



UCF Board of Trustees

April 17, 2025

Agenda Item

GOVC-1: Review and Endorse Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression

Proposed Action

The Board of Trustees is asked to approve, on its consent agenda, the endorsement of the Florida Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse.

Authority for Board of Trustees Action

Board of Governors Regulation 1.001
Board of Governors Civil Discourse Final Report

Supporting Documentation Included

Attachment A: Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression

Facilitators/Presenters

Youndy Cook, Vice President and General Counsel

Summary of Key Observations/Recommendations

The Board of Governors recommends that each university board of trustees annually review and endorse the Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse.

Additional Background

To promote civil discourse in the State University System, the Board of Governors and the presidents of Florida's twelve public universities adopted a systemwide "Statement of Free Expression" in 2019. The Board's statement aligns with the well-established "Chicago Principles" that originated at the University of Chicago in 2014, articulating an overarching commitment to free, robust, and uninhibited debate. The Board's Statement of Free Expression was endorsed by the twelve state universities as a vehicle to establish, maintain, and support a full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on all university campuses. The statement reinforces that a critical purpose of a higher education institution is "to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions, and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated."

The Board of Governors subsequently established a Civil Discourse Initiative, which was led by Governor Tim Cerio. Governor Cerio reported to the Board of Governors at the January 2022 meeting, at which time the Board of Governors approved the Civil Discourse Initiative Final Report and Recommendations. Recommendation 3 states: "The Board of Governors recommends that the leadership of each university board of trustees, faculty senate, and student government annually review and endorse the Board of Governors 's Statement of Free Expression and commit to the principles of civil discourse."

For this year's implementation of Recommendation 3, the Board is requested to review and endorse the Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression, reaffirming the UCF Board's dedication to civil discourse principles.

Implementation Plan

NA

Resource Considerations

N/A