

## **The Lines Furman Must Not Cross**

April 23, 2025

We, the faculty of Furman University, in our role as stewards of this institution, reaffirm Furman’s mission to support “rigorous inquiry, transformative experiences, and deep reflection.” This mission calls us to preserve a community where freedom of thought and expression is actively defended, even when doing so is costly.

We are gravely concerned that our mission is in danger. Growing political pressures seek to curtail international education, narrow institutional autonomy, restrict academic freedom, and suppress open discourse. These pressures—whether through legislation, policy threats, or public intimidation—undermine the core values of the liberal arts and the very foundation of higher education. The coercive tactics used to enforce such restrictions jeopardize not only our institutional mission but also the well-being of individuals who contribute to it—students, employees, and the communities we serve.

We are troubled to see other institutions respond to these pressures by compromising their values, narrowing the boundaries of inquiry, and chilling protected speech. Furman must not follow this path. Our Statement on Free Expression and Inquiry is based on the “foundational belief that diverse views and perspectives deserve to be articulated and heard, free from interference.”

Furman’s leadership must continue to support policies that safeguard expression, uphold human dignity, and foster inclusive dialogue. As faculty, we pledge to defend these commitments, and to hold ourselves and our institution accountable to them—especially in moments of crisis.

To that end, we assert that we will not betray the following principles:

### **Academic Freedom is Nonpartisan and Nonnegotiable**

We will not permit external pressures to determine what or how we teach, whom we hire, or the direction of our research. Furman’s academic mission exists not to serve ideology, but to pursue truth through open, critical, and disciplined inquiry.

### **Free Inquiry is Foundational to a Learning Community**

In accordance with Furman’s Statement on Free Inquiry, we commit to defending the right of all members of the Furman community to express differing—even controversial—views without fear. Offense is not a sufficient justification for censorship.

### **Dignity, Respect, and Inclusion Enhance—Not Inhibit—Freedom of Thought**

We affirm the worth of every individual and the necessity of diverse voices in the search for understanding. We reject any effort to pit freedom of expression against the dignity of persons; both are essential to a thriving community.

### **Solidarity with Vulnerable Members of Our Community**

We will advocate for and protect students, faculty, and staff who may be targeted due to their political beliefs, immigration status, or identity. Furman must remain a place of open and active

inquiry—not surveillance or exclusion. Faculty will use our academic freedom and resources to push for legal protection and other support for any of our campus community who requests it in the face of bullying and intimidation.

We affirm our responsibility not only to preserve Furman’s mission in the present, but to also ensure that in years to come, we can look back with pride—knowing that we upheld the values that make this university a place of real learning, meaningful dialogue, and thriving community.

*-With appreciation to the model provided by [“The Lines We Must Not Cross” of the Emory Faculty Council, 4/15/2025](#)*