

# Faculty Manual

(<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/>)

## Chapter 1: A Statement of Principles

---

### *A: Academic Freedom of Expression*

Vanderbilt University is dedicated to advancing knowledge and ideas, both of which may contain inherently value-laden components. In pursuit of this goal, Vanderbilt is committed to providing an environment for open inquiry and the vigorous exploration and free expression of ideas. Academic freedom for faculty extends from the university campus (e.g., classrooms, lecture halls, clubs, etc.) to outside its boundaries. As informed citizens and experts in their academic specialties who can speak with accuracy and authority, faculty are often encouraged to express ideas and opinions in the public domain. This activity, which is recognized as an important component of academic endeavor, occurs through a variety of venues not limited to formal publications. Vanderbilt encourages intellectual inquiry, discovery, and exchange of information, and, therefore, fully recognizes and protects freedom of exploration, thought, and expression for its faculty in all these activities.

Vanderbilt strives to promote a diverse community, and the views and ideas of its members will inevitably conflict. As an institution committed to the advancement of knowledge, and as a training ground for the intellectual, social, and ethical leaders of the future, the university is the arena where difficult conversations and seemingly heretical thoughts deserve exploration and protection. It is contrary to the principles of the university to limit the freedom of expression of individuals or to protect individuals from the messages of others which may be deemed disagreeable or possibly even offensive.

At the same time, the university deeply values inclusivity, civility, and mutual respect, and it is incumbent upon all members of the Vanderbilt community to engage in civil and respectful dialog and to resist discourse that aims to suppress the free expression of ideas. The university is and should be a forum in which faculty and students engage the spectrum of ideas in a civil and mutually respectful fashion, where faculty provide a role model for student engagement, and where students hone their abilities to think about and explore diverse perspectives.

When an individual or group deems the ideas of others to be inimical to their own, the response cannot be to suppress or obstruct the speech of others but rather the response should be to engage in discussion, debate, and mutually respectful dialog. A core part of the university's mission is to provide opportunities for intellectual exchanges to take place. Our responsibility as a community is to ensure that all members of the university community have freedom of expression.

Only in narrow circumstances should the university endeavor to limit freedom of expression. Speech that violates the law, such as libel, slander, harassment, or threats; that infringes on legally-protected privacy or confidentiality interests; that directly impedes university activities in a severe and/or pervasive manner; or that intentionally promotes hate of individuals or groups is not protected at Vanderbilt. Because the university is fully committed to the promotion and protection of the free expression and exchange of ideas, these rare exceptions should be understood and applied so as to support rather than undermine full and free expression.

### ***B: Students at Vanderbilt: A Statement of Principles***

The community of Vanderbilt University is united by the goals of inquiry and education. Faculty, administration, and students are partners in an enterprise aimed at the enhancement of knowledge and the growth of the individual. All members of this community have both rights and responsibilities and are expected to observe rules required to maintain the humane order of the University. Each member must respect the rights of others and make responsible contributions to the common life.

The University, in turn, dedicates itself to the support and encouragement of a collegial community. Its dealings with students will be governed, within the limits of its resources, by the principles articulated below. It will take special care that its rules and regulations,

through which these principles are implemented, shall adequately reflect and be in accordance with them.

## OPEN COMMUNICATION

The University is committed to the promotion of collegial relationships among students, faculty, and administration through the creation and maintenance of open channels of communication. The University will publish and disseminate in a timely manner its policies, procedures, and regulations concerning students, including those stating academic requirements and standards of student conduct, as well as any other information that is deemed to be important for the protection of all members of the University community.

## OPEN INQUIRY

The University is committed to providing opportunities for the free and open exchange of ideas both inside and outside the classroom. It will safeguard the undisturbed, orderly expression of diverse views and opinions as well as the opportunity for their careful examination.

## GOVERNANCE

The University is committed to the consideration of views expressed by students on matters of student concern, both in support of existing policies and proposals for change. It encourages student involvement in governance at the department, school, college, and University levels. To facilitate that involvement, the University will maintain appropriate processes within which students can communicate their views by formal and informal means, and can, directly or through their representatives, actively contribute to decisions affecting the University community. All involved are expected to participate in these processes in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

## ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

The University is committed to the provision of resources of high quality for aiding students in the pursuit of their academic and intellectual development, including both varied and complementary curricular offerings, a qualified faculty, and accessible, well-equipped facilities.

## FORMAL INSTRUCTION

The University is committed to the pursuit of excellence in the education of its students, whether in the classroom, in the laboratory, or in practical experience. It will strive to create the opportunity for open inquiry, discussion, and challenge of ideas, and to assure students reasonable access to the faculty for continuation of this process outside of class meetings. Instructors will ensure that the objectives of their courses, their expectations for performance, and their methods of evaluation are explained to students. Academic evaluation will be based on fair and relevant standards. Students will be given an opportunity to evaluate the performance of the faculty as teachers and to have those evaluations considered.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University is committed to academic honesty and to the effective and just implementation of a system designed to preserve and protect it.

## COUNSELING

The University is committed to making support and guidance available for its students as they make academic, career, and personal choices and seek to understand themselves and those with whom they live and work.

## FAIR PROCEDURES

The University is committed to providing students with the opportunity to present complaints about the action of any member of the University community. It will provide fair and appropriate procedures, including the opportunity for appeal, as well as for

addressing and resolving complaints. These procedures will be administered in a non-adversarial spirit of openness, fairness, cooperation, and mutual respect among the participants.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The University is committed to the support and stimulation of the learning experience beyond the boundaries of formal instruction. It will provide opportunities through special personnel, facilities, programs, and services for students to associate with one another on an informal basis for participation in nonacademic activities, including the opportunity to form and join campus organizations.

## PRIVACY

The University is committed to the protection of its members from unreasonable intrusions into their individual privacy. It will also provide considerate, and where appropriate, confidential management of their academic, health, disciplinary, financial, and personal records.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The University is committed to the physical and mental well-being of its members. Accordingly, it will strive to provide a secure campus, safe facilities, and responsible regulations designed to protect the health and safety of all.

## NONDISCRIMINATION

The University is committed not to discriminate on the basis of unlawful criteria in its policies, practices, programs, and activities.

## CIVILITY

A goal of Vanderbilt University is to foster an open and diverse society where the rights of all members of the community are respected. The free expression of views in orderly ways is encouraged, but personal vilification of individuals has no place at Vanderbilt. Discouragement of personal vilification includes education and assistance in understanding the differing cultures represented at Vanderbilt, peer disapproval of inconsiderate behavior, and provisions of the Student Handbook regulating abusive or harassing conduct.

The University recognizes that occasions may arise when the amendment of these principles will be necessary. The process of developing, approving, and implementing amendments shall include participation by students, faculty members, and administrators.

## 2023-2024

Part I. The University and Its Governance (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part1-the-university-and-its-governance/>)

Part II. Appointment and Tenure (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-ii-appointment-and-tenure/>)

Part III. University Principles and Policies (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-iii-university-principles-and-policies/>)

Part IV. Disciplinary Actions and Grievances (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-iv-disciplinary-actions-and-grievances/>)

Part V. Faculty Awards (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-v-faculty-awards/>)

Part VI. Faculty Benefits (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-vi-faculty-benefits/>)

Part VII. Financial Procedures (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-vii-financial-procedures/>)

Part VIII. Vanderbilt University Compliance Program and Standards of Conduct (Snapshot as of 10/09/2023) (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/part-viii-vanderbilt-university-compliance-program-and-standards-of-conduct/>)

Alpha Index (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/alpha-index/>)

Print Manual ([https://cdn.vanderbilt.edu/vu-URL/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2023/10/09183655/20231009\\_Faculty\\_Manual\\_Master\\_snapshot.pdf](https://cdn.vanderbilt.edu/vu-URL/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2023/10/09183655/20231009_Faculty_Manual_Master_snapshot.pdf))

Archive (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/faculty-manual-archive/>)

Faculty Senate (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/facultysenate/>)

© ([https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/wp-login.php?redirect\\_to=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanderbilt.edu%2Ffaculty-manual%2Fpart-iii-university-principles-and-policies%2Fch1-a-statement-of-principles%2F](https://www.vanderbilt.edu/faculty-manual/wp-login.php?redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanderbilt.edu%2Ffaculty-manual%2Fpart-iii-university-principles-and-policies%2Fch1-a-statement-of-principles%2F)) 2024 Vanderbilt University · All rights reserved. Site Development: Digital Strategies (Division of Communications) (<http://web.vanderbilt.edu/>) Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action. Accessibility information (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/accessibility/>).

Vanderbilt®, Vanderbilt University®, V Oak Leaf Design®, Star V Design® and Anchor Down® are trademarks of The Vanderbilt University