

## University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Expression of Opinion and Representation Guidelines

Office of Accountability	Office of the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Office of Administrative Accountability	Office of the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Approver	
Scope	Compliance with this Faculty policy extends to all members of the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry

### **Overview:**

This document is a guideline of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD) at the University of Alberta (U of A) regarding considerations when expressing a personal opinion as opposed to representing a University unit (eg division, department, program, faculty) or the institution (U of A) for all members of the FoMD. This guideline does not impact on FoMD members' rights to academic freedom, as set out in their U of A collective agreements, nor the FoMD students' rights and responsibilities, as set out in the U of A Student Code of Behavior.

### **Purpose**

This is a guideline for all members of the FoMD at the U of A, with regards to expression of opinion and representation.

### **Guideline:**

Members of the FoMD have the right to express their opinion, and be free of censorship. When doing so, members should make clear when an expressed view is personal opinion or representation of a University unit (e.g. division, department, program, faculty) or the institution (U of A). **Whenever a possibility of confusion exists as to whether an opinion is personal, it is recommended that the FoMD member dispel any notion of U of A, FoMD or unit representation and/or endorsement, unless it has been formally provided by the appropriate University FoMD Administration** (e.g. using one's position or title as 'Associate Professor, University of Alberta' after one's name). This applies equally to written, web-based, and oral speech. This also applies when using official Department/FoMD/University of Alberta letterhead when expressing personal views not related to a professional position.

To avoid misinterpretation of U of A endorsement where it does not exist, one might use the phrase: "The opinion(s) expressed herewith are strictly those of the author, and have not been endorsed by the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry nor the University of Alberta".

- Examples of when it would be appropriate for you to provide a disclaimer would include personal political views, commentary on social issues unrelated to one's area of professional expertise, or during media interactions when the affiliation with the FoMD or the U of A has been identified.
- Examples of when you would not need to provide a disclaimer could include presentation of your scholarly work, scholarly commentary in your area of research or professional expertise, or when you are asked by the FoMD or the U of A to speak on behalf of the institution

At times, a member of the FoMD may be formally authorized to speak on behalf of the faculty. In such circumstances, a disclaimer would not be necessary if the speaker's content was within the scope of authority granted to them by the FoMD.

It may sometimes be unclear whether an FoMD member is being asked to provide a personal or professional opinion by the media. Further, there may be times when an FoMD member wishes to express their opinion on a matter, and are unsure as to whether to include their U of A or FoMD affiliation. At these times, it is helpful to contact resources including their Chair, Departmental or Program Lead, University of Alberta Relations (<https://www.ualberta.ca/university-relations>), Alberta Health Services or the Associate Dean, Professionalism, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, for direction *prior* to expressing one's opinion.

If approached by the media for an opinion, statement or interview as a member of FoMD, it is suggested that the faculty member contact their departmental, faculty, or media relations office for advice and support, *prior* to granting the interview, whenever possible. There are media training resources for FoMD faculty at the University of Alberta. If interested in receiving training in how to deal with media, contact University of Alberta Relations (<https://www.ualberta.ca/university-relations>).

The Criminal Code and Human Rights legislation include many restrictions in personal expression with offences such as defamatory libel, counselling suicide, perjury, fraud and hate speech. The FoMD urges its members to be familiar with this Code, whether expressing a personal or professional opinion.

### **Definitions**

FoMD	Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
Member	Includes all persons with a faculty appointment, learners and employees
U of A	University of Alberta

**Related Links:**

[University of Alberta Ethical Conduct](#)

<http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/MyEmployment/~media/hrs/MyEmployment/SEC/StatementofEthicalConduct.pdf>

Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Code of Conduct:

<https://d1pbog36rugm0t.cloudfront.net/media/medicine/aboutus/policies/fomd-code-of-conduct18062013.pdf>

University of Alberta Collective Agreements:

<http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/MyEmployment/Agreements.aspx>

University of Alberta Code of Student Behaviour:

<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>

University of Alberta Media Relations:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/news-and-events/mediarelations>

Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Media Relations:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/medicine/news-and-events/media-contacts>

Alberta Health Services Media Relations:

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Info/facility.aspx?id=1011654&service=1045751>