

Chicago Statement Template Letter to *Alma Mater*

Dear [INSTITUTION PRESIDENT],

In January 2015, the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago issued a powerful new statement on the importance of freedom of expression on campus, known as the “Chicago Statement.” As one of many proud alumni of [INSTITUTION], I write today to ask you to endorse the Chicago Statement as institutional policy to ensure that my *alma mater* remains devoted to unfettered inquiry and the search for truth.

In order to encourage student and faculty expression at [INSTITUTION], I urge you to adopt an official policy statement committing your institution to upholding open inquiry, lively debate, and the core values of the First Amendment. Taking this important step would convey to students, faculty members, administrators, alumni, and the concerned public that [INSTITUTION] is a place where one need not fear censorship or punishment for engaging in constitutionally protected expression, and that one will be able to fully participate in the give-and-take of the “marketplace of ideas” on campus.

The Chicago Statement provides, in relevant part:

Because the University is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn.

...

In a word, the University’s fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed.

Over 35 institutions and faculty bodies have adopted a version of the Chicago Statement. This includes measures enacted at the University of Missouri, Georgetown University, Kansas State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and many others. [INSTITUTION] would similarly benefit from adopting a policy statement modeled after the Chicago Statement, as it would allow the school to foster free and open debate in the tradition of the First Amendment. Of course, I would be proud to see my *alma mater* be a leader on this important issue.

Sincerely,