



Public Statements

Riverland Policy #5.40

PURPOSE:

To support our goal of maintaining an informed, equitable, and safe environment for all students, faculty, and staff while upholding the principles of free speech and expression.

APPLICABILITY:

Riverland Community College is committed to creating and distributing official college statements to communicate timely, sensitive, or critical information to our internal community and the public.

Public statements should be issued sparingly to avoid taking a position on matters of public policy, political, and societal issues. When necessary, the college will issue statements to provide support and resources for members of the college community most directly affected by relevant events.

SCOPE: Applies to all Riverland students and employees

The following individuals are authorized to make public statements on behalf of Riverland Community College: The President, Designees of the President (e.g., President's Cabinet member), the Minnesota State system office, in accordance with the Chancellor's office or the Board of Trustees.

DEFINITIONS:

Public Statement: Any form of communication by a college leader to students, faculty, staff, alumni, the media, the public, or other institutional stakeholders from a college-owned channel (email, website, social media feed, etc.) regarding a local, state, national, or international issue.

Free Speech and Expression: Riverland Community College is dedicated to fostering a campus environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and the pursuit of knowledge. The following principles guide our commitment to free speech and expression:

STATEMENT ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS: (as shared to the public):

Our diverse college community, coupled with today's complex and rapidly changing world events, often creates opportunities for Riverland Community College to create and distribute official college statements. Public statements are designed to communicate timely, sensitive, or critical information to our internal community and the public, as well as support our goal to create an informed, equitable, and safe environment for all students, faculty, and staff.

A public statement is defined as any form of communication by a college leader to students, faculty, staff, alumni, the media, the public, or other institutional stakeholders from a college-owned channel (email, website, social media feed, etc.) regarding a local, state, national, or international issue.

Public statements should be issued sparingly to avoid taking a position on matters of public policy, political, and societal issues. Those authorized to make a public statement on behalf of the college include the president or designee (e.g., President’s Cabinet member). The Minnesota State system office may occasionally issue its own statement but should be in accordance with the Chancellor’s office or the Board of Trustees’. Reaching out with support and resources for members of the college community most directly affected is often the best approach.

STATEMENT ON FREE SPEECH AND EXPRESSION: (as shared to the public)

Riverland Community College is committed to fostering a campus environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and the pursuit of knowledge. The college upholds the principles of free speech and expression as fundamental to Riverland’s mission, vision, values, and the democratic society.

As a public institution, we support the right of all members of our community, including students, faculty, and staff, to express their views and engage in open dialogue on diverse topics. This commitment is balanced with the responsibility to ensure that such expressions do not disrupt the educational process or infringe upon the rights of others.

We encourage respectful and constructive discourse, understanding that freedom of expression comes with the responsibility to respect differing viewpoints and the dignity of all individuals. Riverland Community College does not tolerate hate speech, harassment, or any form of discrimination, and will take necessary actions to address behaviors that undermine the safety and inclusivity of our community.

While Riverland believes that constitutional protections for speech and expression are of critical importance, these protections are not unlimited. The college maintains a policy and a procedure permitting it to regulate the time, place and manner of speech and expression to ensure that the College can carry on its ordinary activities. In upholding these values, Riverland Community College strives to create a supportive environment where all voices can be heard, and the principles of academic freedom and free expression are protected and celebrated.

DOES THIS POLICY HAVE A PROCEDURE? No.

LIST RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR FORMS:

Submit completed form and policy to the Cabinet Member responsible for the division affected by the proposal. This section to be completed by President’s Office.

Date Issued: October 2024 (new)

Responsible Division / Author: Administration / Executive Director of Communications, Media & Marketing

Date Revised: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)