Freedom of Expression Policies

FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS
Adopted January 21, 1987

An abiding commitment to preserving and enhancing freedom of speech, thought, inquiry and artistic expression is deeply rooted in the history of The New School. The New School was founded in 1919 by scholars responding to a threat to academic freedom at home. The establishment of the University in Exile, progenitor of The New School for Social Research, in 1933 was a response to threats to academic freedom abroad. The by-laws of the institution, adopted when it received its charter from the State of New York in 1934, state that the principles of academic freedom and responsibility...have ever been the glory of The New School. The New School, since its beginnings, has endeavored to be an educational community in which public as well as scholarly issues are openly discussed and debated, regardless of how controversial or unpopular the views expressed. Providing such a forum was seen, from the first, as an integral part of a university's responsibility in a democratic society.

The New School is committed to academic freedom in all forms and for all members of its community. It is equally committed to protecting the right of free speech of all outside individuals authorized to use its facilities or invited to participate in the educational activities of any of the university's academic divisions. A university in any meaningful sense of the term is compromised without unhindered exchanges of ideas, however unpopular, and without the assurance that both the presentation and confrontation of ideas takes place freely and without coercion. In this context and because of its distinctive, educational role as a forum for public debate, the university has deep concern for preserving and securing the conditions which permit the free exchange of ideas to flourish.

Faculty members, administrators, staff members, students and guests are obligated to reflect in their actions a respect for the right of all individuals to speak their views freely and be heard. They must refrain from any action which would cause that right to be abridged. At the same time, the university recognizes that the right of speakers to speak and be heard does not preclude the right of others to express differing points of view. However, this latter right must be exercised in ways which allow speakers to continue and must not involve any form of intimidation or physical violence.

Beyond the responsibility of individuals for their own actions, members of The New School community share in a collective responsibility for preserving freedom of speech. This collective responsibility entails mutual cooperation in minimizing the possibility that speech will be curtailed, especially when contentious issues are being discussed, and in assuring that due process is accorded to any individual alleged to have interfered with the free exchange of ideas.

Consistent with these principles, the university is prepared to take necessary steps to secure the conditions for free speech. Individuals whose acts abridge that freedom will be referred to the appropriate academic division for disciplinary review.
STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION
Adopted October 4, 1989

The university’s Policy on the Free Exchange of Ideas states that, "An abiding commitment to preserving and enhancing freedom of speech, thought, inquiry and artistic expression is deeply rooted in the history of The New School." The university’s responsibility for and dedication to securing the conditions in which freedom of expression can flourish extend to all forms of artistic expression, including the fine arts, design, literature, and the performance of drama, music and dance.

The opportunity to display or perform works of art at the university is made available through several academic processes and procedures in which faculty members and other duly appointed individuals exercise their best professional judgment. Among these procedures are selection of student art work by faculty, selection of gallery shows by gallery committees, selection of works of art by the Committee on the University Art Collection, display or performance as part of an approved course curriculum. Such authorized display or performance, regardless of how unpopular the work might be, must be unhindered and free from coercion. Members of the university community and guests must reflect in their actions a respect for the right to communicate ideas artistically and must refrain from any act that would cause that right to be abridged. At the same time, the university recognizes that the right of artists to exhibit or perform does not preclude the right of others to take exception to particular works of art. However, this latter right must be exercised in ways that do not prevent a work of art from being seen and must not involve any form of intimidation, defacement, or physical violence. The university rejects the claim of any individual or outside agency to dictate on the appropriateness or acceptability of the display or performance of any work of art in its facilities or as part of its educational programs.