

Indiana University School of Liberal Arts  
Faculty Resolution on Civility and Tolerance

In recent months, the United States experienced a divisive and polarizing political campaign and election. During the campaign and since the election, a range of behaviors has emerged with new vigor and force in our national life, such as: deeply offensive language aimed at others; emboldened discrimination against racial and ethnic minority groups; threats of deportation to undocumented people; marginalization of many based on religious identity; hostility toward those holding different political or social ideologies; and assaults on inquiry and evidence-based knowledge.

The Indiana University School of Liberal Arts exists and thrives based on the conviction that the Liberal Arts are essential to a democratic society. The Liberal Arts advances the critical analysis of and reflection on all ideals, ideas, assumptions, opinions, and beliefs for the pursuit of truth. The School of Liberal Arts is also committed to the fundamental rights to the freedoms of speech and expression. That commitment is limited, however, by the infringement such expression could have on the fundamental rights of others for equal speech on and expression of their ideals, ideas, assumptions, opinions, and beliefs or the violation of the purposes of the School in encouraging rigorous debate and critical inquiry.

The increasing prevalence of destructive behaviors as noted above threatens individual freedoms of speech and expression. It erodes our democratic structures and violates the common good. It also threatens the fundamental values of higher education, which include the exercise of rigorous critical inquiry into all perspectives, including and especially one's own; the consideration of empirical data over passively received opinion; and the discipline of reasoned discourse. For these reasons, the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts condemns these behaviors in the strongest terms.

We seek through this statement to reaffirm and rearticulate our core values, including our commitment to academic excellence and professional responsibility; free inquiry and critical analysis; diversity, inclusion, and tolerance; and civility, respect, and transparency. These values resist the destructive behaviors indicated above; they help move us forward toward a more civil nation.

As we advance into an uncertain period ahead, our School is firmly committed to honoring and enacting these values in all that we say and do. In this, we are better able to foster excellence in our School, to strengthen the structures in which we work, and to empower the students whom we serve.