

Saint Francis University Policies & Procedures

Policy Name:	Speaker Policy		
Policy Officer:	Provost	Responsible Office:	Provost
Effective Date:	August 1, 2015	Approved By:	President's Council

Policy Statement:

Saint Francis University has a responsibility to prepare its students to take a productive role in society. This includes taking positions on significant moral and social issues and defending those positions. To prepare students in this way means to introduce challenging and controversial ideas and it means not shying away from sensitive topics. It means encouraging an exchange of ideas and opinions and it means modeling for students, respectful disagreement. To that end, Saint Francis University remains committed to academic freedom in and out of the classroom for all members of the university community and it reinforces its commitment to the AAUP 1940 statement of principles on academic freedom and tenure.

Consistent with its academic mission, Saint Francis University encourages the respectful presentation of divergent views on topics of interest. At the same time, the university is mindful of the fact that many outside of the academy may have difficulty recognizing that someone speaking *to* the university community is not a person speaking *for* the university. And while this is not the case, such perceptions can be disconcerting for Saint Francis University as it strives to uphold and adhere to the principles and values inherent in its mission and identity as a Catholic and Franciscan institution.

Invitations to speakers may create problems of perception in the eyes of the public when the speaker's past behavior has been controversial, when the speaker has taken a previous position contrary to the values of Saint Francis University, or when the speaker will advocate views contrary to the values of Saint Francis University. It is by being a community of good will and by practicing good communication that we will avoid, or at least minimize, confusion in the minds of the public.

Any member of the Saint Francis community, either faculty, staff, or student, should report to their dean, when they are considering inviting a speaker whose presence may be controversial. The dean, in council with the provost, will decide if the invitation is likely to be cause for concern. If the invitation is likely to cause confusion about the university's fidelity to its values, the provost, dean, and the invitee will work to structure the event to minimize that confusion. This may include making provisions for the presentation of alternate views, structuring the event as a panel discussion, or limiting the speaker to a classroom presentation. The provost will be responsible for keeping the president informed of these deliberations. All efforts will be made to conclude these discussions before an invitation is extended.

And while everyone in the University community contributes towards maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic and Franciscan character of Saint Francis University – according to his or her role and capacity – the President is ultimately responsible for the University's adherence to its mission. Therefore, final determination about the balance between the educational value of a speaker's presentation versus confusion surrounding his or her presence on campus falls to the president.