DATE: April 3, 2006

TO: All Faculty, Staff, and Students

SUBJECT: Statement on Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity

FROM: Barbara R. Snyder, Executive Vice President and Provost

In June 2005 a statement on academic freedom and intellectual diversity on American campuses was released by the American Council on Education (ACE), the major coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions, of which Ohio State is a member. The ACE statement includes the following principles:

- Academic freedom and intellectual pluralism are core principles of America’s higher education system.
- Government’s recognition and respect for independence of colleges and universities is essential for academic excellence.
- Colleges and universities should welcome diverse beliefs and the free exchange of ideas.
- Grades and other academic decisions should be based solely on considerations that are intellectually relevant to the subject matter.
- Neither students nor faculty should be disadvantaged or evaluated on the basis of their political opinions.
- Any member of the campus community who believes he or she has been treated unfairly on academic matters must have access to a clear institutional process to address grievances.

Ohio’s Inter-University Council (IUC), a statewide consortium of public universities, endorsed these principles in October 2005. It then passed a resolution recommending that all four-year public universities in Ohio communicate these principles to their campus communities. OSU President Karen A. Holbrook was among the fifteen presidents of those Ohio universities to sign the resolution.

In supporting the IUC resolution, President Holbrook reaffirmed Ohio State’s unwavering commitment to these principles of academic rights and responsibilities. She has asked the Office of Academic Affairs to lead our institution’s effort to disseminate them campus-wide; to inform faculty and students about relevant policies and procedures; and to promote frank, open, and respectful discussion among faculty and students about this vital matter.

Accordingly, copies of the principles listed above will be distributed as broadly as possible. They have been posted on the Office of Academic Affairs website at http://oaa.osu.edu/acad_rts_respons.php. That link also indicates Ohio State’s procedures for addressing the concerns of those who believe they have experienced treatment that is inconsistent with our institutional commitment to academic freedom.

In addition, these principles and procedures will be addressed in presentations developed by the Office of Faculty and TA Development and the leadership development series offered by OAA. They will be included in orientations for new faculty and new students and will be distributed by academic and resident advisors. We will also broadcast them through such university
communications channels as onCampus, The Lantern, OSU Today, OSU Weekly, and Buckeye Net News.

Though this recent focus on academic rights and responsibilities has been stimulated by the Inter-University Council’s request, Ohio State has always prized freedom of thought and expression, respect for multiple points of view, and the civil and open expression of these views. By encouraging renewed consideration of these issues across our campus, we are nurturing the most fundamental academic right, that of the free exchange of ideas. My hope, as chief academic officer of The Ohio State University, is that all members of the university community will reflect further on the foundations of academic inquiry and, so, the very purpose of an institution of higher learning.