

LAINE

THEATRE ARTS

Policies

Statement on Academic Freedom

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Laine Theatre Arts is committed to protecting and promoting academic freedom. Academic staff at Laine Theatre Arts have freedom within the law to carry out teaching, professional practice and research, including the publication of the outcomes of research and professional practice, in a way which questions and tests established ideas and received wisdom, presents controversial or unpopular points of view and puts forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.

In the exercise of this freedom, we acknowledge that as members of a welcoming and inclusive community we have responsibilities to each other and to the wider society to:

- Value diversity and recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture and that this difference brings great strength.
- Treat others with courtesy and respect; and anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances.
- Respect the rights of individuals to hold different beliefs and views and to express them through appropriate contribution to discussion and academic debate.
- Communicate in ways that are clear, relevant, respectful, accurate and timely, and exemplified by transparency and constructive dialogue.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH ACT 2023 AND PROTECTION OF CONTESTED PEDAGOGY

Academic freedom at Laine Theatre Arts is protected by sections A1 and A2 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (as inserted by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023) and by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It includes the freedom of academic, freelance and visiting teaching staff to make pedagogical choices in good faith - including in the selection of repertoire, casting decisions, the use of culturally sensitive material, and the discussion of contested artistic, social or political ideas in the studio and rehearsal room - without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges. Disagreement with a teaching decision is not, on its own, a basis for disciplinary action against a member of teaching staff.

INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY AND THE RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

A commitment to academic freedom does not entail that every claim or viewpoint is equally worthwhile; some views will not stand up to intellectual scrutiny. Whenever possible, controversial ideas should be subject to questioning and challenged by rational argument supported by relevant evidence.

Similarly, views expressed by staff and students in a personal capacity must not be represented as the views of the College unless expressly authorised to do so. The expression of an individual view does not imply endorsement by the College.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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