



To: The Princeton Community

Date: July 28, 2020

Re: Statement on Principles of Inclusivity and Free Speech to the Princeton University Community

Princeton University cherishes both inclusivity and free speech, which can be protected even when the speech in question is “unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive” (Rights, Rules, Responsibilities 1.1.3). Our commitment to free speech, however, does not allow us to shirk our obligation to maintain a campus climate of enduring mutual respect.

A number of recent statements, publications, or postings on social media have offended and insulted many members of our community. As is our usual practice, we assessed those brought to our attention in light of Princeton’s expressed principles of free speech and [respect for others](#) and concluded that they do not represent violations of University [policy](#).

But even if certain instances of the use of offensive language—including racial, ethnic, gender, or other slurs—may be protected by our policies, depending on the context, they are upsetting, damaging, and unconstructive, and do not match the values of our community. Indeed, such language is contrary to Princeton’s commitment to stand for inclusivity and against racism. Such language is especially harmful in light of recent activism, in which long-standing structural racial inequities in society and on our own campus have been acknowledged.

We are now engaged in conversations with a wide range of students and faculty about how to better foster an environment for debate that aligns with our values. We plan to schedule a series of facilitated dialogues for all members of our community who would like to engage constructively on these essential topics.

We call on everyone to consider the weight and impact of their words. We agree with President Eisgruber, who recently [affirmed](#) the University’s commitment to respectful and productive engagement within a free speech context. We must emphasize that racism, prejudice, and bigotry have no place at Princeton. We will not allow the important values of inclusivity and free speech to be pitted against each other, and we will continue to uphold both of these principles that are so vital to Princeton’s mission. We invite you all to participate in this necessary work.

Be well,

W. Rochelle Calhoun, Vice President for Campus Life
Cole Crittenden, Acting Dean of the Graduate School
Jill Dolan, Dean of the College
Sanjeev Kulkarni, Dean of the Faculty
Michele Minter, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity
Lianne Sullivan-Crowley, Vice President for Human Resources