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# The University

## *Statement of Aims Intellectual Freedom and Responsibility*

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of truth. It attempts to develop in its students qualities of intellect and character that will be useful no matter what they choose to do in later life. The transmission, extension, and discovery of knowledge are central to the liberal arts tradition. While encouraging professional scholarship and feeling justifiably proud of its faculty and graduates who enjoy national or international reputations in their fields, the University has as its preeminent purpose to be a quality institution for teaching and learning. Because effective teaching is of the highest importance, members of the faculty regularly are reviewed and evaluated for excellence in teaching.

Ohio Wesleyan judges itself successful when it has accomplished three objectives in its work with students:

The first is to impart knowledge. Included here is knowledge about our cultural past; a liberal education communicates what great minds have thought, great artists have created, great leaders have done. Also included is new knowledge; a liberal education communicates what is being acquired on the frontiers of contemporary inquiry and current advances of the human spirit. The objective of imparting knowledge begins with the conviction that it is intrinsically worthwhile to possess the knowledge and insight transmitted through the humanities, arts, and sciences.

A second major objective is to develop and enhance certain important capabilities of students. As they progress through the curriculum of the University, students make secure the foundation skills of reading, writing, and quantitative analysis. They build on these skills the capacity to think critically and logically, to employ the methods of the different fields of inquiry, and to understand the symbolic languages used to codify and communicate knowledge in today's society. They may develop aesthetic sensibilities or creative talents in several fields. Many students learn to integrate theory with practice by preparing for careers within various disciplines and through pre-professional and professional programs.

The third objective is to place education in the context of values. Liberal education seeks to develop in students understanding of themselves, appreciation of others, and willingness to meet the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society. It recognizes that trained sensitivity to private and public value issues, grounded in a sound grasp of various cultural heritages, is important for maturation and for living a good life. It accords high honor to intellectual honesty. Consistent with our Methodist tradition, Ohio Wesleyan encourages concern for all religious and ethical issues and stimulates its students to examine their own views in light of these issues.

To the extent that Ohio Wesleyan educates liberally, it fulfills its ultimate purpose of equipping students with knowledge, competence, and character for leadership, service, and continued learning in a complex and increasingly global society.

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## **Intellectual Freedom and Responsibility**

*A Joint Statement by the Trustees and Faculty Members of Ohio Wesleyan University*

The Charter of Ohio Wesleyan University, granted in 1842, provides that "the University is forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all religious denominations, and designed for the benefit of our citizens in general." The spirit of this statement has persisted through the years, so that today Ohio Wesleyan continues to live

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# The University

## *Intellectual Freedom and Responsibility Statement on Student Rights*

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and thrive in an environment of intellectual freedom. It is, therefore, fully committed to a more recent declaration of the General Conference of the Methodist Church (1952):

“Our role is not to suppress ideas, but to open channels of communication, so that (men and women) can come to know the thoughts of their neighbors, and so that the best thoughts of all (men and women) can come to be the possessions of all humanity.”

In pursuance of this tradition, the administration has maintained for students and faculty alike a climate of freedom in learning and inquiry. As a specific guarantee of this climate of intellectual freedom, the faculty and the Board of Trustees have adopted the 1940 statement of the American Association of University Professors relative to academic freedom. It states: “The teacher is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing (his/her) subject, but should be careful not to introduce . . . controversial matter which has no relation to (the) subject.” The only limitation that can appropriately be placed upon the teacher’s academic activities are those required by the accepted standards of (his/her) professions, such as sustained inquiry, propriety of statement, integrity of character, and objectivity of exposition.

Ohio Wesleyan has recognized that its faculty and students are citizens of local, state, and national communities, as well as members of an academic community. The 1940 statement of the American Association of University Professors emphasizes the freedom and responsibility of teachers as citizens in the following words: “When (the teacher) speaks or writes as a citizen (he/she) should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but (his/her) special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a (person) of learning and an educational officer (he/she) should remember that the public may judge (his/her) profession and institution by (his/her) utterances. Hence (he/she) should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that (he/she) is not an institutional (spokesperson).” Within these appropriate limits faculty members should be free to think and act as citizens of the whole community.

Equivalent importance is placed upon academic freedom and responsibility for students at Ohio Wesleyan, as expressed by the faculty and Board of Trustees in their adoption of the following 1965 statement by the American Association of University Professors:

“Free inquiry and free expression are essential attributes of the community of scholars. As members of the community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community. The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. Students should endeavor to exercise their freedom with maturity and responsibility.”

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### **Statement on Student Rights**

In 1970, the Ohio Wesleyan faculty adopted the Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students, which endorses a concept of community responsibility where students, along with faculty and administrators, are encouraged to play a more determining role in formulation of institutional policy.