

<b>Title</b>	Policy on Employee Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Dean of the School of Law
<b>Applies to</b>	School of Law Employees and Invited Speakers
<b>Campus Applicability</b>	School of Law
<b>Approval Date</b>	May 2, 2025
<b>Effective Date</b>	May 2, 2025
<b>For More Information Contact</b>	Dean of the School of Law
<b>Contact Information</b>	Dean's Office, School of Law, <a href="mailto:lawdean@uconn.edu">lawdean@uconn.edu</a> or 860-570-5127
<b>Official Website</b>	<a href="https://law.uconn.edu/Employee-Academic-Freedom-Policy">https://law.uconn.edu/Employee-Academic-Freedom-Policy</a>

## PURPOSE

We are committed to free and open inquiry, deliberation, and debate in all matters. Members of the law school community can and should judge the value of ideas as well as openly and vigorously contest ideas they believe are invalid, unsound, or unlikely. The law school's educational mission includes preparing students to effectively and responsibly engage with ideas and viewpoints with which they may disagree. To serve that mission, the law school should not insulate students from ideas because they may find them controversial, offensive, or disagreeable. At the same time, to serve that mission, the law school must protect the freedom of researchers and teachers to investigate and discuss the issues in their academic field; to teach and publish findings without interference from administrators, boards of trustees, politicians, funders, or others; to speak freely when participating in institutional governance; and to speak freely as citizens on matters whether or not related to their academic field.

## APPLIES TO

This policy applies to

- (a) any person employed by the law school without regard to their status as full-time, part-time, tenured, tenure-track, long-term contract status, adjunct, or any other status that governs the terms and conditions of their employment at the law school;
- (b) any individual not employed by the law school and invited as a speaker by the law school or any agent thereof, including as guest lecturers or speakers who teach a single class session or portion of a class session, or by any registered law student organization.

## EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to students except in their capacity as employees of the School of Law.

## DEFINITIONS

**Registered Law Student Organization:** a law student organization that is registered with the Office of Student Affairs, has an active UConn contact profile, and is in good standing by being recognized and awarded a budget by the Student Bar Association.

## POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Law School shall encourage and support academic freedom and the free expression of ideas by
  - (a) protecting the rights as provided by law (e.g., the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, article I section 4 of the Connecticut Constitution, and section [31-51g](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes) of persons covered by this policy to communicate ideas that may be controversial or unpopular (such as through robust debate, demonstrations, or protests);
  - (b) applying or extending the University policy on academic freedom for faculty and professional staff as set forth in article XIV, section B, of the [By-Laws of the University of Connecticut](#) to any person employed by law school and engaged in conducting research, publishing scholarship, engaging in law school governance, participating in law-related public service activities, curating library collections and providing information services, or exercising teaching responsibilities, including those related to client representation in clinical programs;
  - (c) acting consistently with University policy regarding the expression of dissent as set forth in article XV, section L, of the By-Laws of the University of Connecticut;
  - (d) acting consistently with University policy regarding lawful expression at the meetings of registered student organizations as set forth in article XV, section I, of the [By-Laws of the University of Connecticut](#), as applied to registered law student organizations;
  - (e) proscribing conduct that hinders free expression by preventing or substantially interfering with the carrying out of law school functions or approved activities, such as classes, meetings, library services, interviews, ceremonies, and public events;
  - (f) restricting expression that violates the law, that defames a specific individual, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, or unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests;
  - (g) reasonably regulating the time, place, and manner of expression;
  - (h) acting consistently with the [University Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence](#); and
  - (i) acting consistently with the [University Code of Conduct](#), except that concerns about civility and mutual respect do not justify barring discussion of ideas solely because some find them controversial, offensive, or disagreeable.
2. Any part of any other Law School policy shall, if ambiguous, be construed and applied consistently with this policy.
3. Any exercise of Law School authority shall have no force and effect if it creates an undue obstacle to advancing this policy.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with University By-Laws, General Rules of Conduct for All University Employees, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and the University of Connecticut Student Code.

Any person claiming to be aggrieved by a violation of this policy shall have the same rights to due process, including any rights to notice, hearing, and appeal, currently available to such person for any violation of any law school policy, including but not limited to any grievance procedure set forth in article XIV of the By-Laws of the University of Connecticut or any applicable collective bargaining agreement to which the University of Connecticut is a party.

This policy shall be reviewed within three years after its effective date.

## **REFERENCES**

### **POLICY HISTORY**

**Policy created:** *May 2, 2025 (Approved by the Faculty of the School of Law)*

**Revisions:**