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International Declaration by Universities on Freedom of Expression

As an international group of universities, we have a strong and longstanding commitment to the values of freedom of expression. The environment of rigorous inquiry that is critical to the very function of universities as centres of intellectual challenge and discovery is being debated in our diverse jurisdictions. There are some who argue that freedom of expression in universities is being inhibited through regulation, policies, practices and culture, conversely there are others who suggest that such freedoms need to be regulated to protect individuals and communities from offensive or controversial content.

Through this declaration we, the undersigned universities, affirm our commitment to freedom of expression.

We define freedom of expression as a broad concept that includes free speech, the freedom to engage in lawful protest and academic freedom. In taking such a position on free speech we acknowledge that the laws of the state may pose various constraints on speakers and topics and that by necessity we must operate within those laws. We also acknowledge that some ideas may cause offense to our students, staff and alumni. In such circumstances it is legitimate for students, staff and alumni to exercise their freedom to protest, but again such

