed concern regarding the steady decline in respectful discourse among those with differing viewpoints and his belief that the university setting could provide a foundation for understanding, learning, and growth in this area [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Florida Board of Governors Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee Timothy Ciero Cerio has led this initiative, and has stated that "Civil discourse, conducted civilly without fear of reprisal, is critical to free speech and ensuring academic and intellectual freedom – not just on our university campuses, but throughout our country." [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the Florida Board of Governors recently issued its *Civil Discourse Final Report* which outlines best practices for institutions within the State University System for promoting open-minded, tolerant, and respectful discourse on campus [1]; and,

WHEREAS, dating back to the Ancient Greek term *parrhesia*, speaking freely without fear of retaliation has been recognized as a fundamental element of a democratic society and philosophical discussions [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted on December 15th, 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights, and provides a constitutional protection for specific individual liberties, including free speech [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Florida's "Campus Free Expression Act" was recently signed into law and stipulates that the entirety of a campus should allow free speech, and that free speech should not be restricted to specific areas [4] [5]; and,

WHEREAS, one of the University of Florida's six Core Values is "Freedom and Civility," which is defined as "the freedom to inquire and express ideas without condemnation, and to show respect for the right of others to do the same" [6]; and,

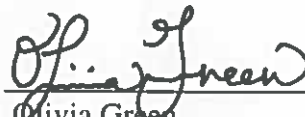
THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate believes that individuals wishing to express ideas with which others may disagree must be free to do so without fear of being bullied, threatened, or silenced at the University of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate maintains that all members of our campus communities should have an equal ability to express their ideas and opinions while preserving campus order and security.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate thoroughly endorses the Florida Board of Governor's Statement of Free Expression and commits to the principles of civil discourse.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Florida Board of Governors Chair Syd Kitson, Florida Board of Governors Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee Timothy Ciero, State University System Chancellor Ray Rodrigues, and University of Florida President Kent Fuchs.

- [1] https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SPC_09_Civil-Discourse_Final_CE.pdf
- [2] <https://foucault.info/parrhesia/foucault.DT1.wordParrhesia.en/>
- [3] <https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/freedom-of-speech>
- [4] <https://flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2022/1004.097>
- [5] <https://www.tampabay.com/news/education/2021/06/26/five-things-to-know-about-floridas-new-intellectual-diversity-law/>
- [6] <https://president.ufl.edu/initiatives/uf-core-values/freedom--civility/>



Olivia Green
Senate President

10/17/2022
Date