

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### Purpose

This policy defines the University of Mary's stance on academic freedom.

### Statement of Policy

The University of Mary is dedicated to the service of truth and the promotion of the common good. Rooted in the rich heritage of the Catholic intellectual tradition stretching over centuries, Catholic universities have long been characterized by commitment to the love of learning and the desire for God. Catholic universities possess a particular mission to pursue the unity of truth in all spheres of knowledge: human, natural, and divine.

Dialogue and debate are hallmarks of the quest for wisdom. The pursuit of truth involves the free exchange and evaluation of ideas among members of the university community, as well as the broader fellowship of scholarship and professional service. Differences of perspective, faith, and conviction are afforded respect, while our collective efforts and common discourse take place in a spirit of profound appreciation for Catholic teaching and practice. In accord with our Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine mission, academic freedom at the University of Mary contributes to a climate of inquiry and discussion, thereby honoring the transcendent dimension of the person and fulfilling the two-fold duty of seeking truth and promoting the common good.

We believe that the exercise of academic freedom and the search for truth are themselves guided and advanced by the pursuit of the common good. The importance of academic freedom, its true nature, and the goods that can constrain its use are authoritatively defined in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. As an apostolic constitution, this document is legally binding on all Catholic universities, including the University of Mary. We follow *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* faithfully in tandem with our own Statement of Mission and Identity, which expresses our roots in the Benedictine wisdom tradition.

In a Catholic university, the obligation to be guided by the truth also confirms the obligation to give particular attention and respect to the authoritative teachings of the Church in regard to the truths of the faith. A Catholic is obliged to support those teachings, while other members of the university community are obliged to acknowledge them and accord them respect. Academic freedom is fostered when it is exercised in a way that promotes free inquiry, avoids private advocacy, and is measured by one's field of expertise. These principles extend to all areas of university life.

### Task Force on Academic Freedom

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