

# DIVERSITY AND FREE EXPRESSION AT CLARK COLLEGE



## VALUES OF THE CLARK COLLEGE COMMUNITY

As members—students, staff, faculty and administrators—of the academic community, we enjoy the privileges and share the obligations of the larger community of which the College is a part. With membership in this community comes an obligation, which is consistent with the goals of personal and academic excellence. This obligation is an acceptance of a code of civilized behavior. These are the guiding principles for all at Clark College:

*“I will practice personal and academic integrity. I will respect the dignity of all persons. I will respect the rights and property of others. I will discourage bigotry. I will learn to respect differences among people, ideas, and opinions. I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings and their need for conditions, which support their learning, work and development. Allegiance to these ideals obligates each individual to refrain from and discourage behaviors which threaten the safety and well-being of all community members.”*

– based upon the Carolinian Creed

The College is committed to equitable, civil, and concerned treatment of all individuals regardless of race, creed, faith-based perspective, color, national origin, language, educational attainment, class or economic status, sex, age, appearance, size, sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, relationship status, active military status, status as a veteran, status as a student, staff, faculty or administrator, and the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.

It is imperative that we learn to recognize, understand and celebrate similarities and differences. Colleges can, and indeed must, help all members of the college community become open to the uniqueness that surrounds them. These matters are learned best in settings that are rich with diversity, and they must be learned if the ideals of human worth and dignity are to be advanced.

## FREE EXPRESSION – OUR POLICY

Clark College’s policy on Free Expression can be found in the Administrative Policies Manual (501.020). This policy acknowledges that free expression requirements may protect many forms of “hateful” or intolerant speech and expressive conduct, including that which occurs during such common college activities as debates, speeches, arguments, conversations, classroom discussions, lectures, distribution of flyers and displaying of posters. In certain contexts, courts have found speech and expressive conduct to be protected that many in our community find repugnant, including such things as display of the Confederate flag, Nazi symbols, cross burning, and flag burning.\*

## FREE EXPRESSION – OUR VALUES

However, any expression of hatred or prejudice is inconsistent with the values of Clark College and the purposes of higher education in a free society. So long as intolerance exists in any form in the larger society, it will be an issue on college campuses. Clark College is committed to maintaining an environment free from prejudice, inequity, and the misuse of power and privilege, and will use opportunities such as open dialogues, debates and discussions to broaden understanding of the scope of protected speech and the role of tolerance in our community.

The College is committed to maintaining its community as a place of work and study free from abuse, intimidation and harassment, where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy.

Conduct which unreasonably disrupts, adversely affects, or otherwise interferes with the lawful functions of the College, or the rights of any individual to pursue an education and/or employment at the College will not be tolerated.

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\*From “Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Incidents Protocol” – Pomona College.