

# Tolerance

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<https://poynterdean.wordpress.com/2014/08/29/tolerance/>

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As I welcome new and returning students to our campus, I thought it would be good to revisit the topic of Tolerance that I first addressed on my website in July 2010.



Built into the walls of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, inside and outside, are sculpted bronze hands holding words representing the enduring values of scholarship: tolerance, diversity, wisdom, courage, inspiration, justice, beauty, and truth. These were designed by USF alumnus Robert Calvo, the artist also responsible for the building's stunning atrium artwork featuring three sculptures representing the great ancient libraries of Alexandria, Nineveh, and Pergamum. (One of those hanging sculptures forms the header of this blog.)

The first value, tolerance, is the foundation for all scholarly endeavors in the modern university. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online defines **tolerance** as *"the disposition to be patient with or indulgent to the opinions or practices of others; freedom from bigotry or undue severity in judging the conduct of others; forbearance; catholicity of spirit."* **To tolerate** is defined by the OED as *"To allow to exist or to be done or practiced without authoritative interference or molestation"*. Wikipedia defines **tolerance** as *"the ability to accept something while disapproving of it."*

The American Association of University Professors' [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), first adopted in 1940, adheres to the value of tolerance when it states that *"Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition."* Academic freedom, based on tolerance, makes it possible for a faculty member to teach a class that a politician may not approve of. It is tolerance within the parameters of academic freedom which makes it possible for students to present a point of view in a class or on a paper that the majority may not agree with and for them to be protected in voicing that opinion. (Academic freedom and tolerance don't mean that students don't have to present logical arguments and data to support their point of view in

class, however.) Tolerance demands respect for differences: different opinions, different modes of expressions, different appearances, different cultures. Tolerance – respect for differences – does not mean agreement or acquiescence: others are equally free to disagree, respectfully.

The [American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights](#), first adopted in 1939, embodies this tolerance for different points of view. In fact, libraries are charged not only to tolerate different points of view but also to champion and fight for them.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.*
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.*
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.*
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.*
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.*
- VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.*

As Dean, I welcome you to the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library where your unique beliefs and opinions will not only be tolerated, but will also be championed. Throughout this academic year, the faculty and staff of the Poynter Library will offer many events, exhibits, and talks that embody these principles.

Welcome to the 2014/2015 academic year!