

Free Speech Annual Report – September 1, 2024

Section A: Institutional Policy

Has your institution amended its free speech policy (or policy framework) since the time of your 2023 report? If so, please explain the reason for the change and provide the link to its location on your institutional website.

No.

Where are members of the institutional community (or guests) directed when there is a free-speech-related question or complaint about an institutional event? Please provide contact information.

Questions or complaints are directed to the Office of the General Counsel.

What is your institution's policy on holding events where there are security concerns? To your knowledge, were there any instances where a non-curricular event did not proceed due to security concerns or their related costs?

Mohawk College reserves the right to reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of freedom of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt normal college operations and ordinary college activities or endanger the safety of others. In its discretion, Mohawk College may require security personnel to ensure the personal safety of students, staff, visitors and guests.

To the best of our knowledge, there was one event that was not approved to proceed as a result of security concerns.

Section B: Complaints

Between **August 1, 2023** and **July 31, 2024**, did any member of the institutional community (or guests) make an official complaint about free speech? If yes, please provide a general description that protects the privacy of complainants.

1. On November 9, 2023 a pro-life campaign group, Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform Hamilton Against Abortion (HAA), was present at the Fennell Campus H Loop and one incident between a student and a protestor took place regarding the group's general presence on campus.
2. On January 24, 2024 Mohawk College received a space rental request from Hamilton Coalition to Stop War (HCSW) to use Mohawk College's facilities to host a panel discussion regarding the conflict in Israel-Palestine and the threat of a broader Middle Eastern War. Such request was not approved on the basis of security concerns. Hamilton Coalition to Stop War disagreed with the outcome of this decision citing Mohawk College's Policy Statement on Upholding Free speech, specifically, regarding freedom of expression.

If there has been an official complaint (or more than one):

What were the issues under consideration? Please identify any points of contention (e.g., security costs, safety, student unions and/or groups, operational requirements, etc.).

See above.

How did the institution manage the free speech complaint(s)? Was the complaint addressed using the procedures set out in the policy? How were issues resolved?

1. When Mohawk College is notified that the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (Hamilton Against Abortion) will be on campus, Mohawk College communicates their presence to the College community, reminds the community regarding the right to freedom of expression under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and, provides relevant support resources to both employee and student groups. Upon receiving complaints generally, complainants are reminded that the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (Hamilton Against Abortion) is an advocacy group that asserts the right to freedom of expression on public property under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In this particular instance, the student was safely escorted by Security to their classroom without further incident.

2. In accordance with the [Third Party Use of College Facilities Policy](#), Mohawk College reserves the right to ensure that any use of Facilities does not compromise Mohawk College’s or the Mohawk College community’s activities as well as the safety and security of persons and facilities. Where, in the opinion of the President of Mohawk College and advisors, provision of Facilities to a particular group could give rise to a dangerous and undesirable situation, such rental may be refused and no reason need be given. The decision to decline the space rental by HSCW for the purposes identified above was made in accordance with existing College policies that govern the use of space at Mohawk College.

Section C: Summary Data

Please provide the following summary data for free-speech-related official complaints received by the institution:

Number of official complaints received under the free speech policy relating to curricular and non-curricular events.	2
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	2
Number of official complaints where the institution determined that the free speech policy was not followed appropriately.	0
Number of official complaints under the free speech policy that resulted in the institution applying disciplinary or other institutional measures.	0
To your knowledge, were any free speech complaints forwarded to the Ontario Ombudsman?	0

To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate of the number of **non-curricular events** held at the institution either online or in person between **August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024**. Non-curricular events include, for example, invited speakers, sporting events, rallies, student life/student affairs events, conferences, etc., as opposed to regular events held as part of an academic program or course.