



Freedom of expression is one of the hallmarks of effective shared governance in the University. The WMU Faculty Senate is dedicated to fostering productive, vigorous and meaningful dialogue and debate in an environment of civil discourse that respects various points of view. To guide our efforts and appreciate the meaning and practical applications of civil discourse as we strive to advance the Academy, the Faculty Senate approved a general **aspirational** statement related to civility.

### **Civility Statement**

Western Michigan University is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity and worth of all members of the WMU community. Respectful behavior expressed verbally, textually, visually, and physically should be the norm in all university communications and venues including classrooms, meetings, offices, workplaces, forums, events, social media, and residential communities. As an institution of higher education, we welcome a diverse range of perspectives and opinions and uphold the importance of civil debate. We fully support the free exchange of ideas and beliefs, as well as the expression of provocative or unpopular ideas. It is through this process that we generate knowledge and deepen our understanding of humanity. Freedom of thought and expression may create conflict, strong emotions, and divergent ideological positions. While these effects are expected and welcomed, all members of the community have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not harm others nor creates a hostile environment. Behavior that attacks, humiliates, belittles, or conveys hatred towards others diminishes our thriving and safe university environment. Each member of our academic community is encouraged to be thoughtful and sensitive in their choice of words and behaviors. We should be aware of how our behavior affects others. Furthermore, we carry a responsibility to challenge those who communicate intolerance, hatred, and bigotry. Words and actions matter. Everyone is asked to do their part in creating a healthy and positive university community and a culture that truly values each member's uniqueness, experiences, and perspectives.