

## **President's Working Group on Free Speech and Expression Policies and Communication**

### **Final Report of Findings and Recommended Action**

The President's Working Group on Free Speech and Expression Policies and Communication, hereafter called the working group, is comprised of faculty, PAT staff, OS staff, and student leaders representing a broad UNH cross-section from the Durham, Manchester, and Concord campuses. The working group was convened by President Elizabeth Chilton and charged with the following:

By December 15, 2024

- Review UNH's Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities, and any other applicable policies and guidelines, and how these policies informed University actions during the Spring 2024 semester, and specifically on May 1, 2024.
- Evaluate public higher education best practices and approaches for interacting with student and community demonstrators. Consider communications, de-escalation processes, intervention methods, and decision-making authority.
- Submit a report summarizing the review and evaluation and making recommendations to:
  - Strengthen UNH's policies, procedures and practices related to free expression and demonstrations on campus with the dual priority of ensuring campus and community safety and promoting First Amendment rights.
  - Improve communication about these policies, procedures and practices with the campus community and beyond, including how the community receives timely information in the event of a large demonstration or major police activity.

#### **Working Group Members**

- **Nadine Petty, Chair**, Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Vice President
- **Michael Blackman**, Dean of Students
- **John DeJoie**, Senior Lecturer, Social Work, Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee
- **Luciana Echazu**, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Paul College
- **Jessica Ernakovich**, Associate Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment
- **Amanda Harvey**, Administrative Coordinator, Office of Community, Equity and Diversity
- **Christopher Josefowitch**, Undergraduate Student Senate Judicial Affairs Council
- **Ashby Kinch**, Dean of the Graduate School
- **Rita Kondrath**, Senior Online Professional Faculty
- **Julien Kouame**, Extension State Specialist
- **Alexis Piñero-Benson**, Chief Student Conduct Officer and Director, Office of Community Standards
- **Shari Robinson**, Assistant Vice President for Student Life

- **Albert (Buzz) Scherr**, Professor of Law, Franklin Pierce School of Law
- **Jeannie Sowers**, Professor of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts
- **Mike Stocz**, Senior Lecturer, Kinesiology, Faculty Senate Campus Planning Committee
- **Ryan Tuttle**, Graduate Student Senate Officer

## Contextual Points

1. Due to the need to process and discuss numerous documents and guest perspectives and to the schedules and responsibilities of various working group members, an extension of the deliverable due date from December 15 to January 15 was granted by President Elizabeth Chilton.
2. The working group engaged in hybrid meetings from October 11, 2024 through January 14, 2025.
3. A SharePoint site was maintained where documents, policies, videos, articles, and other related materials were uploaded for working group access. Working group members also interacted, sharing agreements or disagreements on the SharePoint site.
4. The following people/groups attended meetings to answer questions, offer perspectives regarding May 1 events, offer insight into best practices around expressive actions, and share their recommended paths forward:
  - UNH Chief of Police, Paul Dean
  - UNH Provost, Wayne Jones
  - Palestine Solidarity Coalition (Adeena Ahsan, Maryam Aswad, and Sebastian Rowen)
  - Graduate Student Senate President, Joshua Trembley
  - Professor Emeritus of Communication, COLA, UNH, Joshua Meyrowitz
  - UNH Vice President of Student Life, Ken Holmes
5. Internal and external community members provided their thoughts via a link to a Community Input Form housed on a designated web page.
6. The working group did not meet consensus about who we should hear from, nor what we needed to learn from invited guests; however, the working group found value in hearing the perspectives shared by the invited guests and the additional community members who provided their insights via the Community Input Form. Additionally, the opportunity to pose follow-up questions in real time afforded the working group greater clarity on some of the key details of May 1 events and allowed for a more informed and thorough analysis of freedom of speech considerations, procedural decisions, and overall related UNH policies.
7. The working group agreed that the demonstration on May 1, 2024 was a form of expressive activity.
8. Some members of the working group agreed that the demonstration departed from what was expected based on the permit application and University policy.
9. The working group agreed that, absent an imminent safety concern, colleges and universities have discretion regarding procedural responses to such departures.

10. The working group agreed that elements of the UNH response on May 1, 2024 did not align with its espoused values, namely that freedom of speech and free expression is fundamental to our identity as an institution of higher learning.
11. The working group did not meet consensus on all the recommendations shared in this report; however, members agree that the recommendations offer useful next steps for consideration and represent the complexity of expressive activities in general and of the specific events related to May 1. The working group also agrees on the importance of preserving the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression while also protecting the safety of UNH students, staff, and faculty.
12. The current working group received information that raised significant concern regarding the actions of the University, which took place before and during the May 1 protest. This working group was not created as an investigative body but has done its best to outline various issues and recommendations to address some of these concerns.

## Findings

1. The University should formally adopt institutional neutrality.
2. Most group members felt that the University's overly precipitous response to the May 1 protest infringed on students' free speech rights.
3. The procedural response to the May 1, 2024 demonstration should have been different, with efforts made to meaningfully de-escalate the situation prior to law enforcement intervention.
4. An absence of clear internal procedures outlining roles and responsibilities for matters such as May 1, 2024 contributed to the procedural response.
5. Decision-making by only a few individuals in isolation not only escalated the May 1 events, but deviated from the decision-making process of the Acute Incident Response Team (AIRT). It is also emblematic of the resilient systemic and cultural problems at UNH. Those holding power control decision-making that affects many people across the institution, and those without power have limited access to information about how decisions get made and are often caught in the crossfire.
6. Trained student affairs professionals seeking to de-escalate should be the default first response to a student demonstration. Law enforcement intervention should be reserved for matters where there is an urgent safety concern, destruction of property, disruption of the educational mission of the University, or when attempts to de-escalate have failed.
7. The permit process should be improved to ensure students understand the questions being asked of them, their responsibilities when signing a permit, and potential consequences of violations of policies and permit expectations.
8. UNH student policies related to free expression appear to support constitutional principles when they are followed. UNH should continue to review and update in accordance with national best practices.
  - a. More can be done to educate the community, particularly student leaders and recognized student organizations about student rights.

- b. More can be done to ensure that those tasked with responding to expressive activities utilize discretion in responding to potential violations of policy.
9. Opportunities exist to review additional policy areas that may impact the University's response to protests and demonstrations, including policies on student events, employee participation in demonstrations, and the use of facilities.

### **Risk-Management Framework for Working Group Recommendations**

The recommendations that follow derive from extended discussion and examination of UNH institutional policies and practices, as well as the policies and practices of other institutions. The recommendations should be considered within a broad framework of how an institution of higher education needs to prepare itself to manage risk in the face of high-intensity, high-profile events like the one that took place on May 1st.

Institutional self-assessment should include an assessment of a range of risks that need to be managed, and these risks have different temporal boundaries and timelines:

- 1) An essential role of the University is to support, encourage and cherish free speech and protests, not merely to tolerate it. Any assessment of the University's policies and practice must account for the risk of students, faculty, and staff being deprived of this paramount goal. This role is separate from maintaining the University's reputation.
- 2) In the immediate context of the event, the safety risks to students, campus personnel, and the community are also paramount, and a review must include an assessment of both the policies and the processes that led to specific actions taken by representatives of the institution, as well as by the constituents (in this case, students and community members).
- 3) Immediately following the event, the risk extends to the institution's reputation, which means managing communication with the campus community, as well as with local, regional, and national communities.
- 4) Beyond that initial context, where immediate response and swift communication are necessary, an institution also has a reputational risk to manage with respect to assessing how actions taken—or not taken—reflect its core values. Those values include: the validation of free speech principles; campus spaces as places of learning, growth, and exchange of viewpoints in the context of calm, deliberative civic dialogue.

When actions are taken that do not align with core values, community trust is broken and students, faculty, and staff are less likely to participate, share, and foster a vibrant educational space. The issue is not only one of external reputation, but also one of undermining internal morale and commitment of faculty, staff, and students to the institution itself.

The events that took place in the lead-up to May 1 were managed within many existing policies; however, UNH decision-making was affected by the pressures throughout the higher education

landscape brought to bear by national protests. UNH had hosted numerous protests by pro-Palestinian groups without incident. Prior to the May 1 protests, “encampments”<sup>1</sup> were erected at other colleges and universities, some remaining in place for many days. UNH spoke with the permit holder, who indicated no plan to erect tents. The working group assumes that some of the students involved who did intend to set up tents may have intended those tents to remain overnight.

As soon as there is an overnight presence, the safety of the protestors becomes the responsibility of the campus, and that includes protecting them from both the natural elements and possible attacks by others. These dynamics with respect to overnight tents played out throughout the U.S. during spring 2024 in different ways. While the then-President of UNH, James Dean, declined to meet with the working group, others who did meet with us clearly communicated that external pressure contributed to decisions made at the highest levels of the University and beyond to stop overnight tents from being set up.

The decision to prohibit overnight tents had a series of cascading effects in terms of managing the risk of the incident itself. Chief Dean’s actions amid the protestors where he can be seen on video tussling with a small group over a tent flap objectively escalated the tension, emotion, and stakes: the protest permit was revoked, the protestors were asked to disperse, and the announcement was made that they would be arrested if they continued to linger.

As a further escalation, the state police were called to the scene, even though numerous University officials were on hand, and a mediated dialogue could have taken place to shift the risk management equation back to the safety of students and community members, as well as the institutional values of free and open deliberative dialogue. Instead, the appearance of the state police resulted in a radical escalation of tension, emotion, and physical confrontation, on the part of both the police and protestors, several of whom screamed insults and threw objects at the police.

Several participants and witnesses at the event, including Chief Dean himself, affirm the importance of the institution expressing its values in how people conduct themselves in moments like this. The [Police After Action Review.pdf](#) contains several references to the kinds of training that might instill this set of values in its officers, who have a unique role in a campus community that differs from other public safety officials. The working group affirms the importance of moving forward with this approach to training police in de-escalation tactics and communication that weigh the reputational risks and commitments to free expression of an institution of higher education alongside the risks associated with maintaining public safety.

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<sup>1</sup> The working group chose not to use the word “encampment”. There are numerous reasons for this choice, including a lack of consensual definition of the word; however, the key reason is the politicization of the word “encampment”. “Encampment” has been used by the media and political sources in a variety of ways. Through this usage, the word “encampment” appears to have become a politically coded word, synonymous with antisemitism.

The working group also unequivocally states that it was an institutional mistake to rely on the state police in this instance as this decision resulted in an excessive use of force against student protesters who did not represent an immediate safety risk or threat.

More broadly, institutions of higher education (IHEs) have become the targets of critique of extremists from both ends of the political spectrum on any number of political issues. The wave of protests in 2023 - 2024 over the conduct of the war in Gaza is a vivid illustration of the dilemma of higher education. Interest groups have focused on the student protests despite the lack of influence of IHEs on US foreign policy decisions. It is more important than ever, in this context, to insist that IHEs provide a context of learning, research, and debate, including the open and free deliberation on issues of public concern, but that they do not represent the perspective of any particular political ideology.

Based on the preceding factors, many members of the working group believe the students' freedom of speech rights were likely violated because of institutional action taken on May 1, 2024.

## **Recommendations and Rationales**

### **I. UNH Police: Authority, Appointment, Chain of Command, Training, and Accountability**

1. The UNH police department must answer to UNH, not to the Durham police department. The UNH President should have full authority to hire and fire officers, aligning oversight with financial responsibilities. This may require legislative changes and renegotiating the agreement with the Town of Durham. **Consensus met.**

**Rationale:** Campus protests are free speech events essential to the health of a thriving university. A vibrant intellectual community should not only tolerate differences of opinion expressed through protests. It should encourage them. Protests can be complex events not only involving free speech issues but also potential student safety issues. It is critical that the University has the ability to balance and manage free speech and student safety issues. That balancing act is very different from protests on other than a college campus. Without the University having authority over the police department, the ability to balance student safety and free speech issues is absent.

2. Create a UNH PD Oversight Panel. The oversight of UNHPD is unclear. The President indicates that UNH has no direct authority over the operation of UNHPD. The Town of Durham provides policing privileges to UNHPD, but there is no evidence that Durham possesses any oversight. This panel will research the relationship between UNHPD, UNH and Durham. They will make recommendations, as needed, to

President Chilton. The standing panel will review UNHPD operations and complaints and make recommendations to the appropriate authority. The panel does not possess final decision-making authority and will review system level practices. They will not be involved in disciplinary reviews of officers.

**Rationale:** A university police department must forge a balance between ensuring the safety of students, faculty and staff and upholding a university's fundamental commitment to a healthy, vibrant intellectual community. An oversight body that includes faculty and administration will provide the necessary perspectives to attain this balance.

3. The Durham Police Chief should solicit an independent and thorough investigation into the conduct and statements, sworn and otherwise, of the members of the UNH police department involved in the events of May 1. The investigators should consult directly with UNH students harmed by the actions and publish a report that addresses accountability for police action, both on the day and in subsequent statements.
4. While some situations may overlap, UNH should ensure that campus policies and the university-wide conduct system remain intentionally and appropriately independent of any criminal or civil proceeding. We should ensure that decision-making for the assignment of conduct charges remains with the Chief Student Conduct Officer and that the police maintain authority to determine criminal charges within the confines of the law. Ensuring continued collaboration and consultation between the police department and the Office of Community Standards as to each circumstance is essential.

**Rationale:** An academic institution is charged with creating the ethos of a healthy, vibrant intellectual environment, one within which students can make mistakes, learn and mature; however, students cannot do what they want at every turn without consequences. The lines not to be crossed must be clear and the University must measure any discipline with an understanding of its core ethos. Criminal charges and law enforcement intervention may be counter-productive to the creation of the ethos of a healthy, vibrant intellectual environment, and should be reserved for limited situations.

5. Establish clear policies outlining when and how UNH requests external police assistance (e.g., state police, federal police, or other agencies) or intervention.

**Consensus met.**

- a. Policy compilation should be completed/convened by an appropriate committee, with oversight from the UNH community (faculty, staff, students), UNH Police, Durham Police, and State Police representatives.
  - b. One option is for explicit thresholds tied to emergency levels in the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
  - c. Make these policies clearly visible (as a possible bullet in the digital handout).
6. UNH PD should receive additional training regarding policing civil protest and civil disobedience, with a focus on de-escalation on college campuses. This training should be repeated at least annually. **Consensus met.**

**Rationale:** No evidence was provided by witnesses that de-escalation occurred prior to engagement by NH State Police. Whether de-escalation would have been successful is unknown; however, literature on managing protests cites de-escalation, particularly on college campuses, as an essential initial engagement tactic.

7. UNH PD command staff shall receive refresher training regarding Incident Command principles and operation. **Consensus met.**

**Rationale:** Incident Command exists to manage complex events. There are two chief roles for Incident Command: 1) manage multiple agencies or jurisdictions at the event and 2) to provide command with perspective regarding the event and necessary actions. Events often create a high degree of emotion and potential personal bias for First Responders. The command structure insulates decision making from this bias by keeping Incident Command separate from actions of protestors and police. Chief Dean's actions at this event blurred the lines of command and may have contributed to the eventual outcomes.

8. UNH PD at campus events, such as the May 1 event, will always be in uniform or wearing a vest which identifies them as UNH PD. **Consensus met.**

## II. **Policy and Procedures: Development, Revision, Enforcement, and De-escalation**

1. Refine Emergency Operations Plan: **Consensus met.**
  - a. Emergency Leadership Structure: Update the leadership structure outlined in the EOP, ensuring roles reflect appropriate expertise and representation from impacted groups.
  - b. Make the EOP readily accessible online and ensure university-wide familiarity with its provisions through annual training.
  - c. The UNH-EOP should clearly state what level of emergency (IV or above) state police intervention would be utilized.



- d. The UNH-EOP should clearly identify procedures for demonstration and expressive actions (beyond guidelines for political activity) that address employees and third parties.
  - e. Develop Acute Incident Response Team (AIRT) procedures for responding to demonstrations and expressive activities.
    - i. Clearly articulate the AIRT role in responding to level 3 events and demonstrations.
    - ii. Ensure that trained Student Life professionals seeking to de-escalate are the default first responders to a student demonstration that requires intervention beyond the action of the individuals hosting the event or space.
    - iii. Ensure that individuals who host events or manage buildings where events/expressive activities may occur understand their responsibilities to de-escalate with the Support of Student Life where needed. Law enforcement intervention should be reserved for matters where there is an urgent safety concern, destruction of property, disruption of the educational mission of the University, or when attempts to de-escalate have failed.
    - iv. Ensure that the procedural response to a demonstration is proportionate to preservation of campus safety, protection of speech rights, and the violations of policy if established that a policy was violated.
    - v. Ensure procedural responses are regularly reviewed and updated including decisions related to the appropriate accountability mechanisms for violations of policy.
2. Develop student events policy. **Consensus met.**
  3. Review policies for who can sponsor an unrecognized group or third party (including if governing bodies can sponsor events).
  4. Create a standing panel to review planning and policy change.
    - a. The panel should consist of UNH Admin, Faculty, Grad Student and Student Senate.
    - b. Review the use of and decision making regarding legal involvement versus student disciplinary involvement. Create decision points to be applied for future events.

### III. **Permit Process: Content, Procedures, Ownership, and Timelines**

1. Redesign the permit and or the permitting process to be more aligned with what is and is not allowed by UNH policy: **Consensus met.**

**Rationale:** A university dedicated to nurturing free speech will permit a broad scope of speech and conduct and have clear guardrails. The goal is to support, encourage and honor a variety of forms of free speech. Protestors should find it easy to obtain permits and clearly know the limits of their protest. The “protest permitting” process for a university should not be designed to discourage protests by an overly strict and narrow set of criteria. Nor should the criteria, if any, be so vague or non-specific as to allow for subjective interpretations by university authorities that are restrictive.

- a. Review involvement of Student Life in permitting process for student sponsored events by non-recognized groups. All approved permits should be shared with Student Life for awareness.
- b. Those applying for a permit for a demonstration/protest must identify whether they have invited or expect individuals to participate in the demonstration/protest who are not a part of the University. The inclusion of such individuals shall not be a basis for the denial of a permit.
- c. The criteria should make an explicit distinction between informational events and protests and demonstrations. Applicants should make the choice, rather than the University.
- d. If those granting the permit decide that a campus safety issue may exist, the grantor shall consult with the police department about specific conditions that are the least restrictive possible. It is the decision of the office granting the permit to determine what the least-restrictive conditions should be.
- e. The basis for a revocation of a permit shall be limited and specific and should include a violation of noise, time-based concerns, location-based concerns, campus safety concerns, or deviations from permit agreements. Those involved in the demonstration/protest shall be informed of the violation and the specific consequences of the violation. They shall be given an opportunity to correct the violation prior to event shut down.
- f. The list of possible consequences of a violation must be included in the permit. They should include a range of possibilities, including a ban on any future permits for that organization, either permanently or for a designated period; a referral to the appropriate University disciplinary process, and law enforcement intervention depending on the nature of the violation.

2. UNH should make the permit holder understand they are responsible for subgroup activities that occur at their permitted event. **Consensus met.**
3. UNH Permit Procedures should require an individual representing a student group to clarify that their application has been preceded by consultation of some kind with the group represented. Ensure it is clear that the sponsoring individual, group, or department are responsible for communication with their membership about restrictions, guidelines, and expectations.
4. Improve clarity of permit rules, details about structures such as tents, details about when permits can be revoked, and details about potential consequences for violations. **Consensus met.**
5. The permit process for recognized UNH groups and non-affiliated groups should capture the same information and clearly communicate the same expectations.
6. Ensure that the language on UNH PDs permit application aligns with the language in Catalyst. **Consensus met.**
7. Shorter Permit Processing Times: Streamline the permit application process to ensure timely approvals, particularly for student groups.
  - a. Timely share permit approvals with the AIRT and senior executives when large scale demonstrations have been planned or when protests are in response to lightning rod social or campus issues.

#### **IV. Accountability: Institutional Neutrality, Acknowledgement of Harm, and Response to May 1**

1. Acknowledgement of harm: For the institution and its members to mutually agree to move forward and begin repairing damaged relationships, there must be accountability and acknowledgement of the harm caused to all who have been impacted, emphasizing the need for relationship repair. **Consensus met.**
2. UNH should formally adopt a policy of institutional neutrality (e.g., University of Chicago's Kalven Report), emphasizing UNH's commitment to free expression without endorsing specific viewpoints. **Consensus met.**
  - a. institutional neutrality should be explicitly affirmed in UNH expressive policy statements and freedom of speech commitments.

## V. Education and Training: Dialogue, Mediation, and Community Engagement

1. Provide awareness and training, workshops and forums on free speech (rights, responsibilities, and limits) to students, faculty, police and administrators. Include legal implications and the value of free speech and expression, including how to handle hate speech and counter-protests within legal boundaries. **Consensus met.**
  - a. Show support for the New Hampshire Listens series regarding May 1<sup>st</sup> and related topics that will take place spring 2025.
2. Utilize Educational Excellence and Effectiveness (E3), the Learning and Development and Innovation Team, the College of Professional Studies Online Center for Academic Engagement, and Teaching and Learning Technologies to provide free speech classroom resources and training to faculty should they desire to engage in it.
3. Develop and implement a peer-to-peer ambassador program to facilitate group dialogue on controversial or partisan topics (e.g., abortion rights, police brutality, racial tensions, immigration, gun control, election season).
4. Train and/or engage individuals who can serve as a resource for students during protests. These may include, but are not limited to the Chaplains Association, peer ambassadors, NH Listens, and others.

## VI. Communication: Accessibility and Proactive Dissemination

1. As per section D, of the Emergency Operations Plan where it is stipulated that all departments, divisions, colleges, and organizations should be familiar with the Plan, the EOP should be made readily accessible via a webpage to the UNH community.
2. UNH colleges and the Beaugard Center webpages should link to the Freedom of Expression and Guidelines on Peaceful Dissent webpage. [Freedom of Expression and Guidelines on Peaceful Dissent | University of New Hampshire Academic Catalog.](#)
3. Ensure that the existing UNH landing page for Free Speech is the most accessible for students as well as faculty and staff where permits, policy, and procedure are easily searchable and found. These pages must comply with ADA digital accessibility requirements.

## Appendix

### Community Input

October 14, 2024: What happened on May 1st was done right. They were told not to make an encampment. What did they do? Make an encampment. When told to take it down they did not and they were not listening. Actions had to be taken by the police. So what the police did was right.

October 15, 2024: Discussions around free speech will always be somewhat fraught, and we currently exist in a polarized political climate that makes these discussions even more challenging. The best advice I can give is to encourage you to be as specific and consistent as possible. Outline what kinds of offensive speech (as the descriptor of "offensive" will always be partly subjective) are acceptable and which are unacceptable. Make sure that you differentiate general public statements from attempts to make specific students, staff, or faculty feel unwelcome or unsafe. Recognize that individuals may feel unwelcome or unsafe even if they haven't been specifically targeted and provide supportive resources to those individuals.

October 17, 2024: Firstly, I applaud that you are aware of free speech issues at UNH and are making changes to protect free speech. However, I believe that more still has to be done to protect the voices of libertarians and even conservatives (granted they do not engage in sincere hate speech), as most public voices at UNH are overwhelmingly liberal, thus making non-liberal students feel out of touch with the community. I myself am a libertarian and have been afraid to speak out about my beliefs because of how risky it is to share differences of opinions when almost everyone in my major talks politics when I do not wish to share political beliefs. From what I have seen, the general opinions on world issues here on campus have been basically homogenized since the pandemic. I am also Autistic, which has made me feel less included in conversations, and since most other Autistic students here are more left-leaning than me, I am even nervous trying to engage in conversations with them when they share their political viewpoints at every possible opportunity. My best friend is also Jewish and has family in Israel... and I suppose you can imagine how that must feel with the far-left students condemning everything about our campus's relationship with the last Indigenous Jewish homeland on the planet. Many times, mainly on YikYak, I have been attacked not only for sharing my libertarian views, but for defending Jews and even requesting that pro-Palestinian protests refrain from adopting antisemitic chants. Most users online have called me "complicit in genocide" for denouncing antisemitic calls on the app, and I have also seen actual discrimination on the same app toward others with varying and diverse political beliefs, such as when pro-abortion students announced that they would vandalize a pro-life student organization's booth this U-Day. I have even seen a post that read "our campus is not diverse because there are too many white men" (on May 2, likely to discredit our Dean of Students' reflection on the protests the day before), and any comments that provided points about how our campus is nevertheless rich in diversity of gender, religion, politics, or sexual orientation were all downvoted or disregarded. I felt like this goes against free speech because from what I have experienced, you

can be harassed anywhere, mainly on the UNH YikYak but also out and about, for having an unpopular opinion rooted in political beliefs or what you as a person stand for. I advise you to take these scenarios into account for opportunities to strengthen our free speech laws even further. That said, I am happy to see that changes are being made to protect free speech on our campus, and though I will most likely not be around to see additional changes since I am a senior that is graduating in the spring, I am hopeful that future students will express more freedom of diverse political or social viewpoints. But all of this is my opinion based on what I have seen in the four years since I enrolled.

Unspecified date: My concerns with the new policy

- Firstly, the policy around "time, place, and manner," defined as "Public entities like UNH are permitted to impose restrictions of expressive activities to appropriate times, locations, and methods of delivery, provided these restrictions are uniformly applied," seems incredibly vague, nebulous and difficult for potential student protestors to navigate. This also seems it would make it easier for the institution to deny permits or penalize students after a demonstration has taken place. Furthermore, there isn't any clear indication of what times and places on campus would be "appropriate" under this new policy.

- o Furthermore, the example of the demonstrations that would be in violation of this policy provided, such as "impeding pedestrian traffic" is also vague and a policy that seems to prevent the types of peaceful protests and forms of dissent utilized by college students on campuses in the US for generations, such as sit-ins, teach-ins, or any type of large gathering. It seems this could be revised to make it explicit that such demonstrations can be permitted barring they don't impede public safety.

- It seems there is also a sort of discouragement of student engagement in peaceful demonstrations all together in the "Suggestions and Resources for Community and Self-Care" in the advice for "Intentional Avoidance: Choosing not to engage with an event is your right and a personal choice. There are many indirect and proactive forms of engagement, including non-attendance."

- Finally, on this page, it seems there should also be a link or more information on the appeal process on the page for students to readily access should their permit be denied.

On a different page for this policy:

- The policy against masking: "No persons shall wear masks, facial coverings, or disguises that conceals the identity of the wearer that is calculated to obstruct the enforcement of these rules or the law, or to intimidate, hinder or interrupt a UNH employee or law enforcement officer in the lawful performance of their duty" may prevent immune-compromised students and students more vulnerable to COVID, long COVID, and other respiratory viruses from participating. Perhaps an exception to this rule can be included for these students.

October 29, 2024: When Pro-Palestine protestors came nearby Thompson Hall at UNH, they initially exercised their first amendment right of freedom of speech. However, things got out of hand later on this Wednesday evening. As a result, the protestors tried to install an encampment on University policy. I believe UNH police responded in a brilliant and excellent manner to stop the encampment from being placed on campus. I think UNH police should continue to have a right to do their job, and respond accordingly to any situation. If another situation gets out of hand, such as an attempt to put up an encampment on campus, I am certain that I believe UNH police should have a right to have a voice and remove the encampment. A university is a place of learning, and I believe and hope that certain protestors must not get in the way of interfering with the learning of a university. People deserve the right to make their voices heard via the first amendment and free speech, but if a protest becomes unlawful, the police should have a right to make that clear.

November 26, 2024: Students should be allowed to hold peaceful protests on campus This leads to active engagement in domestic and global affairs for a lifetime. We are a learning institution and being able to speak their mind should be part of their education.

November 26, 2024: I have been assigned to mentor one of the students who was arrested on May 1st. It has been very hard as a mentor to bear witness to how withdrawn this student was acting and to hear from him that he now feels insecure on the UNH campus. Talking about the event still brings him to tears and I worry that he may be clinically depressed or have ongoing anxiety resulting from it. I am not sharing names to respect his privacy, but I do wonder if there could and should be a mediation run by NH Listens between UNH police officers and students involved.

November 26, 2024: I would like to know why body camera footage from UNH and State Police on May 1st has not been released. This would be helpful to understand as Durham Police have inquired about body cameras for their own protection. As Town Councilor, I also feel some weariness about the Town of Durham continuing to provide police appointments and thus taking on some risk related to actions by the UNH Police Department, especially if there is not a transparent as well as neutral and independent after-action analysis. I would imagine this should look like allowing the Town to also view body camera footage, review incident reports, and otherwise actively participate in the after-action report and this Working Group, although I would like to hear other ideas.

December 1, 2024: As various educators have noted, the starting point should be to distinguish classroom from public areas and speech from violence. Confusion results from conflating these. Then address name calling, vilification and us-them stigma as opposed to logic.