

**AGENDA ITEM 16****ISSUE: ADOPTION OF THE CHICAGO STATEMENT – ALL****ACTION PROPOSED:**

President Harroz recommends the Board of Regents approve the proposed adoption of the Chicago Statement of Principles on Freedom of Speech at the University of Oklahoma.

**BACKGROUND AND/OR RATIONALE:**

Following a recommendation from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Freedom of Speech and Inquiry Committee, the President recommends that the University of Oklahoma adopt the Chicago Statement of Principles on Freedom of Speech – an overarching set of guiding principles that reinforce the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression on college campuses.

The Chicago Statement is the 2014 report of a committee charged by University of the distinguished legal scholar Geoffrey Stone, and populated by distinguished professors from the importance of freedom of speech and inquiry in higher education. More than a legal requirement for public universities, freedom of speech and expression is central to the project of higher education.

Since 2014, more than 80 universities have since adopted the statement or crafted similar statements. This list includes well-known private institutions such as Princeton, Vanderbilt, Washington University, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins. The adoptions also include 14 public institutions in the exclusive Association of American Universities, including North Carolina, Kansas, Missouri, Maryland, Colorado, Virginia, Minnesota, Iowa, and Arizona. Also included are non-AAU state flagships, including Louisiana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Alabama, Maine, and Montana.

commitment to upholding these constitutional rights while nurturing an inclusive campus community. Adopting the statement at OU will provide a touchstone for administration, faculty, staff, and students regarding inevitable controversies concerning freedom of speech and academic inquiry. Because over 80 universities have already adopted the statement, its adoption will also provide an important signal to external constituencies.

Controversies around viewpoint differences will always be part of a university setting. Indeed, they grow out of the diversity of thought and background that we celebrate at the University of Oklahoma and out of our common interest in discovery and truth. But when these controversies emerge, members of the University community, on and off campus, will benefit from a clear statement articulating the principles that guide the University through good and bad times.

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