

**261H.2 Public institutions of higher education — duties.**

1. The state board of regents and the board of directors of each community college shall adopt a policy that includes all of the following statements:

a. That the primary function of an institution of higher education is the discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge by means of research, teaching, discussion, and debate. This statement shall provide that, to fulfill this function, the institution must strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression allowed under the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

b. (1) That it is not the proper role of an institution of higher education to shield individuals from speech protected by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which may include ideas and opinions the individual finds unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive.

(2) That it is the proper role of an institution of higher education to encourage diversity of thoughts, ideas, and opinions and to encourage, within the bounds of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the peaceful, respectful, and safe exercise of first amendment rights.

c. That students and faculty have the freedom to discuss any problem that presents itself, assemble, and engage in spontaneous expressive activity on campus, within the bounds of established principles of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that are consistent with established first amendment principles.

d. That the outdoor areas of campus of an institution of higher education are public forums, open on the same terms to any invited speaker subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that are consistent with established principles of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

2. The state board of regents shall develop materials, programs, and procedures to ensure that those persons who are responsible for discipline, instruction, or administration of the campus community, or who have oversight of student government organizations, or distribute activity fee funds, including but not limited to presidents, vice-presidents, deans, department directors, administrators, campus police officers, residence life officials, faculty, and members of student government organizations, understand the policies, regulations, and duties of the institution regarding free expression on campus consistent with [this chapter](#).

3. a. Each public institution of higher education shall protect the first amendment rights of the institution's students, staff, and faculty and shall establish and publicize policies that prohibit institutional restrictions and penalties based on protected speech, including political speech, to the fullest extent required by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States. A public institution of higher education shall not retaliate against a member of the campus community who files a complaint for a violation of [this subsection](#) pursuant to [section 261H.5](#).

b. If it is determined, after exhaustion of all available administrative and judicial appeals, that a faculty member knowingly and intentionally restricts the protected speech or otherwise penalizes a student in violation of [this subsection](#), the faculty member shall be subject to discipline by the institution through the normal disciplinary processes of the institution, and such discipline may include termination depending on the totality of the facts. If the faculty member is licensed by the board of educational examiners under [chapter 256, subchapter VII, part 3](#), the board of educational examiners shall conduct a hearing pursuant to [section 256.158](#), and the faculty member may be subject to disciplinary action by the board.

[2019 Acts, ch 11, §2, 7; 2021 Acts, ch 130, §1; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2559](#)

Referred to in [§256.146](#)

Subsection 3, paragraph b amended