



**COMMITTEE ON FREE EXPRESSION
ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS**

THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING

**Monday, July 27, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Members of the public may attend the public portion of the virtual meeting by viewing the livestream of the meeting.

To view the livestream of the meeting please follow the instructions below.

ABOR Live is available at the following website [YouTube ABOR News](https://www.youtube.com/user/abornews)
<https://www.youtube.com/user/abornews>

- Click the top video for the livestream of the meeting.

If the above link does not work, open a browser, go to www.youtube.com or search YouTube.

- Once in YouTube, use the search bar to search for ABOR News.
- Click the video that says Live.

If livestream fails, a call-in option will be available for public access and will be posted on the ABOR website at <https://www.azregents.edu/meetings/abor-live>.

For technical assistance, click the link here [ABOR Tech Support](#) or email Thomas.Merriam@azregents.edu

Committee Members:

Chad Sampson, Chair
Anne Jones, ASU
Patrick Kenney, ASU
Lisa Loo, ASU
Joanne Vogel, ASU
Nagham Mousa, ASU

Kimberly Ott, NAU
Michelle Parker, NAU
Margot Saltonstall, NAU
Marco Cabrera Geserick, NAU
Jacob Orduño, NAU

Tessa Dysart, U of A
Clifton “Cliff” Iler, U of A
Steve Patterson, U of A
Chrissy Lieberman, U of A
Rachel Reinhardt, U of A
Katie Kelliher, U of A

1:00 p.m. CALL TO ORDER, GREETINGS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**1:05 p.m. 1. Approval of Minutes**

The board office asks the committee to review and approve the minutes of the July 31, 2025, Committee on Free Expression meeting.

1:10 p.m. 2. Review of Open Meeting Law

The board office will provide the committee with an overview of the Open Meeting Law.

1:15 p.m. 3. Review Statutory Charge to the Committee on Free Expression to Submit an Annual Report

The board office asks the committee to review its statutory charge under A.R.S. §15-1867.

1:20 p.m. 4. Review of the Statutory Annual Report on Free Expression for FY 2026 and Possible Action to Approve and Forward it to the Board

The board office asks the committee to review, to discuss and to take possible action to approve and forward the proposed statutory Report on Free Expression to the board for its approval.

1:30 p.m. ADJOURNMENT

PLEASE NOTE: This agenda may be amended at any time prior to 24 hours before the committee meeting. Estimated starting times for the agenda items are indicated; however, discussions may commence, or action may be taken, before or after the suggested times. Any item on the agenda may be considered at any time out of order at the discretion of the committee chair. The committee may discuss, consider, or take action regarding any item on the agenda. During the meeting, the committee may convene in executive session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice regarding any item on the agenda

Adoption of Minutes

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DRAFT

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEM

ITEM 2: Review of Open Meeting Law

Requested Action: The board office will provide the committee with an overview of the Open Meeting Law.

Background

There are no written materials provided at this time for this item.

Contact Information:

Samantha Blevins, ABOR

Samantha.Blevins@azregents.edu

602-229-2535

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEM**ITEM 3: Review the Statutory Charge to the Committee on Free Expression to Submit an Annual Report**

Requested Action: The board office asks the committee to review its statutory charge under A.R.S. §15-1867, as described in this executive summary.

Statutory/Policy Requirements

A.R.S. §15-1867 - Arizona board of regents; committee on free expression; annual report

- A. The Arizona board of regents shall establish a committee on free expression consisting of at least fifteen members.
- B. The committee on free expression shall submit an annual report on or before September 1 to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate. The Arizona board of regents shall post a copy of the annual report on its website and shall submit a copy of the annual report to the secretary of state. The annual report shall include:
 - 1. A description of any barriers to or disruptions of free expression within the universities in this state.
 - 2. A description of the administrative handling and discipline relating to barriers to or disruptions of free expression within the universities in this state.
 - 3. A description of substantial difficulties, controversies or successes in maintaining a posture of administrative and institutional neutrality.
 - 4. Any assessments, criticisms, commendations or recommendations that the committee decides to include in the annual report.
 - 5. An accounting of how student activity fees were allocated in the prior year. For the purposes of this paragraph, "student activity fees" means any fee that is charged to students by a university in this state and that is used to support and facilitate the expression and activities of students or student organizations.

Contact Information:

Samantha Blevins, ABOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ACTION ITEM**ITEM 4: Review of the Statutory Annual Report on Free Expression for FY 2026 and Possible Action to Approve and Forward it to the Board**

Requested Action: The board office asks the committee to review, to discuss, and to take possible action to approve and forward the proposed statutory Report on Free Expression to the board for its approval, as described in this executive summary.

Background

- The Committee on Free Expression will review a draft report to confirm that it complies with the requirements of A.R.S. §15-1867 and that it demonstrates the commitment of the board and the universities to protecting and promoting free expression.
- Following committee review and approval, the committee chair will submit the report to the Arizona Board of Regents for its approval.
- The board is anticipated to consider approval of the report at its August 27, 2026, meeting.
- By September 1, 2026, the committee chair will submit the approved report to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the secretary of state and the ABOR office will post the final report on the ABOR website.

Contact Information:

Samantha Blevins, ABOR

Samantha.Blevins@azregents.edu

602-229-2535

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FY 2026

FREE EXPRESSION ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to
REGENTS' CUP



ARIZONA BOARD OF
REGENTS

ASU ♦ NAU ♦ U of A



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and university leadership strive to protect intellectual freedom and free expression at Arizona's public universities. Students, staff and faculty members may discuss any topic, as guaranteed by the First Amendment, and within the limits of reasonable content and viewpoint-neutral restrictions on time, place and manner of expression consistent with applicable law.

ABOR established a Committee on Free Expression, which submits this report as required by A.R.S. §15-1867. The membership of the Free Expression Committee is in Exhibit A.

A comprehensive list of current board and university policies that protect and promote free speech is provided in Exhibit B.

The ABOR Policy on Free Expression is included as Exhibit C.

ABOUT THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS

ABOR is committed to ensuring access for qualified residents of Arizona to undergraduate and graduate institutions; promoting the discovery, application, and dissemination of new knowledge; extending the benefits of university activities to Arizona's citizens outside the university; and maximizing the benefits derived from the state's investment in education.

MEMBERS

Doug Goodyear, Chair
Jessica Pacheco, Chair Elect
Cecilia Mata, Treasurer
Gregg Brewster, Secretary
Michele Halyard, M.D.
James McCain
Steve Peru
Lee Stein
Felipe Garcia, Student Regent
Aydin-Kane Vo, Student Regent
Gov. Katie Hobbs, Ex-Officio
Superintendent Tom Horne, Ex-Officio

ABOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chad Sampson



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ABOR AND THE UNIVERSITIES DO NOT TOLERATE BARRIERS TO OR DISRUPTIONS OF PROTECTED SPEECH

Protecting free speech and intellectual freedom is a bedrock principle at Arizona's public universities. However, implementing free speech protocols in a community made up of tens of thousands of individual students, faculty and community members can sometimes produce strong and varied emotions, as well as difficult social interactions. Expressions of opposing viewpoints in a legally permissible manner is not a disruption of, or barrier to, protected speech as described in A.R.S. §15-1867. Instead, it is free speech in action.

Essentially, Arizona's universities encourage the free expression of all viewpoints, within established time, place and manner restrictions. As such, all three of Arizona's public universities maintain the highest green light rating from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression ([FIRE](#)), recognizing the commitment of ABOR and the universities to free speech. "Arizona's green light schools are setting a standard for free expression that colleges across the country should aspire to follow," [said Laura Beltz](#), FIRE policy reform senior program officer. Furthermore, all three universities have adopted the "[Chicago Statement](#)," the free speech policy statement produced by the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago.

While each university has policies and procedures to encourage and protect all lawful speech, all expressive activities are subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions as permitted by law. Also, expressive activities can be subject to laws that address discrimination, harassment, safety, defamation, threats, privacy and confidentiality. Actions that unlawfully disrupt the functions of the institutions are not permitted. As required by statute, [ABOR policy 1-124](#) provides:

A student who is subject to the jurisdiction of a university and who engages in individual conduct that materially and substantially infringes on the rights of other persons to engage in or listen to expressive activity, as defined in A.R.S. § 15-1861, is subject to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct and other applicable university and board policies. This does not preclude students from engaging in counter speech as First Amendment principles may permit..

Although a more complete list of applicable policies is provided in Exhibit B, here are some examples of how ABOR and university policies promote lawful free expression within any of Arizona's public universities without barriers.

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Arizona State University (ASU) has a longstanding commitment to free speech consistent with the university's educational function. ASU has adopted the core principles of the University of Chicago's Report of the Committee on the Freedom of Expression from the University of Chicago (the "[Chicago Statement](#)") affirming the role of academic freedom and freedom of expression on college campuses.

In 2026, ASU was ranked in the top 10% nationally by the [Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression \(FIRE\) in its annual College Free Speech Rankings](#). The rankings, which reflect student perspectives on their ability to freely express opinions on campus and administration's support of that expression. This ranking reflects the university's continuing "green light" rating from FIRE, which reflects the highest commitment to free speech protections.

As such, ASU welcomes both members of the university community and campus visitors to engage in expressive activities on campus. Both indoor and outdoor spaces are set aside for use on a reservation basis, while other areas are available without reservations and for spontaneous expression consistent with ABOR and university's content- and viewpoint-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions. ASU staff are available to actively assist in facilitating and supporting speech activities on campus, including providing options for virtual as well as in-person speech and arranging and managing space to permit speakers, listeners, and protestors to engage in speech safely without disrupting university activities and while maintaining access to campus for pedestrians and emergency services and addressing threatening or violent conduct. A public-facing website provides comprehensive information to the ASU community and the general public regarding the use of campus spaces for expression.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Northern Arizona University (NAU) remains steadfast in its longstanding commitment to the US Constitution's promise freedom of expression. And, NAU believes in ensuring the rights of all individuals to engage in lawfully protected speech regarding a broad range of viewpoints and perspectives, as guaranteed by the First Amendment and supported by ABOR and university policies. Simultaneously, NAU is responsible for ensuring that free expression does not disrupt campus operations, interfere with the university's educational mission, or otherwise jeopardize the health, safety, and welfare of the university community.

In 2022 NAU adopted the Chicago Statement, reaffirming its commitment to a campus environment that affirms the crucial role of free expression in advancing knowledge and broadening understanding. And, NAU has earned a "green light" rating from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, which also ranked NAU as 31st nationally (out of 257) in its annual college free speech ratings.

NAU consistently facilitates the freedom of expression of speakers, listeners, debaters, protestors, and others by appropriately managing spaces and forums on campus. NAU also champions free expression by not restricting speech merely because it may be controversial or objectionable to certain listeners. And, NAU works to safeguard the people, places, and spaces in which free expression, academic freedom, and the pursuit of knowledge can thrive.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

The free expression of all viewpoints is foundational to the University of Arizona's (U of A) commitment to its [Six Core Values](#):

- Integrity requires honesty even in the face of public disapproval;
- Compassion demands the courage and capacity to hear all members of our community;
- Exploration deploys a variety of credible techniques to investigate facts or evaluate received wisdom, following the evidence and best arguments to ever more refined conclusions;
- Adaptation requires facing any well-made claim and acknowledging its merits;
- Inclusion grants space for the expression of a broad spectrum of opinions; and
- Determination is the resolve to bear both criticism and acclaim.

Because barriers to, and disruptions of, free speech are inconsistent with the U of A's Core Values, our policies and practices are designed to facilitate rather than obstruct free expression. Content-neutral standards in the U of A's [Campus Use Policy](#) promote a genuine free-speech culture by giving all speakers and groups clear notice of straightforward rules around where, when, and how they can engage in large-scale expressive activities, while ample open public forums ensure individuals have ready avenues for leafleting, speaking, or exhibiting consistent with ABOR 1-124(C). Reasonable regulation of the time, place, and manner of speech activities guarantees a meaningful opportunity for the expression of all constitutionally permissible speech while giving a platform to criticism and opposition. The Dean of Students Office leads affirmative training on First Amendment principles, and that training has been completed by hundreds of members of the campus community in the last two years alone.

The U of A's ongoing adherence to the Chicago Principles on Freedom and Expression, its maintenance of a Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure for the specific protection of faculty speech rights along with [resources](#) and [policy protections](#) for academic freedom, its ongoing "green light" spotlight rating from FIRE, and the robust [First Amendment resources](#) offered by the Dean of Students Office for students and the broader campus community all further illustrate the U of A's intolerance for obstructions to constitutionally protected expression.

THE BOARD AND THE UNIVERSITIES PROMPTLY ADDRESS ALL ALLEGATIONS OF BARRIERS TO OR DISRUPTIONS OF PROTECTED SPEECH

Each university has an administrative process for responding to allegations of barriers to or disruptions of protected speech that complies with applicable law. All three universities provide active support for free speech activities on campus, including managing campus events to support meaningful opportunities for protest and to listen to invited speakers. The universities also engage in dialogue with, and provide support for, students and community members who feel negatively impacted by the speech of others. However, consistent with the provisions of ABOR's Policy on Free Expression and the ABOR Student Code of Conduct, the universities do not impose discipline for constitutionally protected speech solely because that speech is controversial or objectionable to others. As appropriate, the response may address the conduct immediately and may include additional review or sanctions under board or university policy. Campus police may be involved if allegations include criminal conduct or implicate safety concerns. The following reflect the universities' handling of allegations of barriers to or disruptions of free expression.

ASU

As a community of nearly 200,000 people from every state and more than 150 countries that is committed to free and open inquiry, ASU expects that differences of opinion will be a part of the university experience. ASU educates members of its community on the role of free speech, civil discourse, and the expectation to refrain from interfering with the speech of others that are incorporated in its policies. Over the course of any given year, including the last one, numerous individuals and groups visit ASU's campuses to express their views on a variety of issues. These visits are largely without incident, and ASU has trained staff on campus who provide in-person support and guidance to facilitate expressive activities.

When allegations of barriers to, or disruptions of, speech are reported, ASU addresses them through available tools including educational interventions and proactive measures, as well as sanctions where appropriate and necessary. Unless there is an imminent safety issue, ASU's approach is to begin with providing guidance and direction, as well as a warning, before taking steps to stop activities or remove individuals from campus due to a failure to follow guidelines.

While the need for law enforcement involvement is rare, during the 2025-26 year, ASU arrested two individuals who refused to leave an area set aside for graduation activities. The individuals were part of a larger group that demonstrated on ASU's campuses multiple times over the Spring 2026 semester and over the course of several hours on the day of undergraduate commencement. The two participants who were arrested entered the area in front of the venue at the same time as a procession of graduates and families. They were asked to leave and refused to do so. Others who left when directed or remained outside the area set aside for graduation participants continued to demonstrate from a nearby area where they could be seen and heard by those entering the ceremony. While the two

individuals who were arrested have been trespassed from campus, the group with which they are affiliated remains able to engage in expressive activities on campus, so long as they continue to follow ASU's campus use guidelines.

ASU previously reported an allegation involving a prospective administrator whose offer of employment was rescinded based on allegations of misconduct not disclosed during the hiring process, who has alleged the decision was actually in retaliation for protected speech on social media. This lawsuit has been dismissed.

ASU also previously reported a lawsuit brought by several students who were arrested after refusing to vacate an encampment that violated ASU's longstanding content- and viewpoint-neutral prohibition on camping on campus. The university is also defending against this allegation in court.

NAU

NAU's Speech Expression Action Knowledge (SpEAK) Team was designed to effectively address potential barriers to or disruptions of protected free expression on campus. The SpEAK Team is comprised of fourteen (14) trained employees who have volunteered to partner with NAU's Campus Inclusion Team; together, those Teams actively work to ensure that all expressions of speech on campus—whether planned or spontaneous—are supported and protected. Among other things, these Teams facilitate and safeguard the free expression of speakers, events, and protests which occur on campus, as well as the free expression of any individuals attending such events to observe and/or freely express a differing perspective. If members of the university community express concerns about the free expression of any individuals on campus, the Teams listen to such concerns, connect individuals who may have experienced others' free expression in a negative manner with supportive resources (such as Counseling Services, Lumberjack Care Center, etc.), and appropriately educate members of the community regarding the importance of free expression and First Amendment rights.

During the past academic year, NAU's SpEAK Team observed and/or provided support for a number of events as discussed further in Exhibit E.

U OF A

U of A's policies and practices ensure prompt redress of infringements on protected speech. The U of A's first approach to such redress is prevention through education, providing clear policies, informational handouts on the First Amendment and the [Campus Use Policy](#), best practices for [on-campus activists](#), and more, including an [expansive online clearinghouse](#) for free-speech issues offered by the U of A Libraries.

When potential infringements do arise, the U of A has the means to promptly address them. Students are protected by defined timelines in the [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#) and the capacity for the Dean of Students Office to take interim actions based on reliable information of possible conduct violations. Faculty speech grievances move through a general grievance process with flexibility for conciliatory processes, and speech-related grievances for all U of A employees can be brought to Human Resources. Moreover, confidential support from

the [U of A's Ombuds](#) is available for alternative resolution processes, and the plenary authority granted to the President in the U of A's Governance Policy provides for interim interventions when only immediate action can adequately address a barrier to or disruption of protected speech.

ABOR AND THE UNIVERSITIES PROMOTE DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY

ABOR and the universities are committed to maintaining administrative and institutional neutrality regarding speech and to allowing all protected speech, even speech that some may find offensive. From time to time, ABOR and the universities hear concerns from members of campus and the broader community who may not appreciate the broad constitutional protections afforded to speech, especially to speech that many in the community may find deeply offensive.

Despite this, the universities are committed to protecting all lawful expression. The universities are also committed, as part of their educational missions, to providing information about protected speech to those who may seek to have ABOR or universities interfere with or suppress free expression. When protected but offensive speech occurs on campus, universities may use this as an opportunity to educate the broader community as to the nature of constitutional protections as well as to identify opportunities for the safe expression of divergent viewpoints – countering the offensive speech with more speech.¹

ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS

ASU won the seventh annual Regents' Cup, the Arizona Board of Regents' signature competition that showcases its commitment to free speech, civil discourse and civic learning across the state's three public universities.

Hosted on the U of A campus in Tucson, the 2026 competition featured Oxford-style debate and persuasive storytelling, giving students the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking, respectful engagement and effective communication on complex public issues. "Liberty and Responsibility" was the overarching theme of this year's event.

¹At its August 23, 2018, meeting, the board adopted a Free Expression Policy in compliance with A.R.S. § 15-1866. A copy of the policy is attached as Exhibit C. State statute and board policy also address political speech. Board and university policies recognize the limitations imposed by A.R.S. § 15-1633, which limits the use of university resources or employees to influence elections.

Students debated timely topics including the role of generative artificial intelligence in undergraduate education, physician-assisted suicide, social media age restrictions and the civic responsibility to be well-informed when voting. The storytelling competition challenged students to present original narratives inspired by the event theme.

ASU secured the team championship, led by Jake Dueck and Sam Luba, who won the Oxford debate competition. Northern Arizona University's Benjamin Winkler captured first place in storytelling. More than 45 national and statewide judges participated in the event, including elected and appointed officials, business and community representatives, philanthropic leaders, members of the media, and more.

Since its launch in 2019, the Regents' Cup has become a cornerstone of Arizona's commitment to free expression and civil discourse. The competition complements the state's national recognition for free speech, with all three public universities earning FIRE's highest rating in the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings.

ASU

To foster administrative and institutional neutrality about speech and to allow all protected speech, ASU regularly communicates its values regarding campus speech. Materials used during new student orientation include a series of videos on campus free speech prepared by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education ("FIRE") as well as an additional video prepared by ASU featuring student speakers. These videos have a permanent home on a "[Free Speech at ASU](#)" website that is available year-round for reference. This site serves as a central repository for materials about freedom of expression and campus access for both community members and campus visitors.

As in prior years, ASU's faculty and its more than 1,000 student organizations host numerous events encouraging public discourse on a wide variety of topics and from multiple perspectives in both in-person and virtual settings. These events regularly include speakers focusing specifically on the role of freedom of expression in contemporary society. In the 2025-2026 academic year, this included hosting: the Federalist Society [National Student Symposium](#) on the topic *Liberty Rising: The Rebirth of Free Markets, Free Speech, and Federalism*; the Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics' [event series](#) *Founding Values: America 250 Years Later*; a season of the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership's [Civic Discourse Project](#) focused on *America at 250*; a non-partisan debate series called *PRO/CONversations* hosted by the Institute for Politics; and the continuation of the ASU Center for Free Speech/Institute for Politics' [Dialogues for Democracy](#) speaker series, which invites leaders from politics, business, journalism, education and professional sports engaged in open and intensive dialogue modeling and discussing free speech in higher education and a free society.

NAU

NAU is a public institution deeply committed to fostering the free exchange of ideas among all members of its campus community. To that end, NAU regularly reaffirms and promotes the importance of freedom of expression.

NAU's Student Handbook, for instance, affirms the value of and right to free expression, and all of NAU's recognized student organizations receive training regarding the importance of upholding the First Amendment, prior to those organizations being permitted to host events on campus. Additionally, all of NAU's Community Assistants and professional Campus Living staff participate in annual training to educate them regarding how to appropriately protect students' expression of their First Amendment rights. Further, NAU also actively promotes and its students participate in the annual Regents' Cup, which showcases free speech and the free exchange of ideas.

NAU also consistently promotes administrative and institutional neutrality by cultivating a campus environment in which a broad range of viewpoints can be expressed, perspectives can be broadened, and civil discourse can be elevated. Among other events, NAU annually hosts at least two freedom of expression workshops for the purpose of educating NAU employees and students about free expression on the NAU campus. Such workshops are created in partnership with staff from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression; FIRE staff then also visit NAU's campus to facilitate the workshops.

U OF A

The U of A promotes diversity of thought at the highest levels of leadership, with its ongoing commitment to the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression, [strategic imperatives](#) aligned toward success for every student and boundary-pushing research and public scholarship, [confirmation from the President](#) of the foundational nature of academic freedom to the institution's educational enterprise, and the designation of a First Amendment Officer.

This devotion to fostering an atmosphere of real expressive freedom was laid out in President Garimella's 2025 [Statement of Principles](#). In the *Statement*, the President unambiguously affirmed the U of A's belief in a "vibrant marketplace of ideas and perspectives" alongside "equal treatment of all." The Statement highlighted important facts about how the U of A encourages intellectual and expressive diversity: faculty are hired on the basis of "the quality and merits" of the candidates, hecklers' vetoes are prohibited while rigorous inquiry and respectful debate are actively encouraged, and the institution has explicitly proclaimed that it will not "restrict academic freedom in scholarship and teaching or individual speech by students and employees acting in their personal capacities." Moreover, the President observed that the U of A "refrains from taking positions on political and social issues that do not directly affect campus operations, safety, compliance, or the teaching and research mission," a responsible commitment to institutional neutrality that allows the institution space to engage in mission-centered advocacy on issues directly affecting the U of A's mission.

The President's Statement was not a private document intended for internal consumption; rather, it was nationally publicized and widely discussed, setting down a marker on behalf of free expression for all to see.

Beyond merely proclaiming its free speech bona fides, the U of A also demonstrates its commitment to diversity of thought in real ways. Students heard about the U of A's "Fearless Inquiry" mindset and the institution's commitment to free speech both during orientation and in the Bear Down Run Down email newsletter. Volunteers for the 2025 Tucson Festival of Books were given a First Amendment training as they prepared for the event, and each year, the Festival itself creates a literal marketplace of ideas on the Mall and attracts a diverse array of speakers and activists. Beyond that, the campus routinely hosts or participates in public summits (such as the 2026 [Campus Safety Summit](#)); the [Regents' Cup](#); speakers and thinkers of all kinds through initiatives such as the U of A [Discourse Series](#), the [Distinguished Research Lecture Series](#), or College-level events; gatherings of leading legal scholars (including current and former Justices of the United States Supreme Court at the non-partisan [Rehnquist Center](#)); and other events designed to fuel public discussion and the exchange of competing ideas.

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ALLOCATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

Exhibit D provides the allocation of student activity fees, if any, that are used to support and facilitate the expression and activities of students or student organizations as required by A.R.S. §15-1867 (B)(5).



DISTRIBUTION OF THIS REPORT

As required by A.R.S. §15-1867, this report will be posted on the ABOR website and submitted to:

- The governor
- The speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives
- The president of the Arizona Senate
- The Arizona Secretary of State

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EXHIBITS

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EXHIBIT A

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FREE EXPRESSION AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chad Sampson, Executive Director, Arizona Board of Regents

ASU REPRESENTATIVES

Lisa Loo, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

Patrick Kenney, Executive Vice Provost

Anne Jones, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; Professor, School of Molecular Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Joanne Vogel, Vice President of Student Services

Nagham Mousa, Student Representative

****Kim Demarchi**, Vice President for Legal Affairs and Deputy General Counsel

NAU REPRESENTATIVES

Margot Saltonstall, Vice President of Student Affairs

Kimberly Ott, Associate Vice President, Communications

Marco Cabrera Geserick, Assistant Professor of Humanities

Jacob Orduño, ASNAU Student Body President

***Michelle Parker**, Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel

U OF A REPRESENTATIVES

Tessa Dysart, Assistant Director of Legal Writing & Clinical Professor of Law

Clifton “Cliff” Iler, General Counsel

Steve Patterson, Vice President & Chief Safety Officer

Chrissy Lieberman, Dean of Students

Katie Kelliher, ASUA Student Body President

***Rachel Reinhardt**, Chief of Staff to the President

* Point of contact and committee member

** Point of contact and non-committee member

EXHIBIT B

ABOR POLICIES

- [1-124 \(Free Expression\)](#)
- [1-119 \(B\)\(4\) \(Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment\)](#)
- [5-301 \(B\)\(1\) \(Code of Conduct\)](#)
- [5-303 \(11\) \(Prohibited Conduct\)](#)
- [5-308 \(A\)\(1\) and \(B\)\(1\) \(Student Code of Conduct\)](#)
- [6-202 \(Academic Freedom\)](#)
- [6-905 \(Political Activity\)](#)

ASU POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

- [ACD 201 \(Academic Freedom\)](#)
- [ACD 202-01 \(Faculty Responsibilities\)](#)
- [ACD 204-01 \(Code of Ethics\)](#)
- [ACD 204-02 \(Standards of Professional Conduct for Faculty Members and Academic Professionals\)](#)
- [ACD 205-01 \(Political Activity\)](#)
- [FAC 115 \(Use of University Property and Facilities\)](#)
- [Adoption of Chicago Statement of Freedom of Speech](#)
- [Policy Statement Supporting Diversity and Free Speech](#)
- [Freedom of Speech at ASU](#)

NAU POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

- [Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [NAU HR Policy 5.10 Regarding Political Activity](#)
- [NAU HR Policy 5.14 Use of University Property](#)
- [NAU Conditions of Faculty Service](#)
- [NAU Faculty Handbook 4.1 \(Code of Ethics and Conduct\)](#)
- [NAU Student Handbook](#)
- [NAU Statement Campus Use](#)
- [NAU Club & Organization Event Approval](#)
- [NAU Information Distribution Policy](#)
- [First Amendment: Free Expression on Campus Handout](#)
- [Adoption of Chicago Statement of Freedom of Expression](#)

U OF A POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

- [Policy and Regulations Governing the Use of Campus, SA-200](#)
- [Political Activity Policy, HR-104](#)
- [Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy, HR-200E](#)
- [Religious Accommodation Policy, HR-202](#)
- Academic Freedom
 - o [Statement on academic freedom from the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, approved by Faculty Senate 9/14/09](#)
 - o From [University Handbook for Appointed Personnel Definitions](#): “Professional and intellectual freedom means the right and responsibility to exercise judgment within the standards of the employee’s profession. Professional and intellectual freedom is defined as ‘academic freedom’ for employees involved in teaching or research.”
- [Faculty Responsibilities, UHAP 3.1, Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty](#)
- [Statement on Professional Conduct, UHAP 7.01.01](#)
- [Adoption of Chicago Statement of Freedom of Expression](#)

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EXHIBIT C

ABOR FREE EXPRESSION POLICY

1-124 Free Expression

- A.** The primary function of Arizona's public universities is to promote the discovery, improvement, transmission and dissemination of knowledge through research, teaching, discussion and debate. The universities must strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression. It is not the proper role of a university to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment, including ideas and opinions that may be unwelcome, disagreeable or deeply offensive.
- B.** Students, staff and faculty members may discuss any topic, as the First Amendment allows and within the limits of reasonable content- and viewpoint-neutral restrictions on time, place and manner of expression that are consistent with applicable law and that are necessary to achieve a compelling institutional interest if these restrictions are clear, are published and provide ample alternative means of expression. The board's policy on political activity by employees or others acting on behalf of a university is set forth in Board Policy 6-905.
- C.** Students, staff and faculty members may assemble and engage in spontaneous expressive activities if those activities are not unlawful and do not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the university.
- D.** A student who is subject to the jurisdiction of a university and who engages in individual conduct that materially and substantially infringes on the rights of other persons to engage in or listen to expressive activity, as defined in A.R.S. § 15-1861, is subject to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct and other applicable university and board policies. This does not preclude students from engaging in counter speech as First Amendment principles may permit.
- E.** Universities may restrict expressive activity that is not protected by the First Amendment.
- F.** The board will establish a committee on free expression composed of representatives from the universities and the board office, which will submit an annual report as required by A.R.S. §15-1867.

EXHIBIT D

ALLOCATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES BY UNIVERSITY

ASU

The Associated Students of Arizona State University is responsible for oversight of the student programming fee that provides funding to more than 1040 student organizations annually. This includes funding for the Programming and Activities Board, sport club organizations, cultural coalitions, college councils and registered organizations that seek funding. Students and student organizations can also seek funding for traveling to professional and academic conferences. The Undergraduate Student Government spent approximately \$1,468,572.15 on appropriations for more than 701 undergraduate clubs and organizations (including general clubs, sport clubs, cultural coalitions, college councils and Programming and Activities Board) in fiscal year 2025-2026. The Undergraduate Student Government also spent approximately \$106,890.46 on 575 individuals who traveled to academic and professional conferences. The Graduate Student Government spent approximately \$110,112.69 on appropriations for more than 47 graduate clubs and organizations requests. The Graduate Student Government also spent approximately \$192,016.64 on 272 individuals who traveled to academic and professional conferences. Undergraduates pay \$35 per semester and graduate students pay \$35 per semester for the student programming fee. The remainder of the student programming fee budget supported events such as concerts, community gatherings, professional artists and speakers, rental fees, and supplies. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-1626.01(C), each student may choose to select one or more student organizations or clubs to which the university may not allocate that student's pro rata share of fee monies. For each student who does so, that student's share of fee monies is used only for programs that are open to all students.

NAU

All Flagstaff campus students pay the \$25 per semester Student Activity Fee, which supports on-campus programs and activities that enhance campus life and involvement, including concerts, speakers, movies, Welcome Week, Homecoming, Family Weekend, leadership programs, and recreational activities. The Student Activity Fee also provides funding for student organizations, colleges, and departments to host events—which are open to all students—on the Flagstaff Mountain campus. During academic year 2025-2026, funding totalling approximately \$68,000 was provided to 21 student organizations, colleges, and/or departments that hosted events.

Every NAU Flagstaff Mountain Campus undergraduate student also pays the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University (ASNAU) 23 Fee each semester. During academic year 2025-2026, ASNAU distributed approximately \$550,000 to directly contribute to a wide variety of services and programs that benefit all of NAU's students, including providing support to more than 340 campus student organizations and clubs, individual students, campus-wide programming and events, and providing various forums for free expression which enable all NAU students to share their perspectives. The ASNAU 23 Fee was further distributed to support endeavors such as the Lumberjack Concert Series, Homecoming Carnival, a range of community events, reimbursements to student clubs and organizations for travel and

operations, support of students' basic needs, and awards to recognize NAU students for exemplary service and achievements. The Fee is further utilized to increase access to the university library by supporting extended hours for its operations; it also helps fund NAU students pursuing studying abroad. Additionally, the ASNAU Student Affairs Committee meets regularly to discuss any and all issues of importance to students, with the express goal of helping all NAU students more effectively make their voices heard and share their opinions on campus, thereby amplifying the diverse opinions of all NAU undergraduate students. Relatedly, to comply with Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-1626.01, each semester NAU students identify clubs they prefer not to support with their Activity and/or ASNAU 23 Fee monies. If a student identifies such a club(s), their Fees are not made available to that club(s), and instead are allocated to other events open to all students.

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The Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA) operate the Wildcat Events Board (WEB), a student-governed entity responsible for planning and implementing campus-wide social and educational programming. All events hosted by WEB are open and accessible to the entire student body. Funding for WEB is provided through a mandatory fee of \$5 per student, per semester, which generated \$310,550 in FY26.

WEB is committed to fostering community and collaboration among students while providing opportunities for leadership development through active engagement in event planning and execution. Its programming portfolio encompasses a broad spectrum of events, including trivia and bingo nights, outdoor film screenings, cultural and national celebrations, live musical performances, and other educational and entertainment-based programs.

ASUA is also responsible for the oversight of club funding, which supports more than 450 recognized student organizations annually. This funding is available to all registered student groups, including those seeking support for travel to professional and academic conferences.

In FY26, the U of A directed \$330,000 of student services fee funding to ASUA for club appropriations. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-1626.01(C), students may designate one or more student organizations or clubs to which the institution may not allocate that student's pro rata share of fee monies. Any resulting balance is used to support large-scale student organization events, such as the annual Club Fair.

EXHIBIT E

NAU'S SpEAK TEAM SUPPORTED EVENTS

Date	Organizing Group	Event Recap	Action Taken
9/11/25	Turning Point NAU (TPNAU)	STPNAU was approved to have an impromptu candlelight vigil at the Union Amphitheater, with about 95 students in attendance.	STPNAU worked with NAU's Unions and Activities concerning event logistics. The NAU SpEAK Team was asked to be present at the event; there were no disruptions or counter-protests.
9/15/25	TPNAU	TPNAU held a second candlelight vigil at the union amphitheater with close to 100 students in attendance. The event included a formal program of student speakers.	TPNAU worked with Leadership and Engagement, NAUPD, and the SpEAK Team to review and adhere to all applicable policies and processes. There were no disruptions or counter protests.
9/27/25	Leaders for a Thriving Climate at NAU, NAU Fossil Free Club, Headphone Jacks, and United Left Coalition	35-40 attendees met on campus to make posters and organize marchers. The group proceeded to peacefully march off-campus to City Hall.	The SpEAK Team was present as the attendees marched through the NAU campus.
9/29/25	TPNAU	TPNAU hosted a tabling event to promote their student organization and upcoming events.	The SpEAK Team was not present for this event. There was an incident where an individual swiped merchandise off the table and stole a posterboard sign. The Office Student Rights and Responsibilities (which enforces the Student Code of Conduct) and NAUPD responded to the incident pursuant to NAU's policies and practices, and TPNAU members were offered support and resources.
10/1/25	TPNAU	TPNAU hosted a tabling event to promote upcoming events.	The SpEAK Team was not present for this event. During this event, an individual left a note glorifying the death of Charlie Kirk. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities responded pursuant to applicable policies and procedures, and TPUSA

Date	Organizing Group	Event Recap	Action Taken
			members were offered support and resources.
10/6/25	TPNAU	TPNAU hosted Cabot Phillips at its <i>How to Fight Like Charlie</i> event. Over 85 faculty, staff, students, and community members were in attendance.	The SpEAK Team was present at the event. There were no disruptions or counterprotests.
10/14/25	NAUSOMOS	NAUSOMOS gathered at the union amphitheater to make posters and then march off-campus to downtown Flagstaff to hold a vigil for Gaza. There were at least 115 people in attendance.	The SpEAK Team was present and coordination with NAUPD and Flagstaff took place prior to the march. There were no counterprotests.
10/28/25	Students For Life of America	This student organization held a tabling event and invited Kathleen Pelak, the Pacific Southwest Regional Coordinator. Ms. Pelak was present to train members regarding organizing the table display and provide guidance regarding engaging other students in Pro-Life discussions.	The SpEAK Team was present. There were no negative encounters or counterprotests.
11/10/25	TPNAU	TPNAU held a tabling event to promote future programming for their organization.	The SpEAK was not present for this event. There was an incident where an individual repeatedly made contact with club members (shoulder-check; smacking members with her bag). The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities responded pursuant to policies and procedures, and TPNAU members were offered support and resources.
1/12/26	Students for Democratic Society Flagstaff (SDS Flagstaff)	SDS Flagstaff held a demonstration in response to the death of Renee Good. 20-30 students were in attendance.	The SpEAK Team was present for event. The event was not officially registered with NAU. There were no speeches, no amplified sound, and no negative encounters or counterprotests.
1/30/26	SDS Flagstaff, MECHA, and the United Left Coalition	The groups held a demonstration at the union amphitheater in response to the death of Alex	The SpEAK Team was present and coordinated with NAUPD and Flagstaff PD related to the

Date	Organizing Group	Event Recap	Action Taken
		Pretti. There were 220+ people in attendance. Speeches were made and then the group led a march from campus to City Hall.	marching route. No negative encounters or counterprotests occurred.
2/3/26	Students for Life for America	Kathleen Pelak returned for their monthly tabling event. Ms. Pelak was there to engage group members and discuss pro-life issues with students.	The SpEAK Team was present for this event. One encounter occurred, consisting of a student yelling at the group. No other encounters or counterprotests took place.
2/6/26	SDS Flagstaff	The event began at the union amphitheater with 80-90 students gathering, claiming that their goal was to get NAU to declare itself a “sanctuary campus.” After speeches were delivered, the group marched from the north union to south campus and made brief statements at the DuBois Center before ending the event.	The SpEAK Team was present for this event, and coordinated with NAUPD regarding the marching route through campus. Although they had been informed that the Campus Use Policy applied to this event, the group violated that policy because they did not register their event and they used amplified sound. No counterprotests or negative encounters occurred.
2/11/26	SDS Flagstaff and MECHA	Over 130 students marched from the north union to Ashurst Hall, and then lined up inside the building near NAU’s Center for Inclusive Excellence. Three student leaders met with the Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and members of his team to share their wish to make NAU a “sanctuary campus.”	The SpEAK Team was present and coordination with NAUPD occurred; NAUPD officers were also present. SDS violated NAU’s Campus Use policy by using amplified sound. There were no other negative encounters or counterprotests.
2/27/26	SDS Flagstaff	12 students gathered at the NAU First Amendment Plaza and read prepared speeches pertaining to expressing solidarity with Cuba.	The SpEAK Team was present for this event, and NAUPD was on stand-by. There were no negative encounters or counterprotests.
3/27/26	SDS Flagstaff	50-60 students and 2-3 community members gathered at the union amphitheater to create posters and give speeches. Afterwards, the students marched from campus to City Hall.	The SpEAK Team was present. NAUPD and Flagstaff PD coordinated their efforts to ensure the march took place safely. The group did violate NAU’s Campus Use policy since they failed to register the event and also used amplified sound.

Date	Organizing Group	Event Recap	Action Taken
3/30/26	TPNAU	TPNAU hosted Chloe Cole, who was speaking as part of TP USA's national "Prove Me Wrong" campus tour, which invited students to engage with Ms. Cole on various topics.	The SpEAK Team was present, as was NAUPD. Prior to the event, a TPNAU sign was stolen; this incident was reported to NAUPD for further investigation. There were also a few counterprotest incidents that were each addressed by campus police and/or SpEAK Team members.
3/30/26	Planned Parenthood Generation Action (PPGEN) and United Left Coalition	The groups held a tabling event in the afternoon followed by an evening educational event focused on Trans Education.	The SpEAK Team was present for these events; there were no negative encounters or counterprotests.
4/9/26	Hillel	Hillel hosted a tabling event to promote their organization and events for remaining of the semester.	The SpEAK Team was not present for the event. One counterprotester engaged in dialogue regarding support for Israel.
4/10/26	SDS Flagstaff	Approximately 129 students gathered at the south union Dubois Center lawn to create posters and then march to the location of a building off-campus which US Immigration and Customs Enforcement apparently planned to rent. The group also marched to the Babbit Administrative Building to express their wish that NAU become a "sanctuary campus."	The SpEAK Team was present, as were the coordinated efforts of NAUPD and Flagstaff PD. The group violated the NAU Campus Use policy by not registering their event and using amplified sound. There were no other negative incidents or counterprotests from this event.
5/1/26	United Left Coalition	32-44 students gathered at the union amphitheater to make posters and then march to City Hall. They then marched back to campus to hold a panel discussion regarding labor history and the history of May Day.	The SpEAK Team was present as the march began on campus, and NAUPD and Flagstaff PD coordinated to ensure the march to City Hall was safe. There were no negative encounters or counterprotests.

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