

2019 Free Speech Annual Report

Submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)

Georgian College is pleased to submit its inaugural institutional report on the implementation of its Free Speech policy (CS-001). The report covers the period January 1 to August 31, 2019 and is structured as a response to the questions presented by HEQCO in its memorandum of June 12, 2019.

Institutional culture and policies

- 1. *In the wake of the government's requirement for institutional free speech policies, has there been ongoing debate or dialogue on campus with regard to freedom of speech?***

No debate has occurred; dialogue was composed of initial process-related discussions regarding implementation of the policy.

- 2. *Have institutional practices changed as a result of the free speech policy? For example, has the new free speech policy led to a re-examination or amendment of other institutional policies?***

Georgian has implemented an operational plan and process to guide potential situations where external groups or organizations wishing to protest and/or interact with the Georgian College community may do so, providing they act peacefully and do not obstruct or interfere with the business and operations of the college and its students.

- 3. *Have any issues emerged that would cause you to re-evaluate or amend your existing policy?***

Procedures within in Georgian's existing Free Speech policy are broadly stated, allowing for variable interpretation among individuals. Guidelines on how to interpret and respond to specific situations, particularly those that mask as free speech but in reality intentionally create an unsafe, offensive or intimidating environment for others, would be a useful amendment to the college's existing policy for those individuals who are responsible for its implementation. (An example of this type of "fine line" situation would be where a student chooses to exhibit an offensive behaviour which is intentionally directed towards other students to bully and harass them, yet the student claims this behaviour to be an act of free speech or outward expression in a public place.)

Events

4. Provide an estimate of the number of non-curriculum events that have been held at the institution since January 1, 2019.

Internal, non-curriculum-related events include applicant receptions, orientation for international students, town hall and update meetings, networking and career fairs, awards dinners, announcements from government officials and employee professional development events (list not inclusive), several of which featured guest speakers. Approximately **55 internal non-curriculum-related events** were held at the Barrie campus since January 1, 2019.

Georgian also permits space on campus to be rented for a variety of events by external groups, including associations, corporations, educational institutions, government, not-for-profit and sports/recreation organizations. Since January 1, 2019, approximately **65 external organizations** have conducted their events on the college's Barrie campus.

5. Is there a designated office at the institution where members of the institutional community or guests are directed when there is a free speech-related question or complaint about an event on campus?

As stated in Georgian's Free Speech policy, complaints are directed to the college's Campus Safety Services department. All complaints will be recorded using Georgian's existing incident management reporting system.

6. How did your institution navigate free speech-related cost and/or safety concerns related to events on campus? To your knowledge, were there any instances where a non-curriculum event did not proceed due to these concerns?

Georgian has no free speech-related safety concerns or costs to cite over the term of this report. There were no instances where a non-curriculum event did not proceed due to free speech concerns.

Complaints

7. Have any organized campus events or incidents on campus—curricular or non-curricular—caused members of the institutional community or guests to make an official complaint about free speech on campus?

No complaints were received over the term of this report.

Signed:



Roman Calvano
Director, Campus Safety Services

Free Speech

CS-001

Version	Version Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Review Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Description of Changes
01	12/12/2018	12/12/2023	Initial release -

Director, Campus Safety Services	<i>Roman Calvano</i>	12/12/2018
Policy Holder	Print Name	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

College Council	
Advising Body	Date Consulted (MM/DD/YYYY)

Vice President, Corporate Services and Innovation	Angela Lockridge	12/12/2018
Approver	Print Name	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Purpose

This document outlines the requirement for Georgian to maintain the right of freedom of expression among members of the college community, as per the Policy Statement on Upholding Free Speech developed by Colleges Ontario and adopted by the presidents of all Ontario Colleges, effective Jan. 1, 2019.

Scope

This policy protects freedom of expression at Georgian College, within the parameters described in the following procedure.

Freedom of expression, which means the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn, is essential to discovery, critical assessment and the effective dissemination of knowledge and ideas and leads to social

and economic advancement—a key role of colleges as described in the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002.

Speech that violates the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, is not allowed. Speech that constitutes harassment, a threat or hate speech is not allowed. Other context-specific boundaries to freedom of expression may also apply.

This policy and procedure applies to all college faculty, students, staff, management, guests and others who are present at the college.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Freedom of expression	the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn

Responsibility

- **Georgian College** must be a place that allows for open discussion and free inquiry, where diverse voices can be heard and ideas and viewpoints can be explored and discussed freely and debated openly without fear of reprisal, even if these are considered to be controversial or conflict with the views of some members of the college community.
- **Members of the college community** are free to criticize and contest the views of others; however, they may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views.

Policy

Georgian will protect freedom of expression among all members of the college community, as per the Policy Statement on Upholding Free Speech developed by Colleges Ontario and approved by all Ontario college presidents, effective Jan. 1, 2019.

Procedures

1.1 Protection of free speech

- 1.1.1 The **college** may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of freedom of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt normal college operations and ordinary college activities or endanger the safety of others.

- 1.1.2 Speech that violates the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, is not allowed. Speech that constitutes harassment, a threat or hate speech is not allowed.
- 1.1.3 Although the college greatly values civility and **all members of college community** share responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, it is not the role of **Georgian** to shield members of the college community from ideas and opinions that they may find disagreeable or offensive. It is up to individuals – and not the college – to make such judgments for themselves and to debate and challenge ideas that they find unacceptable.
- 1.1.4 **Members of the college community** are free to criticize and contest the views of others; however, they may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views. The rights of others to express or hear ideas must also be respected.
- 1.1.5 Other context-specific boundaries to freedom of expression may also apply, such as those arising out of the terms of employment and collective agreements.
- 1.1.6 This policy statement is aligned with other college policies, all of which shall be read in harmony.

1.2 Complaints

- 1.2.1 Existing college mechanisms and processes will be used to handle complaints and ensure compliance with the policy.
- 1.2.2 Complaints that remain unresolved may be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman.
- 1.2.3 Existing disciplinary measures will apply to those whose actions are contrary to the policy.

1.3 Compliance by student groups

- 1.3.1 Georgian will consider official student groups' compliance with the policy as a condition for ongoing financial support or recognition.
- 1.3.2 Georgian will encourage student groups to adopt policies that align with this policy.

Related Materials

- *Policy Statement on Upholding Free Speech: Colleges Ontario, 2018*
- *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*
- *Ontario Human Rights Act*
- *Georgian College Employee Code of Conduct*
- *Georgian College Student Code of Conduct*
- *CAAT academic and support staff agreements*