



NORTH AMERICAN
INTERFRATERNITY
CONFERENCE

**FREEDOM OF
ASSOCIATION TOOLKIT**

About This Toolkit & FAQ

This toolkit provides guidance and resources for you to understand the importance of Freedom of Association on college campuses and to take action to advocate for this fundamental student right. Included in this toolkit is a customizable resolution for your Student Government Association, PR templates, and a pledge to help your community articulate your commitment to Freedom of Association — and to share that message with your peers, campus partners and administrators, and the public.

About Freedom of Association

Freedom of Association is a fundamental element of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, protecting every individual's ability to form and join groups built around shared interests, values, or missions¹. On college campuses, this right ensures that a wide range of student organizations (including honor societies, cultural clubs, advocacy groups, fraternities, and sororities) can exist and thrive without interference.

For students, Freedom of Association is more than a constitutional principle. It's the foundation of involvement, belonging, leadership development and the diverse marketplace of ideas that defines a healthy campus community. When this right is respected, students can choose the groups that best support their personal growth and identity. When it is restricted, opportunities for connection and engagement are diminished.

Advocacy plays a critical role in safeguarding this freedom. By speaking up, student leaders help ensure that campus policies respect their' rights to organize and participate in the organizations that matter most to them. Proactive advocacy also reminds university administrators that student communities, not administrative mandates, should guide the shape of campus involvement.

What is Freedom of Association?

Freedom of Association is a critical part of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. This foundational right protects individuals' ability to form and join groups to pursue common interests. On a college campus, this protects a wide variety of students including, but not limited to, honor societies, sororities and fraternities².

Why is Freedom of Association important on a college campus?

Freedom of Association allows students to form and join certain student groups without fear of retaliation from their university administration. This includes, but is not limited to, single-sex organizations such as fraternities and sororities. Without this core tenant, these student groups would not be allowed to exist¹.

Why is it important to advocate for Freedom of Association?

Advocating for freedom of association ensures that students shape the communities that define campus life. When leaders speak up for this right, they protect opportunities for involvement, belonging, and leadership for current and future students. Ongoing advocacy helps preserve student choice, fosters viewpoint diversity, and reminds campus administrators that a healthy university community depends on students' ability to organize around shared purposes and values.

How do I advocate for Freedom of Association?

Let your university administration know how important this fundamental right is! Send them an email, go to a town hall and speak up, or run for student government.

1. Constitution Annotated "Overview of Freedom of Association" https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/amdt1-8-1/ALDE_00013139/

2. FIRE "Guide for Greek Life: Know Your Rights" <https://www.thefire.org/sites/default/files/2023/03/FIRE%20Guide%20for%20Greek%20Life%3A%20Know%20Your%20Rights.pdf>

Resolution Template

Formal resolutions are a powerful way for student leaders to demonstrate their commitment to student rights and shared governance. By passing a resolution, your Student Government Association can clearly express its position on the importance of Freedom of Association and encourage university administrators to uphold this foundational principle. The sample below provides customizable language you can use to fit your institution's context and governance process.

A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING OUR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS' RIGHT TO FREELY ASSOCIATE WITH STUDENT GROUPS ACROSS CAMPUS

WHEREAS, the **[INSTITUTION NAME]** Student Government Association (SGA) recognizes that student organizations play a vital role in shaping campus culture, leadership development, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the right to freely associate is a foundational element of the United States Constitution and a guiding principle in higher education, ensuring students can join together around shared values, missions, and interests; and

WHEREAS, the **[INSTITUTION NAME]** community thrives when students are empowered to form organizations that reflect a diversity of thought, identity, and purpose; and

WHEREAS, student organizations, including fraternities, sororities, cultural groups, service clubs, and advocacy-based organizations, contribute meaningfully to the intellectual and social fabric of campus life; and

WHEREAS, policies or actions that restrict students' ability to join or maintain membership in such organizations, based on timing, affiliation, or status, undermine students' rights to self-governance and voluntary association; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the **[NAME OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION]** formally affirms its support for the right of students to freely associate with registered student organizations that align with their values and interests; and

RESOLVED, that the **[SGA/STUDENT GOVERNMENT]** urges the **[UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION/BOARD OF TRUSTEES/ETC.]** to uphold and protect the principle of freedom of association in all policies governing student organizations; and

RESOLVED, that the **[SGA/STUDENT GOVERNMENT]** encourages continued collaboration between student leaders and university officials to promote accountability within all student organizations without infringing upon students' associational rights; and

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the **[UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT/CHANCELLOR], [VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS/DEAN OF STUDENTS]**, and other relevant stakeholders as a demonstration of the student body's commitment to protecting and celebrating freedom of association on our campus.

Adopted this **[DAY]** of **[MONTH]**, **[YEAR]**

by the **[NAME OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION]**

at **[INSTITUTION NAME]**

Signatures:



CUSTOMIZABLE RESOLUTION
TEMPLATE

PR Templates

Along with formally affirming your student government's support for Freedom of Association, publicly establishing your stance is crucial to emphasize to key stakeholders the importance of Freedom of Association.

Below is a customizable press release template to use after you pass a resolution to share with your campus community and local media, and graphic templates to utilize on your social channels.

[INSTITUTION NAME] STUDENT GOVERNMENT AFFIRMS FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **[DATE]**

[City, State] — The **[INSTITUTION NAME]** Student Government Association (SGA) has passed a resolution affirming its support for students' right to freely associate with organizations that align with their values, missions, and interests. The resolution, adopted on [Date of Passage], underscores the importance of protecting student rights and maintaining diverse opportunities for leadership, service, and community engagement.

[QUOTE FROM SGA PRESIDENT]

[QUOTE FROM UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL]

The resolution emphasizes that freedom of association is a foundational right in higher education and calls on the university administration to uphold this principle in all policies governing student organizations. It also highlights the contributions that student groups, such as fraternities, sororities, cultural organizations, service clubs, and advocacy groups, make to campus culture and student success.

The resolution was shared with **[UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT/CHANCELLOR]**, **[VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS/DEAN OF STUDENTS]**, and other key university officials.



CUSTOMIZABLE PRESS RELEASE
WORD DOCUMENT



CUSTOMIZABLE GRAPHICS

Want to edit these graphics in Canva?
Click [here](#) to learn how!



Pledge Template

Public support from students is a powerful way to demonstrate the importance of freedom of association on your campus. This pledge allows students to formally affirm their belief in the right to freely join and participate in student organizations that align with their values and interests.

You can share this pledge online, at student organization meetings, at campus events and generally around campus. Once you have collected an ample number of signatures, you can present them to university officials.

STUDENT PLEDGE IN SUPPORT OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AT [INSTITUTION NAME]

Freedom of association is a cornerstone of the college experience. It empowers students to come together around shared values, interests, identities and goals.

By signing this pledge, I affirm that:

I believe students should have the right to freely associate with recognized student organizations that reflect their values and interests.

I support policies that respect student choice, autonomy, and self-governance within campus life.

I recognize that diverse student organizations at [INSTITUTION NAME] contribute to a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged university community.

I encourage continued dialogue between student leaders and university administrators to protect and uphold freedom of association on campus.

I am proud to stand in support of students' rights to build community, develop leadership and participate fully in campus life through voluntary association.

[SIGNATURES]



CUSTOMIZABLE PLEDGE

Additional Resources



Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression's (FIRE) mission is to defend and sustain the individual rights of all Americans to free speech and free thought.

They offer several educational resources for college students to defend their rights on campus. You can find their library of resources [here](#).



The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) and **Foundation For Fraternal Excellence** (FFE) jointly support research on the fraternity/sorority experience and how membership positively impacts students.

Learn more: [Fraternity Research](#) | [Sorority Research](#)



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