

Oberlin College - Student Bill of Rights
Updated 1/20/2021

A. Philosophy

It is understood that Oberlin students are adults. Therefore, Oberlin College does not act in loco parentis. The college provides students with the freedom and encouragement to make decisions and requires them to assume responsibility for and accept the consequences of their behavior. With self-governance comes an obligation to participate in a system of regulations conducive to teaching and learning, which protects the rights, safety, and property of others, and which ensures the orderly functioning of the college. It is our aim to construct and implement these regulations in an educational, developmental, and community based framework.

B. Preamble

Oberlin College exists as an educational community in which free inquiry and free expression are indispensable. Any assertion of rights and freedoms implies a willingness to assume responsibilities. The college community, in moving to protect individual liberty, expects the following from each of its members: recognition of the primarily academic purposes of the institution, concern for the rights and freedoms of others, and commitment to the rule of reason in settling disputes. The purpose of the delineation of rights, freedoms, and responsibilities that follows is to foster learning and the free exchange of ideas within a cooperative academic community.

C. Freedom of Access to Opportunities and Resources

1. *FINANCIAL AID* - The College provides financial aid through scholarships, grants-in-aid, work opportunities, and loans in order to attempt to meet the total financial needs of its students.
2. *LEAVE FROM ABSENCE* - Any student in good standing has the right to be granted a leave of absence from the college based on policies that are published and available.
3. *COLLEGE SERVICES, FUNCTIONS, AND FACILITIES* - Students who are enrolled have the right to attend functions and to use all facilities and services.

students may take the matter to the chair of the relevant department or, if they are not satisfied, to the appropriate dean of the college or conservatory.

E. Expression and Inquiry in Campus Activities

1. *EXPRESSION BY INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS* - Students and student organizations are free to examine and discuss questions of interest to them and to express their opinions both publicly and privately. Members of the college are expected to take responsibility for their expressions anonymous expressions are inimical to the free and open exchange of ideas.

2. *GUEST SPEAKER POLICY*- College organizations are free to bring to the college any guest speaker. The college may develop procedures for orderly scheduling and presentation of speakers and other programs. Sponsors of speakers should clearly state in their publicity the name of the sponsoring organization. Sponsorship of a guest speaker does not necessarily imply endorsement by the sponsoring group or the college.

3. *STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS*- Students may participate in any demonstrations that do not endanger the safety of individuals or destroy property. In any public demonstration, students are understood to speak only for themselves or for the student organizations they represent.

4. STUDENT MEDIA

a. The student media—such as student-produced radio, newspapers, literary or opinion magazines or journals, video, and film—shall remain free of censorship and prior view of copy. Editor(s) and manager(s) are free to develop editorial policies for each specific publication.

b. Editors and managers of student media are protected from arbitrary suspension and removal from office because of student, faculty, administrative, or public disapproval of editorial policy or content.

c. All student media must explicitly state that the opinions therein expressed are not necessarily those of the college community.

d. The freedom accorded student editors and managers recognizes adherence to the canons of responsible journalism and reporting, e.g., the avoidance of libel, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, harassment, and slanderous innuendo.

F. Confidentiality of Records

The college guarantees the confidentiality of student records consistent with the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). (See Students' Rights and Responsibilities section, V. Social Conduct and Regulations, AA.)

G. Associations and Organizations

1. The college guarantees students the freedom to organize and join associations within certain limitations relating to secret societies. (See Students' Rights and Responsibilities section, II. Student Governance and Activities, C.)

2. Student organizations are chartered according to the established procedures of the Student Senate and the General Faculty.

3. Although organizations may set membership criteria, these should have a basis in the functioning of the organization and should not be discriminatory, as specified in the college's nondiscriminatory policy.

4. No organization shall be required to submit a membership list to the college.

4. RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW

- a. Oberlin students shall accept full responsibility for their own actions under federal,