



**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY ADOPTING THE STATEMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan State University of Denver (“MSU Denver”) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) believes that MSU Denver must sustain an environment of free inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, consistent with this philosophy, the Board has adopted MSU Denver’s Free Expression Statement and promulgated its policy on Academic Freedom; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of institutional positions not related to the University’s education role is contrary to the notions of free expression and academic freedom; and

WHEREAS, MSU Denver students are expected to develop and express diverse viewpoints, listen actively, ask thoughtful questions, and seek a deeper understanding of disagreements, and how best to resolve them; and

WHEREAS, the Kalven Report concluded that while individual faculty members and students may be the “instrument of dissent and criticism,” the university, on the other hand, “is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic.”

WHEREAS, the MSU Denver Board of Trustees agrees that by committing to neutrality the University is better positioned to fulfill its mission of generating and disseminating knowledge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY: The Statement of Policy on Institutional Neutrality, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby approved and adopted as the official policy of MSU Denver.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED as of September 20, 2024.

[SEAL]



BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

By *Kristin D. Hultquist*  
Name Kristin Hultquist  
Title Board Chair

ATTEST:

By *David Fine*  
Name David Fine  
Title Board Secretary



## EXHIBIT A

### Statement of Policy on Institutional Neutrality

Consistent with its commitment to free and open inquiry in all matters, MSU Denver adheres to the principle of institutional neutrality, holding to the view—as eloquently expressed in the Kalven Committee’s Report on the University’s Role in Political and Social Action at the University of Chicago in 1967 (the “Kalven Report”)—that:

“[t]he university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic. It is, to go back to a classic phrase, a community of scholars. To perform its mission in society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures. A university, if it is to be true to its faith in intellectual inquiry, must embrace, be hospitable to, and encourage the widest diversity of views within its community.”

From this key observation followed the Kalven Report’s central conclusion that maintaining institutional neutrality is crucial for a university to remain faithful to its core mission of “the discovery, improvement, and dissemination of knowledge.” MSU Denver fully subscribes to this view.

In light of its commitment to this principle, MSU Denver formally adopts and embraces the substance of the Kalven Report set forth below as its own statement of policy on institutional neutrality.

MSU Denver recognizes that there may be occasions when proposed legislation or a regulatory proposal has a direct bearing on the University’s fiscal affairs or on the tools afforded to it to advance its land-grant mission. In such cases, the University may elect to offer comment, at the request of government officials, on specific provisions of the proposal. Moreover, as the Kalven Report recognizes, instances may arise from time to time “in which society, or segments of it, threaten the very mission of the university and its values of free inquiry. In such a crisis, it becomes the obligation of the university as an institution to oppose such measures and actively to defend its interests and its values.”

MSU Denver endorses the Kalven Report’s ultimate conclusion that, aside from these special exceptions, there is “a heavy presumption against the university taking collective action or expressing opinions on the political and social issues of the day, or modifying its corporate activities to foster social or political values, however compelling and appealing they may be.”

Of course, recognizing MSU Denver’s commitment to freedom of expression and its role as “the home and sponsor of critics,” individual members of the campus community will always be free to express their views on a particular policy proposal or in a debate over a particular political or social issue, provided that such views or concerns are expressed in a personal capacity and do not purport to be official statements of MSU Denver.

*Statement of Policy Institutional Neutrality (from the Kalven Report)*



*A university has a great and unique role to play in fostering the development of social and political values in a society. The role is defined by the distinctive mission of the university and defined too by the distinctive characteristics of the university as a community. It is a role for the long term.*

*The mission of the university is the discovery, improvement, and dissemination of knowledge. Its domain of inquiry and scrutiny includes all aspects and all values of society. A university faithful to its mission will provide enduring challenges to social values, policies, practices, and institutions. By design and by effect, it is the institution which creates discontent with the existing social arrangements and proposes new ones. In brief, a good university, like Socrates, will be upsetting.*

*The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic. It is, to go back once again to the classic phrase, a community of scholars. To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures. A university, if it is to be true to its faith in intellectual inquiry, must embrace, be hospitable to, and encourage the widest diversity of views within its own community. It is a community but only for the limited, albeit great, purposes of teaching and research. It is not a club, it is not a trade association, it is not a lobby.*

*Since the university is a community only for these limited and distinctive purposes, it is a community which cannot take collective action on the issues of the day without endangering the conditions for its existence and effectiveness. There is no mechanism by which it can reach a collective position without inhibiting that full freedom of dissent on which it thrives. It cannot insist that all of its members favor a given view of social policy; if it takes collective action, therefore, it does so at the price of censoring any minority who do not agree with the view adopted. In brief, it is a community which cannot resort to majority vote to reach positions on public issues.*

*The neutrality of the university as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints. And this neutrality as an institution has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest. It finds its complement, too, in the obligation of the university to provide a forum for the most searching and candid discussion of public issues.*

*Moreover, the sources of power of a great university should not be misconceived. Its prestige and influence are based on integrity and intellectual competence; they are not based on the circumstance that it may be wealthy, may have political contacts, and may have influential friends.*

*From time to time instances will arise in which the society, or segments of it, threaten the very mission of the university and its values of free inquiry. In such a crisis, it becomes the obligation of the university as an institution to oppose such measures and actively to defend its interests and its values. There is another context in which questions as to the appropriate role of the university may possibly arise, situations involving university ownership of property, its receipt of funds, its awarding of honors, its membership in other organizations. Here, of necessity, the university, however it acts, must act as an institution in its corporate capacity. In the exceptional instance, these corporate activities of the university may appear so incompatible with paramount social values as to require careful assessment of the consequences.*



*These extraordinary instances apart, there emerges, as we see it, a heavy presumption against the university taking collective action or expressing opinions on the political and social issues of the day, or modifying its corporate activities to foster social or political values, however compelling and appealing they may be.*

*These are admittedly matters of large principle, and the application of principle to an individual case will not be easy.*

*It must always be appropriate, therefore, for faculty or students or administration to question, through existing channels . . . whether in light of these principles the University in particular circumstances is playing its proper role.*

*Our basic conviction is that a great university can perform greatly for the betterment of society. It should not, therefore, permit itself to be diverted from its mission into playing the role of a second-rate political force or influence.*