

Arizona Board of Regents
Minutes of the Committee on Free Expression
Thursday, July 31, 2025

Committee Members present via video: Chad Sampson (Chair); from ASU: Anne Jones, Patrick Kenney, Lisa Loo, Joanne Vogel (joined at 10:02 a.m.), and Nagham Mousa; from NAU: Michelle Parker, Kimberly Ott, Marco Cabrera Geserick, Eesha Syeda; from U of A: Tessa Dysart, Art Lee, Steve Patterson, Chrissy Lieberman, Armando Garcia, and Adriana Grijalva (joined at 10:04 a.m.)

Committee Members absent: from NAU Margot Saltonstall

Also present via video from the ABOR office Jennifer Pollock, Samantha Blevins, Kevin Smith, Rachel Malefors, Suzanne Templin, and Tom Merriam; from Arizona State University: Kim Demarchi; and from Northern Arizona University: Laurie Dickson

All lists, reports, summaries, background material and other documents referred to in the minutes can be found in the July 31, 2025, Document File and on the board's website.

CALL TO ORDER, GREETINGS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Chad Sampson called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Chair Sampson, seconded by Member Dysart, the committee approved the public session minutes of the July 31, 2024, Committee on Free Expression meeting. Committee Members Sampson, Jones, Kenney, Loo, Vogel, Mousa, Parker, Ott, Cabrera Geserick, Syeda, Dysart, Lee, Patterson, Lieberman and Garcia voted in favor. None opposed and none abstained. The motion carried. Member Grijalva was not present for the vote.

2. Review of Open Meeting Law

Samantha Blevins, ABOR Senior Associate General Counsel, provided an overview of the Open Meeting Law, she noted that the Committee on Free Expression is a statutorily required committee of the Arizona Board of Regents, which is a public body, therefore the committee is also a public body subject to the Open Meeting Law.

Chair Sampson asked the committee if they had any questions, there were none.

3. Review the Statutory Charge to the Committee on Free Expression to Submit an Annual Report

Ms. Blevins presented an overview of the A.R.S §15-1867 statutory charge to the committee to submit an annual report.

Chair Sampson asked the committee if they had any questions, there were none.

4. Review of and Possible Action to Approve and Forward the Statutory Annual Report on Free Expression for FY 2025

Ms. Blevins noted that the 2025 draft report presents a comprehensive overview of the Board's and universities' continued commitment to upholding free expression and ensuring that Arizona's public universities do not permit barriers to, or substantial disruptions of, lawful expressive activity. Each university regularly supports campus activity reflecting a wide range of viewpoints and continues to foster expressive activity within established, content-neutral time, place, and manner requirements. It further recognizes that Arizona's public universities maintain the highest "green light" rating from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) and have adopted the Chicago Statement affirming institutional support for free expression.

In FIRE's 2025 College Free Speech Rankings, Arizona State University ranked 14th, the University of Arizona ranked 25th, and Northern Arizona University ranked 28th nationally. These rankings reflect student perceptions regarding the ability to express opinions freely and the degree to which university administrations support expressive rights and open discourse.

The report also outlines the processes used by each university to review and respond to allegations involving disruptions of, or barriers to, free expression. These practices are intended to support lawful expressive activity on campus, whether planned or spontaneous. The report also highlights several university-level efforts, including Northern Arizona University's Speech, Expression, Actions and Knowledge team, which supports speakers, events, protests, and counter-expression; Arizona State University's use of virtual and in-person options and appropriate space coordination to facilitate expressive activity; and the University of Arizona's training of more than 700 campus community members on First Amendment rights, along with the publication of accessible guidance on campus use policies and expressive activities.

Upon motion by Chair Sampson, seconded by Member Lieberman, the committee approved the proposed report, and authorized Samantha Blevins to make any non-substantive changes in preparation for submission to the board for approval at its August 28, 2025, upcoming meeting. Committee Members Sampson, Jones, Kenney, Loo, Vogel, Mousa, Parker, Ott, Cabrera Geserick, Syeda, Dysart, Lee, Patterson, Lieberman, Garcia and Grijalva voted in favor. None opposed and none abstained. The motion carried.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Submitted by:

Rachel Malefors
Committee Secretary