

To all UNM Students from the Faculty Senate,

In light of the upcoming controversial speaking event being held on the UNM campus[alternative: upcoming campus speaking event by “alt-right” Milo Yiannopoulos, who is known in the public sphere as a controversial figure who regularly harasses members of vulnerable communities], the Faculty Senate at UNM feels the need to reaffirm our shared commitment to the values that make UNM a safe campus for all. In doing so we find ourselves in a familiar double-bind between the desire to uphold the promise of the First Amendment, and the equally important role as campus leaders to protect vulnerable members of our community from potential harassment and hate-speech.

As is the case at most, if not all institutions of higher learning, the Faculty of UNM are committed to providing a space for all ideas, perhaps even especially for those that may be challenging or cause us to reexamine our core beliefs or values. This commitment includes fostering an environment that avoids censorship and allows space for differing points of view.

At the same time, the Faculty Senate takes seriously its obligation to challenge discrimination wherever and whenever it emerges. It is our obligation as leaders of the university, as noted in the Respectful Campus Policy Section 2, to “serve as role models in the promotion of a respectful campus. Promoting courtesy, civility, and respectful communication is consistent with the responsibility of leadership” (Faculty Handbook CO9, Respectful Campus Policy). Further, the Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action policy (University Administrative Policy 2720 & Regent’s Policy Manual Section 2.3) “forbids unlawful discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, ancestry, spousal affiliation, medical condition, or veteran status”. These vulnerable groups of people enhance to the academic mission and the cultural environment of the university greatly.

Although we stand firmly behind the First Amendment’s commitment to free speech and encourage the exchange of differing opinions and ideas, we stand even more firmly against messages that promote hate and could potentially lead to the normalization of hate speech and acts of physical or verbal violence on campus at UNM. With this message the Faculty Senate would like to reiterate its position and commitment to stand proudly with all the members of the UNM community who oppose the spread of hate speech, harassment and intolerance.