Barnard College

Institutional Neutrality

Policy Adopted by the Barnard Board of Trustees on June 3, 2026

To encourage exploration and discussion of the widest diversity of views, Barnard College makes statements only about issues directly affecting the College's educational mission. The College does not make statements about political and social issues that do not directly affect our educational mission.

This adherence to institutional neutrality is rooted in the principles set forth in the University of Chicago's Kalven Report and reinforces Barnard's long-standing commitments to free speech, open inquiry, and academic freedom. Given these commitments, Barnard's adherence to institutional neutrality does not restrict individuals from making statements as individuals or groups of individuals so long as they do not purport to speak in the name of or on behalf of the College and are not reasonably perceived as doing so.

FAQs as of September 1, 2026

The following questions and answers provide more detail about the parameters of Barnard's adherence to institutional neutrality:

1. **Who must follow institutional neutrality?** The principle of institutional neutrality applies to the entirety of Barnard College and all departments and units within the College, as well as to any person seeking to issue statements in the name of or on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts. This includes any person who reasonably could be perceived as issuing a statement in the name of or on behalf of Barnard College or any of the College's component parts, especially those serving in administrative or academic leadership roles (including all chairs, directors, deans, assistant and associate vice presidents, and vice presidents).

Faculty or staff acting on their own behalf in their capacities as individuals or as groups of individuals may make statements so long as they do not purport to speak in the name of or on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts and would not reasonably be perceived as speaking in the name of or on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts. Individuals should take care to ensure that such statements are not reasonably likely to be misconstrued to represent the College or any of the College's component parts, including by including disclaimers that emphasize they are speaking as individuals.

2. **Who may speak on behalf of Barnard College?** Only the President and Chair of the Board of Trustees, and their respective designees, may make statements on behalf of the College. For the sake of clarity, department chairs or other unit leaders may not speak as or on behalf of the College or as or on behalf of their departments or units. Members of such departments or units may speak individually or in groups so long as they include appropriate disclaimers stating that the opinions expressed are those of the individuals and not a statement from a department or unit or the College itself. Similarly, members of student organizations recognized by the College may not speak as or on behalf of the College, the students of the College, or the recognized student organization.

3. **What is a statement for purposes of institutional neutrality?** A statement is a written or verbal public declaration by the College, a department or unit of the College, or a Barnard College leader to students, faculty, staff, alumnae, the press, the public, or other stakeholders. Formal remarks as well as written communications constitute statements. In some instances, expressive activities also will be viewed as statements. Statements include any public declaration issued through official Barnard College channels, including all aspects of the College's website and social media channels controlled by the College or departments and units within the College.

Importantly, mere announcements of authorized events on campus are not considered statements for purposes of institutional neutrality. In addition, individuals and groups of individuals may make statements through non-College channels so long as they do not purport to speak in the name of or on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts and would not reasonably be perceived as speaking in the name of or on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts.

4. **When do Barnard College leaders speak on behalf of the College?** Barnard College leaders have a responsibility to speak on issues that directly affect Barnard College's educational mission. Conversely, Barnard College leaders may not speak on issues unrelated to the College's mission unless they are clearly speaking as individuals.

5. **When may Barnard College leaders speak on their own behalf?** When Barnard College employees in leadership positions speak as individuals, they must take care to emphasize that they are not speaking on behalf of the College or any of the College's component parts. Importantly, when Barnard College employees in leadership positions also serve as academics with expertise in a given field, the College's adherence to institutional neutrality does not preclude them from offering their substantive views in their areas of academic expertise, provided that they clearly state that they are not speaking on behalf of Barnard College or one of the College's component parts. They therefore may make statements within their area of academic expertise, but it should be clear in context that they are speaking as individuals, not on behalf of Barnard College or the College's component parts. Presidents, provosts, deans, and

vice presidents must explicitly state that they are not speaking on behalf of the College because it is difficult for members of the Barnard College community or public to differentiate whether they are acting in a personal or an official capacity when they speak.

6. **How does institutional neutrality relate to social media accounts of Barnard College and the College's component parts?** All communications issued through official Barnard College channels, including the College's website and social media channels controlled by the College or departments and units within the College, are the College's statements and must adhere to institutional neutrality. Care also must be exercised with respect to any statements issued from individual or other accounts or channels that could be construed as being attributable to the College or any of the College's component parts. In such instances, appropriate disclaimers must be included to ensure that any recipient is not under the misimpression that the views expressed therein are those of the College or the College's component parts. To avoid the possibility of such misimpression, individuals may not use the Barnard logo on individual accounts or channels and should otherwise emphasize that their views on those non-College accounts or channels are their own.

7. **Are there additional actions that will be taken in connection with institutional neutrality?** The President may adopt additional guidance and procedures to ensure adherence to institutional neutrality. Further, the President and the senior leadership team will continue to work with students, faculty, and staff to develop initiatives to support dialogue and discussion on issues of public importance that reinforce the role of Barnard College as an academic community that fosters discussion, debate, and dialogue and welcomes diverse viewpoints. Please direct any questions about the implementation of institutional neutrality to presidentsoffice@barnard.edu.

8. **How does institutional neutrality relate to other College policies?** The questions and answers above relate only to Barnard's adherence to institutional neutrality. Individuals or groups of individuals speaking in their individual capacities must continue to follow all other College policies and guidance, including the College's policies prohibiting discrimination; the College's policies setting forth content-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions for events, demonstrations, and posting; the Student Code of Conduct; the Employee Handbook; and guidance for employees established by the Office of the Provost, the Office of Human Resources, and individual supervisors.