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Free and Civil Discourse: Challenges and Imperatives



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 | From the Editor

Free and Civil Discourse: Challenges and Imperatives

4 | Speech, Spectacle, and Looking Closely for What One Cannot See

LYNN PASQUERELLA, *Association of American Colleges and Universities*

8 | Toward a Democratic Speech Environment

CHRISTOPHER M. TINSON and JAVIERA BENAVENTE, *Hampshire College*

12 | Bridging the American Political Divide: The Role of Higher Education in Advancing Civil Discourse

EDUARDO M. OCHOA, *California State University–Monterey Bay*

16 | The Role of Governing Boards in Addressing Campus Tensions

SUSAN WHEALLER JOHNSTON, *Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges*

Perspectives

19 | Free Speech Is Not Enough

ROBERT QUINN, *Scholars at Risk Network, New York University*

21 | Owning Your Own Mind

LESLIE E. WONG and ALISON M. SANDERS, *San Francisco State University*

23 | Practicing Peace on a Weaponized Campus

LISA L. MOORE, *University of Texas at Austin*

Campus Practice

25 | This Is Who We Say We Are

DAVID MAXWELL, *Drake University*

27 | Community Days of Learning: Building Capacity for Challenging Conversations

KIMBERLY CASSIDY and RUTH LINDEBORG, *Bryn Mawr College*

29 | World Ready: Incorporating Interfaith Learning into General Education

ESTHER BOYD *Interfaith Youth Core*, and KATIE CRUGER, *Chatham University*

31 | A Whole-Institution Approach to Civic Engagement

MICHAEL SORRELL, *Paul Quinn College*

Presidential Statement

34 | Free Expression, Liberal Education, and Inclusive Excellence

LYNN PASQUERELLA, *Association of American Colleges and Universities*

For More...

38 | Resources and Opportunities

39 | From the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Action Network

About Diversity & Democracy

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today's interdependent but unequal world. The publication features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision. To access *Diversity & Democracy* online, visit www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/.

FROM THE EDITOR

Free and Civil Discourse: Challenges and Imperatives

American higher education has been visited of late by a tempest of questions both enduring and newly germane: What is the relationship between free speech and civil discourse, and what are the benefits and limitations of these and related frameworks? When does a commitment to free speech exist in harmony or tension with a commitment to inclusive learning environments, and when do calls for civility empower or silence marginalized voices? How do historical and contemporary dynamics of power and privilege affect which voices are dominant in which contexts, and what might this mean for educational practice? What is the relationship between freedom of inquiry, freedom of expression, civil rights, and civil discourse, and what can higher education do to secure and balance these core values in the face of external and internal pressures and threats?

As Lynn Pasquerella points out in her opening essay in this issue of *Diversity & Democracy*, the complex issues reflected by questions like these “require the capacity to talk across differences and listen critically with heightened sensitivity and sophistication”—some of the many learning outcomes of a high-quality liberal education. It is appropriate, then, that this issue’s contributors do not offer definitive answers to all of these questions. But they do share different tools they have used to navigate unpredictable waters, and in their stories, readers may find the components to piece together the vessels they need to sail through the gale-force winds of controversy.

The journeys described in this issue include Hampshire College’s efforts to create democratic speech environments, California State University–Monterey Bay’s attempts to carve space for

dialogue out of shock and despair, and the work of higher education’s governing boards to play a more robust role in addressing campus conflict. Contributors contemplate the limits of “more speech” as an antidote to hate speech; they reflect on how a sense of physical vulnerability can circumscribe intellectual risk-taking; and they espouse the value of living one’s principles and embodying one’s values, individually and collectively, in times of

The issue calls readers to contemplate a range of related challenges: bridging gaping divides in perspectives, presumptions, and politics; finding one’s voice, but also listening for and truly hearing the voices of others; and attending to the entrenched power differentials that affect who speaks and who is heard.

turmoil. These articles offer models for bringing campus communities together in support of equity and justice, for the purpose of learning across differences and for the sake of civic engagement.

Contributing authors address a series of interrelated topics—including free speech, academic freedom, civil discourse, and civil rights—and invite readers to consider these different terms, their points of connection or divergence, and their implications for liberal learning in a democratic society. The issue also calls readers to contemplate a range of related challenges: bridging gaping divides in perspectives, presumptions, and politics; finding one’s voice, but also listening for and truly hearing the voices of others; and attending to the entrenched power differentials that affect who speaks and who is heard. Finally, these articles suggest one key imperative: that we continue to struggle

with these challenges, however insurmountable they seem.

Indeed, the future of liberal education—and of US democracy and leadership in a world facing extraordinary dangers and unrealized opportunities—may depend in part on higher education’s ability to continue struggling. As scholars and citizens, college and university educators must find in themselves the resilience they often celebrate in their students. The tempests

raging across higher education are formidable and often damaging. But, like the eponymous squall of Shakespeare’s play, they may soon dissipate, leaving the prospect of transformation in their wake.

Through that wake lie potential routes forward—and this issue of *Diversity & Democracy* emphasizes the value of those voyages. Every journey, and every means of travel, will be different. But each may be guided by the principles that form higher education’s North Star: the commitment to unconstrained inquiry supported by the substance of evidence, the search for democracy’s promise of a just and equitable society, and the understanding of higher education’s role in connecting these priorities.

—Kathryn Peltier Campbell
Editor, *Diversity & Democracy*

[FREE AND CIVIL DISCOURSE]

Speech, Spectacle, and Looking Closely for What One Cannot See

■ LYNN PASQUERELLA, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities

For more than two decades, I taught courses in the philosophy of law encompassing both analytical and ethical jurisprudence. The section on freedom of expression was always one of the liveliest as students grappled with the nature of profound offense; the circumstances, if any, under which speech acts should be proscribed under liberty-limiting principles; and the question of whether a university's educational mission can provide sufficient grounds for restricting "hate speech." Those classes have been on my mind lately amidst the current proliferation of accusations that free speech is threatened at colleges and universities and burgeoning legislation that calls for censoring and, in some cases, criminalizing protests and disruptions on campuses.

While the recent legislation has focused on charges of illiberalism in higher education, the issues at the center of the bills often extend beyond the academy. The perspectives these issues have invited in other contexts can inform the work of college and university communities as they come together to safeguard an environment in which the free exchange of ideas can thrive. Consider, for instance, the debate spurred last spring by the display of artist Dana Schutz's *Open Casket* at the Whitney Museum's 2017 *Biennial*. Her abstract and figurative depiction of what has become an "American image" of lynching victim Emmett Till provoked outrage in many. Though Schutz maintains that her controversial work was motivated, in part, by a desire to express empathy with Till's mother,

Mamie Till-Mobley, and draw attention to persistent institutionalized violence against young black men, at the public opening, an African American artist, Parker Bright, stood for several hours in front of the painting while wearing a T-shirt bearing the words "Black Death Spectacle." Other protestors silently joined in, while another artist, Hannah Black (2017), posted a letter calling for not only the painting's removal, but also its destruction on grounds that "it is not acceptable for a white person to transmute Black suffering into profit and fun."

Black asserted that Schutz offended on several grounds. She argued, among other things, that the subject matter was illegitimate for a white artist, and that representations of Till's body perpetuated symbols of white supremacy and black fear rather than suggesting inspiration for blacks and defiance of whites, goals purportedly sought by Till's mother. Josephine Livingstone and Lovia Gyarkye (2017) defended Black and her allies in a *New Republic* article, arguing that the artistic technique "blurred the reality of Till's death, infusing it with subjectivity" and enjoining: "When Hannah Black and her co-signers call for the destruction of this painting, try not to interpret them as book-burners doing the work of censorship. Instead, hear their open letter as a call for silence inside a church. How will you hear the dead boy's voice, if you keep speaking over him?"

At the same time, artist Kara Walker, whose own controversial work has often

prompted equally vitriolic responses, wrote on Instagram:

The history of painting is full of graphic violence and narratives that don't necessarily belong to the artists [sic] own life, or perhaps, when we are feeling generous we can ascribe the artist some human feeling, some empathy toward her subject. Perhaps, as with Gentileschi we hastily associate her work with trauma she experienced in her own life. I tend to think this unfair, as she is more than just her trauma. As are we all. I am more than a woman, more than the descendant of Africa, more than my fathers [sic] daughter. More than black more than the sum of my experiences thus far. I experience painting too as a site of potentiality, of query, a space to join physical and emotional energy, political and allegorical forms. Painting—and a lot of art often lasts longer than the controversies that greet it. I say this as a shout to every artist and artwork that gives rise to vocal outrage. Perhaps it too gives rise to deeper inquiries and better art. It can only do this when it is seen. (Quoted in Smith 2017)

Similarly, Cuban-American artist Coco Fusco (2017) found it "alarming and entirely wrongheaded to call for the censorship and destruction of an artwork, no matter what its content is or who made it." Though supporting the protestors who are raising awareness of the intricacies of political representation, Fusco objected to the essentialist overtones in Black's letter and the assumption that certain artistic content is out of bounds for some painters based solely on race—attributing this stance to what she perceives as "a deeply puritanical and anti-intellectual strain in American culture that expresses itself by putting moral judgment before aesthetic understanding."

Divisions on Campus

The expansive divide surrounding the question of what constitutes racial offense, who should be allowed to decide, and what the appropriate response should be has been playing out on a variety of college and university campuses across the country in relation to freedom of expression. Consider, for instance, the debate at Evergreen State College over protests and calls by some students for the firing of a biology professor, who eventually moved his classes off campus after being advised by campus police to do so for safety reasons. The controversy erupted when a campus tradition of a “Day of Absence,” in which students and faculty of color met off campus to discuss ways to promote equity and inclusion, followed by a “Day of Presence,” which reunites all groups, was replaced by a request from the organizers of the Day of Absence that white people stay off campus. The professor objected on an email list, maintaining:

There is a huge difference between a group or coalition deciding to voluntarily absent themselves from a shared space in order to highlight their vital and underappreciated roles (the theme of the Douglas Turner Ward play *Day of Absence*, as well as the recent Women’s Day walkout), and a group encouraging another group to go away. The first is a forceful call to consciousness, which is, of course, crippling to the logic of oppression. The second is a show of force, and an act of oppression in and of itself. (Quoted in Jaschik 2017)

Thus, the professor encouraged all white people to be on campus during the Day of Absence, contending that the right to speak in a college setting should not be based on the contingencies of birth, namely skin color.

The professor also expressed vocal opposition to a recommendation by the college’s Equity and Inclusion Council that an “equity justification/explanation” be required for any new faculty hires, suggesting that such an approach “subordinates all other characteristics of applicants to one thing” (quoted in Jaschik 2017). Considering this objection together with the comments on the Day of Absence, the professor’s critics labeled him a racist and issued demands to the president that he be fired. Colleges and universities, like art museums, have traditionally been white spaces. In the view of some of the protestors, disrupting this

The expansive divide surrounding the question of what constitutes racial offense, who should be allowed to decide, and what the appropriate response should be has been playing out on a variety of college and university campuses across the country in relation to freedom of expression.

racial hierarchy by creating a tradition destabilizing these norms is a critical step forward in promoting racial and social justice.

While Evergreen’s president reaffirmed his commitment to protecting the faculty member’s right to freedom of expression, he announced the implementation of mandatory diversity and cultural sensitivity training for all faculty members; the creation of a center for equity and multiculturalism; the hiring of a vice president for equity and diversity issues; and the adoption of a new policy instituting the practice of acknowledging at every official event that Evergreen State is on land stolen from Native Americans.

Burgeoning Legislation

Both cases described above force us to consider the question of what the white gaze sees and cannot see and the harm

that comes from being blind to the perspectives of people of color when addressing the relationship between diversity and the common good alongside issues of freedom of expression. They recall the opening paragraph of philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre’s essay “Black Orpheus”:

When you removed the gag that was keeping these black mouths shut, what were you hoping for? That they would sing your praises? Did you think that when they raised themselves up again, you would read adoration in the eyes of these heads

that our fathers had forced to bend down to the very ground? Here are black men standing, looking at us, and I hope that you—like me—will feel the shock of being seen. For three thousand years, the white man has enjoyed the privilege of seeing without being seen; he was only a look—the light from his eyes drew each thing out of the shadow of its birth; the whiteness of his skin was another look, condensed light. The white man—white because he was man, white like daylight, white like truth, white like virtue—lighted up the creation like a torch and unveiled the secret white essence of beings. Today, these black men are looking at us, and our gaze comes back to our own eyes.... (1964–5, 13).

The issues are complex, nuanced, and require the capacity to talk across

differences and listen critically with heightened sensitivity and sophistication. Such attempts to meaningfully engage in racial healing and reconciliation are being thwarted by legislative efforts, based on proposals emerging from the Goldwater Institute and the Ethics and Public Policy Center, to censure or criminalize student protests or disruptions of free speech. As professors at Columbia University and Barnard College (2017) maintain in their faculty statement on the Charles Murray lecture

of the primary aims and methods of a liberal arts education is to disturb well-settled beliefs, opinions, and notions of truth through reasoned and rigorous interrogation.

Their concern is well-founded. A new Tennessee law, for example, requires public colleges and universities to adopt statements supporting freedom of expression consistent with the University of Chicago's Free Speech Policy while barring "free speech zones" that are set

matter is justified, especially when it is intentionally intended to stigmatize.

Proposed laws in Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin mandate the suspension or expulsion of students who "infringe on the 'expressive rights' of others," whereas other state laws prohibit the disinvitation of speakers (California) or any other measure that would abridge constitutional freedoms (North Carolina, Utah, Virginia) (Quintana and Thomason 2017). The Association of American Colleges and Universities stands with the American Association of University Professors in opposing any legislation "that interferes with the institutional autonomy of colleges and universities by undermining the role of faculty, administration, and governing board[s] in institutional decision-making and the role of students in the formulation and application of institutional policies affecting student affairs" (quoted in Quintana and Thomason 2017). In addition, we condemn the use of intimidation and harassment as a means of attempting to silence any member of a campus exercising academic freedom or any collective entity exerting institutional autonomy.

College administrators, faculty, staff, students, and governing boards must stand together in guaranteeing the free exchange of ideas, regardless of the political perspectives informing those ideas, by creating infrastructures to support such exchange on an ongoing basis.

held on Columbia's campus, which concludes with a rejection of what they refer to as "cynically mistitled 'Campus Free Speech Bills':"

...these bills seek to impose serious sanctions on students who engage in a range of otherwise protected speech and action in educational settings. Their effect would be to radically undermine the robust campus environment where ideas are hotly debated, contested, and argued in the name of eliminating any 'disturbance.' We believe strongly in the right of student groups to invite speakers of choice to campus. But by the same token, those who find those speakers' views abhorrent have an equal right to express their disagreement in a vigorous, although non-violent, manner. Efforts to vanquish disturbance from our campus mirror similar efforts to impose civility norms on academic inquiry and debate. In our view, one

aside in public spaces for the purpose of political protests; bans institutions from rescinding invitations to speakers invited by students or faculty; defines student-on-student harassment in a particular way; prohibits viewpoint discrimination in the allocation of student fees to student organizations; and protects faculty from being punished for speech in the classroom, except when that speech is "not reasonably germane to the subject matter of the class as broadly construed, and comprises a substantial portion of classroom instruction" (Senate Education Committee 2017, 5). When it goes into effect, this law would allow faculty to engage in speech that students might regard as creating a hostile learning environment, as when a faculty member uses racist language directly related to the subject matter. There may, indeed, be pedagogical reasons for a faculty member to use such language, but certainly not all repeated racist language related to the subject

The Core of a Liberal Education

As a college president, I expected to receive public criticism, and praise, related to a wide range of issues. Yet, I confess that I was taken aback when bands of roving strangers contacted me demanding that certain faculty members be fired or sanctioned because of political stances they had taken. These messages contained personal information about the faculty members and their families, making me fear for their safety.

College administrators, faculty, staff, students, and governing boards must stand together in guaranteeing the free exchange of ideas, regardless of the political perspectives informing those ideas, by creating infrastructures to support such exchange on an ongoing

basis. As I wrote recently in a statement on “Free Expression, Liberal Education, and Inclusive Excellence,” republished in these pages (34–35):

To prepare the next generation of informed citizens who will shape our democracy, colleges and universities must remain free from entrenched and intellectually rigid forms of political partisanship and engage students from across the political spectrum. In fact, the honest and genuine pursuit of truth, at the core of a liberal education, mandates tolerance for ambiguity and respect for those bearing radically different perspectives. 📍

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[FREE AND CIVIL DISCOURSE]

Toward a Democratic Speech Environment

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Committed acts of caring let all students know that the purpose of education is not to dominate, or prepare them to be dominators, but rather to create the conditions for freedom. Caring educators open the mind, allowing students to embrace a world of knowing that is always subject to change and challenge.

—bell hooks,
Teaching Community (2003, 92)

Around the country, college administrators and faculty are actively looking for ways to embrace or respond to a host of student demands related to defending undocumented students; challenging campus racism, sexism, and misogyny; and supporting social movements such as Black Lives Matter. Calls for change include a spectrum of proposals, from those addressing immediate conflict to those that would result in long-term structural reforms. Within and beyond higher education, many individuals have observed that conversation, debate, and critical engagement have become extremely difficult in the very spaces where these practices should be celebrated and protected. From its inception, liberal education has involved embracing difficult discussions as critical opportunities for student learning. But conversations that promote social justice have generally not been central to liberal education's speech frameworks, with implications for the overall health of the campus community. This brief article represents our thinking about the

possibilities for creating speech environments that promote social justice, stemming from our own attempts to advance democratic speech within a rapidly changing college context.

Now more than at any other time in recent history, it is important for campuses to become what we are calling Democratic Speech Environments (DSEs): sites of justice-seeking conversation and discourse. For too long, American higher education has protected a silent power that is based on racial, class, and gender privilege and compounded by institutional inertia. And yet, more marginalized students than ever before are attending college, including students from some of the country's most economically depressed and racially segregated communities. When they arrive on campus, these students are not empty vessels into which we pour Foucault, Audre Lorde, and W. E. B. Du Bois. They already carry with them a variety of racial, class, and gender antagonisms drawn from their own first-hand experience.

Students expect that the campus will serve as a vital place for them to test out, wrestle with, and analyze the histories and experiences they carry, and hopefully arrive at a deeper sense of self or purpose. The liberal arts campus has never been the equitable or neutral space necessary to meet these expectations. We believe that the relationships and community-building practices students encounter, the active communication and conflict-transformation skills

they acquire, and the structures of accountability that surround them can determine whether or not they exist and thrive in a healthy, intellectually challenging academic environment. Indeed, these factors can determine whether the college itself succeeds or fails in its mission to cultivate an informed, engaged citizenry.

Our conception of democratic speech emerges from a context in which a range of distinct yet related sociopolitical concerns are hotly discussed in spaces shared by a vast constituency. It also emerges from our thinking about the limitations of free speech. While free speech is a treasured concept in higher education and a hallmark of a constitutionally democratic society, it does not resolve everything. To be clear, we are not arguing that campuses should abandon free speech. But we are suggesting the need to move beyond an uncritical attachment to free speech as a salve for an assortment of difficult conversations, and to distinguish between free speech claims that promote justice and those that protect the right to any kind of speech at all, especially speech of the willfully uninformed or intentionally harmful variety.

College campuses are not immune from the entanglements of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Our campuses are rare sites where these issues are interrogated in classrooms. They can also be places where these issues proliferate. Thus, the challenge facing us is that of identifying, deconstructing, and uprooting these issues and their intersections. A Democratic Speech Environment is predicated on the idea that social relationships reflect power dynamics that play out in society. In a campus environment shared by many, it is important not only to speak on behalf of oneself, but also to ask ourselves how we relate with and are accountable to others.

Characteristics of DSEs

Considering that different constituents across campus exchange, debate, and circulate competing ideas daily, our approach to democratic speech is guided by several basic related questions: Who gets heard and when? Who is always heard? Who is consistently left out? How do these patterns mirror power relationships in society? Democratic speech reframes claims to free speech by centering critical engagement across differences among individuals and within communities, opening space for conversations that promote justice, healing, and solidarity throughout the campus.

Building on the observation that campuses are already multidirectional speech environments, several elements that contribute to Democratic Speech Environments have emerged in our work:

1. **Willingness to Engage.** Since the campus is a shared space, how we talk with and hold space for others is critical. Engagement requires deep listening and a willingness not only to be open to what others have to say, but also to allow oneself to be affected and moved by others' words, perspectives, and experiences. Essentially, this means that whoever is listening experiences and demonstrates empathy toward the person speaking, takes them seriously, and listens intently. A willingness to engage is built on principles of deep listening, empathy, and solidarity, or what we call an ethics of care (Sevenhuijsen 1998).
2. **Getting and Staying Informed.** Engaging in a difficult dialogue requires being informed. Speaking about an issue (from global or national politics to local campus conflicts) requires being educated about the issue. Students often ask what they should do to deepen their activism. We tell them that the first step is to be as informed as they can.



A student converses with Iris Morales, one of the first female members of the revolutionary Latin@/Latinx organization the Young Lords Party, during a talk and film screening. (Photo by Andrew Hart)

This includes gaining an understanding of the histories of the issue that they are attempting to represent or build awareness around.

3. **Commitment to Shared Understanding of Shared History.** This aspect of crafting a Democratic Speech Environment encourages all community members to ask themselves, "How did we get here?" It includes a commitment to confronting longstanding structural impediments to safety and learning. It is not about promoting the common good at the expense of attempts to contend with deep, lingering tensions. Instead, it is about achieving a shared narrative through a series of questions: What issues need to be addressed? What demands have been made? And what structures of accountability can be used to answer those demands?
4. **Commitment to "Collective Courage."** Community justice scholar Jessica Nembhard (2014) originated this term; we use it here to refer to a concern for the general health and well-being of the community, requiring a willingness to challenge a status quo that promotes division, produces campus silos, and

emphasizes individualism. Collective courage in dialogue requires that we actively listen, that we are present, that we give equal time to listening and speaking, and that we reflect on what is stated. Without this commitment, campuses will consistently fail to achieve a sense of collective purpose and community well-being.

Democratic speech is not about infringing on First Amendment rights to free speech or assembly. Instead, it aims to amplify and promote those rights throughout the campus community. Above all, it promotes the common good by centering the histories, yearnings, and desires of those in historically and locally marginalized communities and sectors of campus life.

Democratic Work on Campus

Thinking about how to apply and practice DSE approaches among students, faculty, staff, and administrators requires developing a shared vision of a healthier campus community. Below, we describe how DSE can apply to various sectors of campus life.

DSE in the Classroom—The classroom is a key site of democratic speech. There, students and professors engage



Assistant professor of theater Mei Ann Teo facilitates a discussion in one of her courses, where she encourages students to examine the intersections of art and activism. (Photo by Amanda Schwengel)

in a give-and-take that results in shared knowledge. At its best, the classroom is where professors and students alike ensure that marginalized voices are heard, that no single student or small group of students dominates classroom discussion, and that quiet students are encouraged to speak up—all practices that open the classroom space to conversational resilience, which is connected to the willingness to engage. When these elements are central to the course, the opportunity for enhanced learning and deep engagement increases.

DSE among Faculty—Supporting democratic speech requires faculty to move past the idea that free speech claims alone will foster a shared sense of justice. It asks faculty to attend to the changing mechanisms by which students access information, to remain open and receptive to student concerns about curricular content, and to consider adjusting classroom norms to meet student needs (for example, by developing a set of shared agreements for classroom discussion, or by adding a reading that addresses an issue that students want to discuss but that is indirectly connected to course content). This approach can

inspire students to take advantage of the classroom as a space of true knowledge production—a result that can be challenging to achieve as students are pulled in several directions at once by internships, interpersonal relationships, campus community-building activities, and jobs on and off campus. DSE among faculty requires a commitment to instructional practice based on inclusive learning, collective knowledge production, collegiality, and constant reflection and revision.

DSE among Students—DSE cultivation can play a particularly vital role among students. Practicing democratic speech requires students to move away from shaming and condemning others toward embracing where others may be coming from; it requires a willingness to show, teach, and model without judgment. It asks that students stay open to opportunities for growth and self-reflection, learn from their mistakes, and deepen their commitments. When challenges emerge, it asks that students exercise patience and remember that difficulties are a fraction of the whole, not the whole itself. This empathic approach requires students to exercise patience

with their cohort, roommates, and classroom colleagues and encourage others on the path toward an ethic of solidarity. But it also requires that students who are less informed on the issues at hand commit themselves to deep study of those issues. This ideal of democratic speech among students can be hard to achieve in a charged climate in which the stakes for various individuals may differ greatly.

DSE among Staff—Staff are often less empowered than faculty and students to vocalize their ideas about campus life. Their work may be seen as separate from the academic side of the campus; they may be discouraged from attending lectures or workshops, or from cultivating relationships outside of their units.

While many of these limitations may be due to their work schedules, the result is a compartmentalized campus environment. Therefore, efforts should be made to invite and include staff members in all areas of campus life.

DSE among Administrators—At the administrative level, embracing democratic speech means taking students' claims seriously, developing an informed analysis of institutional structures in need of revision, reaching out to the broader campus community for insight and perspective, and acknowledging the earnestness of students' demands and requests. Above all, the deliberation and evaluation process, as well as the decisions resulting from that process, should be transparent.

Examples at Hampshire

Much of the work and perspective that we describe here is already taking place within many sectors of the campus community we inhabit. Our thinking about democratic speech comes out of our work with Speaking Across Resilient Communities (SPARC), a presidential advisory council that convened at Hampshire to connect sectors across campus and to deepen the campus

community's shared understanding of the challenges we face around issues of communication, conflict, and difference. SPARC sought to identify strategies to enhance our community's capacity to engage with and transform these challenges.

The council was composed of students, staff, and faculty who met regularly throughout the 2016–17 academic year. Council members were invited based on their work, teaching, and willingness to share and develop interpersonal communication strategies that could be beneficial to the broader campus community. As cochairs we were selective in extending membership invitations. We wanted to create a diverse group that represented the entire campus community but consisted of individuals who were interested in and known for collaborative work in their respective sectors or fields. Most of all, we sought individuals who were open-minded and who shared a concern for building bridges of communication across the campus. Early on, we realized that we needed to engage the various sectors of our community in our conversations. To accomplish this, we met with faculty from four of the college's five interdisciplinary schools, student residence advisors, and students in three different courses whose instructors or students requested our attendance. SPARC council members also attended an all-staff meeting.

Before introducing our concept of DSE to each group, council members began by asking participants:

- How are issues of communication and conflict showing up in your work?
- What resources and supports do you lean on when these issues arise?
- What resources and supports do we need to shift and transform the culture around these issues?



Urban revitalization strategist Majora Carter (center, facing students) speaks with students during an event focused on environmentalism and environmental justice. (Photo by Michael Manning)

The conversations generated by these questions gave us a more nuanced understanding of how issues related to conflict and communication play out on our campus and informed our recommendations for moving forward. Because we thought it was important to ground our recommendations in practice, we developed several workshops on communication, conflict resolution, community care, and facilitation and offered them to students, staff, and faculty. This approach created a space where we could test our ideas about what conversational techniques and critical understandings would be useful in cultivating a less contentious campus environment.

Conclusion

In essence, creating Democratic Speech Environments is about encouraging conversation that challenges the exploitation of workers, staff, faculty, and students. Where these practices are successful, they should be expanded; where they are not currently available, they could be instrumental in shaping healthy and vital, rather than toxic and indifferent, campus climates. The DSE approach

embraces dialogue that promotes restoration, rejuvenation, and resilience, especially during moments of crisis. Ultimately, however, DSE alone can only go so far. Institutional structures that support social justice and hold members of the campus community accountable are essential to effecting change—especially when our authority, power, and prestige as institutions and as individuals are challenged. A commitment to critically inclusive dialogue and conversation that supports justice will determine the relevance of a twenty-first-century liberal education, and may position our colleges and universities as the staging grounds for our national discourse. @

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[FREE AND CIVIL DISCOURSE]

Bridging the American Political Divide: The Role of Higher Education in Advancing Civil Discourse

■ **EDUARDO M. OCHOA**, President of California State University–Monterey Bay and Former Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education in the US Department of Education

Since the 1980s, America has become an increasingly divided country. The causes of this division are complex, structural, and longstanding, as outlined by Bill Bishop in *The Big Sort* (2008). Growing ideological gaps and geographical segregation based on values, education, and outlook have resulted in diminished attempts to find common ground and compromise, threatening the viability of our democracy.

The 2016 presidential election was a bellwether in the long-term deepening

of partisan divides. The presidential campaign tapped into a sense by many people—especially working-class whites—that the system is rigged against them, and that the political classes of both parties have turned their backs on them. Their pain is real, evident in hollowed-out Rustbelt communities, the opioid epidemic, and the withering of union jobs. Authors like Arlie Russell Hochschild (2016), George Packer (2013), J. D. Vance (2016), and others have offered insight into the tectonic shifts in American society that have caused

many to feel as though they have been left behind. At the same time, the election’s outcome has resulted in justifiable fear on the part of many Americans. Recent federal actions that directly affect our campus communities include executive orders on immigration that are now being challenged in the courts and proposed changes to health care policy that, if implemented, are anticipated by the Congressional Budget Office (2017) to severely reduce access to health care.

At a time when division, anger, and acrimony are acting like caustic solvents on our civic fabric, America’s institutions of higher education should help our nation bridge those divides by creating opportunities for reasoned dialogue and understanding.

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Extreme polarization has led some to reject evidence in favor of ideology as the basis for their beliefs.

Within this context, American higher education is often seen as part of the America that embraces and benefits from globalization, technological innovation, and the information economy—and therefore as disconnected from the suffering experienced by those in economic distress. Consistent with the rise of the “creative class” described by Richard Florida (2002), our institutions are often associated with large urban centers or

technological ecosystems: Silicon Valley, the North Carolina Research Triangle, and the hundreds of university towns representing information economy clusters across the nation. We are accused of glossing over the realities of small-town, rural, and poor America while prescribing education as the cure-all solution to the dislocations brought about by the tectonic shifts identified by Hochschild (2016) and others. In essence, we are thought to be of a piece with the political class that the other America feels has abandoned them.

However, as shown in a recent study released by the Equality of Opportunity Project (Chetty et al. 2017), many institutions of higher education are powerful engines of upward social mobility. They bring together students from different backgrounds in pursuit of the ideals of inclusive excellence, leveraging diversity to provide enriched educational experiences and preparing students for the global society of the twenty-first century.

America’s institutions of higher education—liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, research institutions, community colleges, and others—are not only centers of learning, but also key community resources. We create a halo effect along economic, cultural, and social dimensions that extends into the greater society. At a time when division, anger, and acrimony are acting like caustic solvents on our civic fabric, we should help our nation bridge those divides by creating opportunities for reasoned dialogue and understanding.

Finding Opportunity in Surprise

Like many institutions, California State University–Monterey Bay (CSU Monterey Bay) found an opportunity to encourage dialogue last November in the immediate aftermath of the 2016 presidential race. The election of Donald Trump caused surprise across the nation, including in higher education, with most forecasts predicting until

the last minute and with near-certainty that Hillary Clinton would win the election. The result was the culmination of a campaign of firsts, most of them negative. Unprecedented acrimony, the intentional spread of disinformation, hacking by foreign actors, and strident anti-immigrant and racist rhetoric—to name only a few extraordinary elements—all contributed to one of the most divisive political environments in recent memory. By the time of the election, many people on both sides of the divide were convinced that a victory by the other party would mean the downfall of the republic.

Following the election, many Clinton supporters lapsed into sadness, depression, and fear. Many of the immigrants among us (especially but not only undocumented immigrants) felt themselves to be unwelcome and the targets of hostility. At CSU Monterey Bay, our mission reflects a strong commitment to educating the underserved agricultural communities of the Salinas Valley, primarily the children of Mexican and Central American farm workers. Like many other campuses in California and elsewhere, we have significant numbers of undocumented students who were anxious about what to expect from a Trump administration. Many of our undocumented students are “DREAMers” (named for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) and have enrolled in the Obama administration’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. These students were especially fearful, since by enrolling they had given detailed personal information about themselves and their families to the federal government—information that could now be used to facilitate their deportation or that of family members. They—and many other students, staff, and faculty—were alarmed and concerned about what the election results would mean, and were looking for a venue in which the campus



Photo courtesy of California State University—Monterey Bay

community could come together, process what had happened, and find some reassurance about what to expect in the months to come.

At the same time, nearly half of voters nationally had backed the winning candidate and were understandably pleased with the results of the election. Even in California, a strongly liberal-leaning state, a substantial number of people—and 43 percent of the state’s counties—voted for Trump (California Secretary of State 2017). Because CSU Monterey Bay draws students from across the state, we knew that a significant portion of our students, as well as some staff and faculty members, were likely Trump supporters. So in thinking about how to respond to the election, we had to walk a fine line to avoid alienating any one segment of our community. After consulting with the cabinet, the academic senate chair, and the president of the student government organization, we opted to hold a forum open to all members of the university community.

Setting the Tone

In planning the forum, we decided early on not to have an open-mic session,

anticipating that such an event could give a platform to the most emotionally distraught members of our community and possibly derail our attempt to promote reflection, thoughtful dialogue, and dissemination of accurate information. Instead, we structured the forum to begin with framing remarks by me, as well as the academic senate chair, the student body president, and a faculty member with expertise in multicultural studies, diversity, and inclusion.

My remarks had multiple objectives. The first objective was to emphasize facts that we could all agree on, and that were the worthy object of our discussion and reflection. These were (1) that the results of the election were a surprise to many people; (2) that the campaign had been unusually hostile and had left the country divided and in need of healing; and (3) that the election results showed that our understanding of the state of our society was incomplete and needed to improve. Many of our fellow citizens felt unrepresented by the traditional establishment of both political parties, and had unmet needs and concerns that deserved to be understood.

The second objective was to reaffirm the university’s commitment to

the values of inclusiveness and respect for all regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or immigration status, and our commitment to reasoned discourse and dialogue in the pursuit of knowledge, based on evidence and logical analysis.

The third objective was to remind the community of the robust character of the US Constitution and of the checks and balances built into our institutions.

The fourth objective was to inform those most concerned about the fate of undocumented students regarding what they could expect from our institution.

All colleges and universities have as part of their institutional DNA the tools to engage in respectful, inquiry-based dialogue: practice debating ideas rather than engaging in ad hominem attacks; an appreciation for evidence and careful reasoning; a commitment to the scientific method—in other words, the suite of critical thinking skills that we continually strive to develop in our students.

On that score, the CSU system—and the entire California state government—had already strongly committed to supporting undocumented immigrants to the full extent possible within US law. Specifically, the CSU system had pledged not to cooperate or share information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any other federal agency for the purposes of enforcing immigration law, unless specifically mandated by federal law or court order to do so.

The fifth objective was to convey that as a university, and by virtue of our mission and values, we were ideally situated to exemplify the respectful inquiry and dialogue that our nation needs to bridge the divide reflected in our political process and exacerbated by social media,

socioeconomic segregation, rising inequality, and other social forces.

Finally, the ultimate objective of my remarks was to frame the election and its aftermath as an opportunity to thoughtfully seek understanding of perspectives across the social divide, to develop empathy for others' hopes and fears, and to begin bridging the divide.

Facilitating Civil Conversation

After my remarks, the chair of the academic senate spoke. She is a white woman with a distinct Southern accent, which could have led some in our

university community to stereotype her views and social background. But as she shared her personal history with the audience, her stories of hardship and of her working-class roots effectively dispelled assumptions and reminded listeners not to judge people by appearances. Our next two speakers were our student body president (a third-year student) and an ethnic-studies faculty member. Both women made sensitive remarks reaffirming the open-minded and constructive framework that we hoped to establish.

Having set the stage in this manner, we turned to small-group conversations and asked attendees to discuss the speakers' comments and any other insights, perspectives, or concerns they had about the election and this moment

in our nation's history. We had convened the forum in a large ballroom, and had arranged attendees around banquet tables seating about ten people each. Attendees had chosen seats at random, so the composition of the groups varied. Some groups were uniformly dismayed by the election results, so they compared notes and shared their anxieties about the current moment, working a bit like support groups but focusing on what we could do as a campus to buck the tide of discord and hostility in the larger society.

Other groups were mixed, with some Trump supporters and some Clinton supporters. In these groups, participants were exposed to perspectives not normally available to them in their circle of friends and colleagues. As the opening speakers circulated around the room, we observed that advocates on either side of the divide were conducting conversations in moderate tones. The intentional seating arrangement reinforced this turn to civility: it is hard to make the sort of intemperate remarks that are associated with Twitter and Facebook when interacting face-to-face.

The conversations were animated but respectful, as attendees were engaged and pleased at the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and listen to other perspectives. After thirty minutes, we reconvened the groups and provided an opportunity for the tables to report on their conversations to the full assembly. The reports were wide-ranging, addressing concerns specific to undocumented students as well as issues faced by African American students on campus, experiences related to micro-aggressions, the need for training in multicultural competence for faculty and staff, and other topics. The organizers also collected information in writing from attendees who chose to provide it.

Opening New Possibilities

As a follow-up to the forum, two

spontaneously formed groups—the AB540 Coalition and the African American Faculty and Staff Alliance—developed a set of recommendations for the university and met with me to discuss them in a collegial manner. (The AB540 Coalition was named for California Assembly Bill 540, which establishes eligibility for resident tuition and financial aid for undocumented students meeting certain conditions comparable to federal DACA criteria.) The recommendations fell into three categories: (1) things the university was already doing; (2) steps that we could take either with existing resources or additional resources; and (3) things that we could not legally do. We reaffirmed our commitment to items in the first category, agreed to implement a number of recommendations in the second, and communicated about why we were unable to address items in the third. This response was well received by both groups.

Reflecting on the overall effect of the election on our campus, I believe that our response was timely, measured, and effective. We did not experience postelection disruptions or protests aimed at the university by either pro- or anti-Trump groups (although the surrounding community did choose our campus as the setting for January’s Women’s March). The forum and subsequent meetings reassured members of our community about the support provided by the university and opened up new spaces for continuing dialogue.

This outcome was possible because of CSU Monterey Bay’s strong sense of its mission and values. Our Vision Statement makes an explicit commitment to social justice and respectful collaboration among all university community members (CSU Monterey Bay 2017). They provided a shared language that guided our deliberations as well as our actions. The campus community saw consistency between the

administration’s words and deeds, and members of the community felt reassured that the university supported and respected them, regardless of where they stood in relation to the election results. The election thus became a crucible wherein our true essence emerged: that of an academic community dedicated to promoting social justice and the respectful search for knowledge and meaning.

Expanding Our Public Role

CSU Monterey Bay’s response to the election is indicative of how we can promote dialogue in the community. One way we have done this is through our President’s Speaker Series. For several years, we have selected annual themes that resonate with the communities of the California central coast, such as regional economic development, global trends and their regional impact, and, most recently, immigration. For each event, we have convened a panel of speakers to share their different perspectives, followed by a moderated question-and-answer session. The series has drawn strong participation from a variety of stakeholder groups in the surrounding communities and has established a role for the university as an intellectual center and a place where challenging issues can be examined and illuminated.

We now have the opportunity to apply a similar formula to the big policy issues that are roiling the nation—jobs, trade, globalization, technological disruption, health care, immigration, taxes and public spending, infrastructure, diversity and inclusion—and to the question of what constitutes the essence of America. We hope to use our position as a neutral meeting ground and convener to bring diverse communities together to explore these issues in a more measured setting where different individuals can seek solutions and

common ground. Our fellow Americans are hungering for this.

If higher education is to fulfill its promise of strengthening the civic foundations of our democracy, we must break out of our bubbles and reach out effectively to all parts of America. All colleges and universities have as part of their institutional DNA the tools to engage in respectful, inquiry-based dialogue: practice debating ideas rather than engaging in ad hominem attacks; an appreciation for evidence and careful reasoning; a commitment to the scientific method—in other words, the suite of critical thinking skills that we continually strive to develop in our students. We need to model their use across the political divide, and then find the way to bring our larger communities into the conversation. No other institutional body in our country has the capacity to do it, so we must. ☐

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[FREE AND CIVIL DISCOURSE]

The Role of Governing Boards in Addressing Campus Tensions

■ **SUSAN WHEALLER JOHNSTON**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

At many higher education institutions, recent academic years have been characterized by debate and conflict over what it means to be a diverse and inclusive campus, how to ensure free speech while safeguarding against uncivil acts, and whether there are limits to civil discourse. Today's campus environments are reflections of the larger national environment, and in neither arena is there a clear course of action to ensure the best outcome. Indeed, heightened political tensions nationally have increased tensions on campus.

Across the nation, students are speaking out in numbers and ways not seen in decades, demanding a greater voice in institutional decisions and a more significant role in defining institutional values. In doing so, they are striving to create campus cultures that are more open and inclusive. At the same time, however, they have increasingly demanded “trigger warnings” designed to shield them from language, images, and references that could elicit intense emotional responses from some. Many people, both inside and outside the academy, see these warnings as unnecessarily preventing students from grappling with difficult topics that are part of the educational experience and of life, resulting in a phenomenon that Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt have called “the coddling of the American mind” (2015). Others believe that trigger warnings are a necessary protection for students who have been traumatized by physical abuse, sexual assault, or racism.

These trends have coincided with a growing intolerance for disagreement—in classrooms, in open forums, in print, and in social media. The most visible examples of this intolerance have arisen in response to invited speakers, some of whom have been met with shouts of disapproval or have been shut down completely before or during their talks. Safety has at times been at issue, with campus lockdowns, physical altercations, fires, and the appearance of masked demonstrators marking some events; videos from these incidents have gone viral. While intended as protests of offensive speech and ideas, these incidents can result in limits on the educational experiences available to students, and can damage the educational missions and reputations of colleges, universities, and higher education as a whole.

The tension on campuses is between the necessity for all students to feel safe and welcome and the necessity for a college or university to provide opportunities for full and constructive debate about competing ideas. The results of a recent Gallup survey of US college students and adults on free expression on campus confirm that students largely live and learn in this area of tension. The survey found that nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of college students were “highly confident” about the security of the freedom of speech (Gallup 2016, 3). A slightly larger group (78 percent) agreed that “colleges should expose students to all types of speech and viewpoints” in order to create an effective

learning environment (3). However, a little over half of students (54 percent) also observed that the “climate on their campus prevents some people from saying what they believe because others might find it offensive” (4).

The Role of Boards

When issues of free speech, diversity, inclusion, and campus climate arise, presidents, chancellors, provosts, vice presidents, and faculty are often on the front line of response. They are typically expected to comment, apologize, protest, or suggest resolutions to problems. However, board members increasingly have a role in how a campus addresses conflicts over these critical issues. Governing boards bear the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policies exist to support an institution's educational mission and create a culture that supports student well-being and success. Increasingly, board members are also expected to be visible on campus, to demonstrate understanding and concern, and to ensure that current policies are implemented to manage tensions over two types of inclusion: meaningful inclusion of all people in the campus community, and inclusion of a range of ideas and perspectives that enable colleges and universities to remain places of robust dialogue and debate.

Board members come to their positions primarily through political appointment, public election, or selection by other board members. They are often successful in business, industry, finance, law, real estate, and other careers, and they serve as a bridge between the campus and the larger community, whether local, regional, or national. Most importantly, they are fiduciaries, holding in trust the colleges and universities they serve. This means that they have special responsibilities to “make careful, good-faith decisions in the best interest of the institution

consistent with its public or charitable mission” (Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities 2015, 2). Given their backgrounds and the ways by which they come to their positions, how well prepared are board members to make “careful, good-faith decisions” about students’ needs for inclusion, personal safety, and sufficient intellectual room for development? Given their regular but infrequent visits to campus, how do they engender campus climates that welcome differences of opinion without tolerating uncivil acts? How can they contribute to ensuring that students can learn and thrive?

In 2016, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) released *AGB Board of Directors’ Statement on Governing Board Accountability for Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility*. That statement urges board members to understand and embrace their responsibility for these issues, and it provides guidance and best practices for presidents and board members to promote meaningful diversity and inclusion throughout their institutions in both curricular and cocurricular practices, to build environments that reflect a full diversity of thought, and to engage students intentionally in the examination and analysis of this diversity as a significant part of their education. Importantly, the statement does not recommend specific resolutions to issues of campus climate, diversity, inclusion, and civility because the nature of these issues is specific to each campus.

For boards to engage meaningfully with these responsibilities, they need appropriate involvement with faculty and administrators. In fact, the best strategies for supporting diversity and inclusion and for creating a healthy, civil campus culture likely come from the combined experience and wisdom of boards and of faculty and administrators

who have deep understanding of the campus, its constituents, and its educational mission. Boards are most effective when they focus on policies and ensure that the necessary conditions exist to enable the implementation of those policies. They must depend on faculty and the administration for implementation as well as for historical and cultural contexts. Boards are guardians of institutional mission; they rely on faculty and administrators for the daily actions and longer-term plans that ensure the mission is realized.

Current Board Perceptions

To find the right role for faculty and administrators in working with boards on matters of diversity, inclusion, and campus climate, it is helpful to know how board members approach their

twenty-four months aimed at supporting a positive campus climate. Substantial percentages of respondents (70 to 80 percent) said they have included students, faculty, and noncabinet administrators, respectively, in board conversations about diversity, inclusion, and campus climate over the previous two years.

Most respondents (71 percent) reported that their boards had dedicated adequate time over the previous twelve months to discussions of campus climate, inclusion, and civility. Asked about the number of reports their boards received about protests or other forms of social activism that took place at their institutions over the previous two years, respondents gave answers typically ranging from zero to two, but some said five or more, and about one-fifth selected “don’t know.”

The best strategies for supporting diversity and inclusion and for creating a healthy, civil campus culture likely come from the combined experience and wisdom of boards and of faculty and administrators who have deep understanding of the campus, its constituents, and its educational mission.

responsibilities in these areas, as well as what they know and are already doing. In a 2016 survey of board members (the results of which will be published in 2017), AGB found that 95 percent of respondents believe they understand their role in helping to create a positive campus climate. The majority—84 percent—were confident that their system or institution had adequate policies in place to address issues of campus climate, inclusion, and civility, and 82 percent said that their boards had made at least one policy decision in the previous

Asked how likely it is that their institutions or systems will experience protests about diversity and inclusion in the following two years, the majority of board members from public institutions and systems answered “somewhat” to “very likely” (69 percent). This compares to 52 percent of board members of private institutions who answered “somewhat” to “very likely.”

In responses to open-ended questions, board members expressed concerns about campus perspectives that are too liberal as well as those

that are too conservative. They shared worries about bullying, social media, identity politics, binge drinking, and the post-presidential election climate on their campuses. Their concerns included external influences on internal campus dynamics, insufficient diversity of staff and faculty, the influence of social media, mental health issues, and practical matters such as campus communications systems. Some expressed concerns that the board was not sufficiently involved in, and received too little information about, these issues. Many commented on the importance of engaged leadership and staff.

Recommendations for Engagement

The AGB survey responses reveal several points that are important to faculty and administrators who are interested in working with boards to support the challenging work of ensuring inclusive and civil discourse in campus environments. With appropriate planning, probably with the president or chancellor, and attention to organizational and communication protocols, faculty and administrators can help board members think through the conditions that currently exist as well as the desired state for their institution.

Following are recommended actions that boards, faculty, and administrators can take together to help ensure that their campus supports healthy, civil engagement with diverse ideas and an environment that ensures student success. These recommendations are adapted from a set of action steps on campus climate, inclusion, and civility developed by AGB (2017).

1. Evaluate efforts to ensure a healthy campus climate. Board members, faculty, administrators, students, and others can work together on a task force to review existing policies and statements. They can also recommend resources—financial support,

staffing, special initiatives—to strengthen the campus climate.

Where needed, campus constituents can organize and participate in training sessions to ensure shared understanding of key ideas related to diversity, inclusion, and civil engagement.

2. Ensure that policies related to diversity and inclusion are current and relevant. Such policies exist in offices across campus, from admissions to human resources to student affairs. Periodic review of these policies helps create a campus that is proactive on diversity and inclusion and prepared in case these values are tested.
3. Develop an institutional statement on campus climate. Board members, faculty, administrators, and other important stakeholders can work together to clarify the institution's values related to campus climate. A formal statement can demonstrate the campus's commitment to diversity, inclusion, freedom of speech, civility, and academic freedom.
4. Create a statement on freedom of expression and civil debate, or review existing statements. A statement or policy on academic freedom, civil discourse, and free speech can set the conditions for healthy debate and treatment of outside speakers on campus. The act of creating or reviewing such a statement can bring clarity for all on important features of campus culture.
5. Articulate a plan for continuing development related to campus climate concerns. Include training opportunities for the board, faculty, staff, and students, as well as formal mechanisms for board engagement with stakeholders. Develop a regular process for conducting a climate survey and making necessary adjustments.

Conclusion

Governing boards are an important part of the campus community, serving as stewards of the institution. Their fiduciary responsibilities require them to ensure that the institution operates within the law as well as in keeping with its mission. They are accountable to the public as well as to the heritage of the college or university and the values of the academy. For these reasons, their engagement on matters of diversity, inclusion, and campus climate, and on related debates about free speech and civil discourse, is critical. But the nature of these important matters requires a breadth of understanding of campus culture and an awareness of students' educational needs that faculty and administrators can provide. By working together, boards, faculty, and administrators can align efforts to ensure that campuses are truly inclusive environments that protect free speech and energetic, open dialogue. ☐

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[PERSPECTIVE]

Free Speech Is Not Enough

■ **ROBERT QUINN**, Executive Director of the Scholars at Risk Network, New York University

On January 15, 1975, US President Gerald R. Ford delivered his first State of the Union address, declaring with astonishing candor that the state of the union was “not good.” Today, the recent rash of incidents related to free speech at Auburn, Berkeley, Missouri, Yale, and Chicago, among others, has tempted many commentators to similarly assess the state of US college and university campuses and students. They raise alarms about insufficient regard for free speech, as heard in complaints about “snowflake” students and attempts to disrupt talks by Milo Yiannopoulos, Charles Murray, and Ann Coulter. Alternatively, they complain of a fetishizing of free speech, as when defending disruptive student actions and privileging experiential positions on issues like legacy racism, microaggressions, and trigger warnings. Both sides claim to be defending marginalized individuals, groups, or views. However, by focusing almost exclusively on a continuum of more vs. less speech, both sides misdiagnose the problem, and therefore miss opportunities for more meaningful dialogue and more lasting and productive outcomes. A better approach might be to recognize that the recent incidents, and college and university communities themselves, are about more than free speech.

A Different Space

At Scholars at Risk (SAR)—a network of over 450 higher education institutions in thirty-five countries—we work primarily with the extreme cases where higher education scholars, students, administrators, and leaders suffer

intentional violence or coercion because of their research, teaching, speaking, or publishing. A historian receives death threats for her book contradicting the national historical narrative favored by the ruling party. A feminist scholar is charged with blasphemy for exploring the female voice in ancient sacred texts. A legal scholar is imprisoned for a conference presentation urging the necessity of constitutional reform. These cases involve not only a breakdown in

On campus, encouraging more speech is a goal; but refining, filtering, and curating speech are paramount goals. These are the hallmarks of quality teaching and research, the functions that academic freedom is designed to protect, and the means by which the university serves the public square and the marketplace of ideas.

free speech, but a breakdown in the rule of law. SAR may respond with direct assistance for threatened individuals (such as arranging a temporary position somewhere in our network) or by raising awareness (as through our Academic Freedom Monitoring Project).

This work is motivated by more than a humanitarian impulse to help colleagues, although that is reason enough. The universities, colleges, and individuals in our network strongly believe that the higher education space is different from other political or public spaces, and

worth protecting. How is it different? In the words of a former Palestinian university president at a SAR workshop some years ago, in the higher education space we “leave our guns at the door.” Some of the examples above, of course, violate this principle in the literal sense, as do some US incidents: A professor is forced to decline an invitation to speak at a US campus after anonymous death threats when the university is unable to guarantee the absence of firearms in the lecture hall due to local concealed-carry laws. Minority students are threatened with violence over social media if they come to campus.

But leaving our “guns at the door” means more than the literal. It means that the campus is a place that allows the widest range of perspectives to enter,

with the understanding that opinions will be questioned, challenged, tested, and even rejected, often publicly, and that violence, coercion, shame, or slander are never permissible. Quality of information, reason, and persuasion, refereed by experts according to the accepted methods of their disciplines, should win over physical strength, volume, sensationalism, wealth, and personal or political contacts. This principle is operationalized through core higher education values, articulated by UNESCO (1997) and others as equitable

access, autonomy, academic freedom, accountability, and social responsibility.

Many incidents on US campuses and abroad reflect a breakdown in understanding of these values and their interrelatedness—more precisely, an oversimplification that privileges one value over others. An example abroad might be South African students demanding serious examination of the costs of higher education (a laudable recognition of the values of equitable access and social responsibility) but a minority among them adopting violent tactics such as attempted arson (a violation of social responsibility leading to an erosion of institutional autonomy and academic freedom).

Privileging Free Speech

US examples tend to privilege academic freedom or its analog, free speech. Some student protesters demand to be heard, but do not want to engage in dialogue. Some physically disrupt talks by those whose views they abhor so as to deny others the opportunity to hear them. Faculty members may dismiss speech/civility codes or trigger warnings out of hand as violations of academic freedom, without fully wrestling with the inclusivity concerns of a much more ethnically, economically, and otherwise diverse generation of students. Higher education leaders and administrators may dismiss concerns about international activities, employment practices, or investments as intrusions on institutional autonomy or academic freedom, giving short shrift to the social or human rights implications of institutional conduct.

This privileging of academic freedom or free speech above other core values is a trap that makes satisfying outcomes difficult to achieve. This is because it neglects the important difference between higher education (campus) and other public spaces (“the street”). On the street, speech should be generally

free from constraint. It is not required to serve a purpose; it need not form a dialogue or an argument; it may or may not justify itself with data or evidence. While there are some limits in every locality—you can’t yell “fire!” in a crowded theater—encouraging more speech is the norm, even if that speech does not add much to the public square or the marketplace of ideas.

On campus, however—while it should be similarly free from constraint, especially from restrictions imposed from outside—speech *is* expected to serve a purpose: the pursuit of deeper understanding and truth. Toward this purpose, speech on campus is expected to link up with other speech, to foster dialogue, and to support an argument. It is constrained to justify itself with data, evidence, or other supporting material, which in turn is subject to rigorous examination. Speech on campus has the same limits as on the street *and then some*—you still can’t yell “fire!” in a crowded lecture hall, but neither can you present false data or evidence or expect your opinions to be accepted without examination. On campus, encouraging more speech is still a goal; but refining, filtering, and curating speech are paramount goals. These are the hallmarks of quality teaching and research, the functions that academic freedom is designed to protect, and the means by which the university serves the public square and the marketplace of ideas.

A Values Framework

Pure “more speech” arguments forget the difference between speech on campus and speech on the street, and that makes it very difficult to achieve deeper understanding and truth. This is because as broad as a speech frame is, it implicitly disfavors perspectives that are more accurately represented through other values: debates about trigger warnings that use a speech-centric frame may undervalue legitimate concerns of

survivors of highly traumatic events.

These claims may be more readily examined through a lens that includes equitable access and social responsibility.

Moreover, because a speech-centric frame tends to elicit all-or-nothing responses (such as “we don’t do trigger warnings here”), it may reduce the range of possible outcomes. A broader values framework may allow for greater nuance or tailoring (e.g., reasonable accommodations for individual victims of trauma on a case-by-case basis), without eroding core speech/academic freedom concerns. Similarly, addressing challenging issues such as speech/civility codes and micro-aggressions with due regard for *both* speech/academic freedom *and* equitable access may lead to more nuanced and inclusive discourse that can add legitimacy to outcomes even if there are no material differences in resulting policies or practices.

Broadening the frame to include all core values will help. But this is not enough. We must also shift from a reactive mode—discussing values only after an incident or dispute—to a proactive one. This is the goal of SAR’s Promoting Higher Education Values Project, which encourages institutions to develop cultures and norms of practice that uphold core values before crises arise. Examples of such practices might include (1) widely and regularly disseminating any statement of values and related processes; (2) including values content in staff and student induction processes; (3) encouraging research, course offerings, and trainings on values-related issues; (4) circulating a regular values assessment letter or report and creating opportunities to discuss it with stakeholders; and (5) appointing a values ombudsperson empowered to raise values issues proactively. Such measures can make a big difference. They can help to develop a common vocabulary for discussing what are often complex and

continued on page 33

[PERSPECTIVE]

Owning Your Own Mind

■ **LESLIE E. WONG**, President of San Francisco State University

■ **ALISON M. SANDERS**, Chief of Staff at San Francisco State University

Trust yourself, be open to different ideas, and continue to learn. That is what it means to “own your own mind.” At San Francisco State University, we see owning one’s own mind as a key outcome of a college education. But with today’s students facing complex challenges related to social media, global conflict, and civic leadership—and with an educational system that is under pressure to focus on helping students secure jobs rather than on ensuring their good thinking—a life of the mind can seem like a distant, romantic, and dated goal.

Nevertheless, our library is filled to capacity until closing with diligent students earnestly seeking peace where they can find it. Clearly, the value of liberal education—which liberates the mind for higher-order thinking—persists on our campus. At the same time, the physical, psychological, and social manifestations of a world in conflict are real to our students. As a microcosm of that world, our campus has experienced significant challenges, including disruptions of speakers and ugly social media entanglements. This reality has required students to incorporate their lived experiences alongside the wisdom they gain in the classroom.

Experientia Docet

San Francisco State prides itself on the powerful learning that comes from experience, as reflected by our motto: *Experientia docet*, experience teaches. Our campus has a long and proud history of social and intellectual activism, a deep respect for community, and a commitment to excellence that inspires our

students and faculty. We not only support difference and encourage activism that speaks to injustice, we also provide the conditions necessary for students to achieve our collective goal of owning our own minds—an outcome that is critical to contending with and confronting a complex world.

Within the storm of modern life, a liberal education provides the tools to think deeply, broadly, and differently from the crowd. Today, however, liberal

The way in which college presidents and other campus leaders engage with the full range of emotions and conflicts—and, more importantly, how we manage our solutions and successes along the way—means much to the public and to our students, who carefully watch us.

education involves more than interacting with an inspirational professor or exposing oneself to a world of books and ideas. Owning one’s own mind requires thinking beyond anything one has ever encountered, and activism is one way of practicing such thinking. Participation in activism, like practice in intellectual inquiry, arms students with methods of thinking and doing that can help them navigate a world that may love them at one moment and despise them the next.

Activism can also lead students to a place of belonging. In a complicated and challenging world, where intellectual anchor points are hard to find and

messages rarely endure beyond a social media blast, the notion of belonging and the chance to make a difference can infuse a student’s education with a unique sense of responsibility. And so, students aggressively seek those anchor points, those moments of inspiration that motivate them on their educational journeys.

The College President as Model

Far too often, students of color—especially those of mixed heritage—approach me (Leslie Wong) respectfully and remark, “You’re the first president (or campus leader) I know who looks just like me.” It is a deeply symbolic gesture suggesting a connection that is unique in their own educational histories, and it conveys an important message about the welcoming and supportive environments

that they desperately seek. Perhaps it also provides a glimpse into the challenges they face in a world that, all too often, doesn’t look like them.

But for me, these exchanges also suggest a real conundrum. As the university’s president, I am not president for these students alone, nor will I always be on their side of every issue, even if we look alike. Our campus is diverse and robust, with more than thirty thousand students striving to excel. My own behavior, public and private, serves as a model for these students, including those who rightly identify me as someone who comes from their neighborhood,



San Francisco State University President Leslie E. Wong meets with students. (Photo by Steve Babuljak, courtesy of San Francisco State University)

who looks like them, and who often thinks like them (as demonstrated by my frequent support for social issues). Each moment of every day, I have to include in my own repertoire the very behaviors I want all students to learn and cultivate.

The way in which college presidents and other campus leaders engage with the full range of emotions and conflicts—and, more importantly, how we manage our solutions and successes along the way—means much to the public and to our students, who carefully watch us. As a college president, I am guided by the following observations:

- One's presence at events signals a lot about one's personal values. I attend athletic events with the same passion as those related to theater, philosophy, or science. I participate in the vast array of speaker engagements on campus; some speakers I agree with, and some I don't, but all offer something I want and need to learn. I tell students that it's not whether I agree or disagree that counts. In order to think meaningfully, I need to put myself in conversation with others holding ideas across the spectrum of viewpoints. If I am not a learner, the
- odds are, neither will students be. Excitement over learning and understanding of its value start at the top.
- I want to be seen not only attending to bureaucratic questions, but also reading and exploring in the library, fueling my addiction to learning with my own curiosities. I am far from being an expert in many things, and I'm sure that the people around me tire of my questions and queries. Each year, I focus on learning something about which I know little: poetry, math, literature, welding, wood-working, farming, or information technology.
- In the face of student activism, I want to make sure students see that I am listening intently, measuring my own words out of respect for their voices, and asking questions that help me better understand their positions. Their activism will result in sharper thinking, which I expect will shape their positions as authentically theirs. I hope that students will see their input reflected in my decision-making and thinking processes, whatever actions I take.
- I recognize that owning one's own mind is of particular importance

when making tough, politically charged decisions. I want students to see the members of my leadership team weighing the evidence, seeking input, collaborating, and coming to a shared position that allows us to collectively face the issues and meet our responsibilities.

Modeling the very processes expected of students is not easy, but that is the beautiful challenge of leadership on today's campuses. When the campus leadership team looks like our students (and at San Francisco State, it does), shares their values (we do—more on that below), and collectively confronts challenges with good thinking, compassion, and strength—that is when we can show students that it's possible to confront a world that upsets us, gratifies us, and confuses us, yet somehow enables us to make a difference.

The Heart of What We Do

In tough moments, we always pull out San Francisco State's strategic plan, which was crafted through an extensive, highly public process. We ask ourselves whether the decisions of the leadership team and our collective approach to these challenging times reflect, to the best of our abilities, the fundamental values that the strategic plan articulates: courage, life of the mind, equity, community, and resilience.

These values are at the heart of what we do, of when we do it, and of the high level of accomplishment we expect of ourselves. And it is most heartening to experience how important these values are to our leadership. If students can see how we engage with difficult, important, and often threatening circumstances, we will succeed not only as administrators, but as educators modeling the deep and consequential learning that our students need in order to thrive in a complex and uncertain world. 📍

[PERSPECTIVE]

Practicing Peace on a Weaponized Campus

■ **LISA L. MOORE**, Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

I grew up in Alberta, where my family has a 640-acre cattle ranch in the eastern foothills of the Canadian Rockies. I learned to shoot gophers with a .22, to chase cattle on horseback, to brand and castrate and tattoo calves. I went to school with the children of the oil industry; during the energy crisis of the 1970s, neighbors' cars sported bumper stickers reading "Let the Eastern Bastards Freeze in the Dark." It's a place I fondly call the Texas of Canada.

Now I live in the liberal heart of Austin, in a house with solar panels on the roof. The family beneath that roof includes my wife Madge, artistic director of the experimental theater company Rude Mechs; our teenage boys, Max and Milo; and Madge's eighty-seven-year-old mother, a military widow Madge's friends fondly call Colonel Barb. Colonel Barb drives herself to Catholic mass every week and voted for Trump. She presides over our Sunday family dinner, which each week includes our friend Jon, who donated his sperm so I could give birth to our kids. Max and Milo call him Dodo for donor, and so does their half-sister Millie, who joins us with her mother, a single straight woman. Sometimes Jon brings a boyfriend.

We have a rule that we don't talk about politics at the table, but as a friend remarked after sharing one Sunday evening with us, "You sure do talk about everything else."

I don't have the luxury of avoiding conflict, is what I'm saying.

One thing I love about my job as a professor is that every day I get to create a laboratory for healthy conflict.

Whether they know it or not, students go to college to conduct field experiments on their own lives. Especially in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts, a college classroom is a place to come face-to-face with the record of human knowledge and ignorance, greatness and failure, beauty and ugliness.

In my classroom, we get to practice speaking to one another, not just to be heard but to discover thoughts and feelings we may not have noticed beneath our habits and beyond others' expectations of us.

Just as at the family dinner table, we can all get pretty uncomfortable in a college classroom. We can all say things we regret. And I very much include myself here.

But in my classroom, we get to practice speaking to one another, not just to be heard but to discover thoughts and feelings we may not have noticed beneath our habits and beyond others' expectations of us. We get to practice listening in order to really hear one another, not to defend our own positions but in the hopes of interacting more skillfully with people and ideas.

The Security We Need

This kind of speaking and listening is some of the hardest work we can do as

human beings, and some of the most valuable and rewarding. Lately, though, it's been challenging in new ways. First, Senate Bill 11, the law that allows students to bring concealed firearms into university classrooms, went into effect on August 1, 2016. Then we experienced an especially divisive election season and inauguration. The University of Texas (UT) has seen demonstrations, walkouts, resignations, and the horrible murders of two students in two separate on-campus incidents.

We're all on edge, and my students are rattled. The day the guns-in-classrooms law went into effect, I was teaching a summer class on Jane Austen.

We had a lot to do, so I planned to make a brief announcement about my office gun policy, as surreal as that seemed. I've never felt the truth of Wordsworth's phrase, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" ([1802] 2012, 225), more forcefully than I did that day. An almost visible ripple moved through the room when I told students that while the new policy allowed them to bring concealed loaded weapons into the classroom, I requested that they not bring guns into my office. Eyes rounded in fear, shock, and horror. Some students gabbled questions, waving their hands for my attention. Some later confessed that, to their own shame, they had begun profiling their classmates to guess who might be carrying a weapon.

A young woman with a military background said she would now make sure she always sat with her back to a corner, facing the door. Others shut down and stared at their desks. We did not talk much about Jane Austen that day.

In my first twenty-five years of teaching at UT, a student has walked out of my class upset exactly once. Since last August, it's happened three times.

Like you, I'm sure, I've been horrified by the epidemic of gun violence that is gripping our country. To me, the college

UT has documented dozens of cases at UT in which invited speakers cancelled their appearances, potential hires turned down offers, and parents withdrew their children from college as a result of classroom carry. Gun Free UT has also allowed us to partner with national organizations combating gun violence, and that's how I became the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Texas attorney general, the chancellor, and President Fenves—in their official, not personal, capacities, as the suit explicitly stated.¹

It's gotten harder to bring students into that priceless experimental space: to hold their attention, to get them to leave their fears behind.... When their security is shaken, it's hard for them to take risks, even—or maybe especially—intellectual risks.

classroom is a sacred space—a place to practice dealing with conflict without recourse to violence. My professional judgment as a teacher is that the kind of security we need in the classroom is incompatible with the presence of a loaded firearm.

That's a pretty widespread feeling on campus. It's why UT Chancellor William H. McRaven and UT Austin President Gregory L. Fenves both opposed the legislation. In another spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, a group of faculty animated by an instinctive sense of “no way, no how, not in my classroom” started a movement we call Gun Free UT. Our demonstrations, op-eds, window signs, T-shirts, and self-defense workshops have provided a platform for thousands of faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni to protest the legislation that President Fenves has reluctantly had to put in place. Gun Free

I love my job, even though I'm suing my boss. I love my job, and that's why I'm suing my boss.

Taking Risks

In the era of the weaponized campus, it's gotten harder to bring students into that priceless experimental space: to hold their attention, to get them to leave their fears behind and encounter the beauty and wisdom of the literary tradition. When their security is shaken, it's hard for them to take risks, even—or maybe especially—intellectual risks. After years of conducting these classroom experiments, though, I know that their encounters with challenging literature in a strong classroom community can help them realize that their own struggles are actually what connects, not separates, them from other people. And that's a powerful source of security for a person or for society.

So this year, I'm taking a risk. Inspired by our Gun Free UT Peace Zone workshops, I'm starting my freshman World Literature class every day with a five-minute period of guided meditation. I tell the students I need their full attention, and I need the sense of trust that can develop when we make ourselves vulnerable with other people on a regular basis. I tell them it's an experiment, and they can judge for themselves what the effects of this kind of quiet-minded attention may be. I tell them it takes practice.

So we practice. We sit up straight in our chairs and feel our feet planted firmly on the floor. We notice that we're leaning on the table or the backs of our chairs, and we bring ourselves upright. We close our eyes, which feels risky in a place where you're not used to doing it. We feel that fear, however small it seems. We notice how we're being carried from one moment to the next on a wave of breath. We try to quiet our minds long enough to notice where that breath moves our bodies—how it opens our nostrils and throats, causes our chests to rise and fall, expands and contracts our bellies. We let ourselves get soft and vulnerable alongside one another. Just for a few minutes, but it feels like forever. And then we arrive, together. ☺

An earlier version of this essay was delivered as a talk in Dallas on January 29, 2017, at Meeting of the Minds, an annual gathering of alumni of the College of Liberal Arts of the University of Texas at Austin.

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Note

1. On July 6, 2017, a federal judge granted a motion to dismiss the lawsuit. My co-plaintiffs and I are currently appealing the dismissal.

[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

This Is Who We Say We Are

■ DAVID MAXWELL, President Emeritus of Drake University

Since retiring two years ago after sixteen years as president of Drake University, I have had many conversations with college and university presidents regarding the vast array of challenges that they and their institutions are facing. But in recent months, one set of issues has risen to the top of nearly everyone's list: campus climate, inclusivity, free speech, and civil discourse. As reflected in the higher education media (and, increasingly, the popular press), hardly a week goes by in which some institution's commitment to these core values is not challenged—often in very troubling and sometimes violent ways. Clearly, there are currents on our campuses—exacerbated by the devastatingly toxic nature of public discourse—that we are struggling to navigate. While there are no easy solutions to these issues, my experience at Drake University suggests at least one approach that may produce a more productive outcome when the inevitable conflicts of ideas and perspectives arise.

A Statement of Principles

In 1990, the then-president of Drake appointed a committee to review the university's student conduct standards and disciplinary procedures. This committee recommended that hateful, threatening speech be addressed in the student judicial code—which it subsequently was. But several committee members felt that the recommendations went too far and were concerned about the implications for free speech and academic freedom. They also worried about the focus on prohibitions—what students *could not do*—and felt it important for the university to have a formal

statement of what students, faculty, and staff *should do* regarding free speech, academic freedom, and civil discourse.

These concerns resulted in the drafting of the “Drake University Statement of Principles,” which the Faculty Senate approved and the Board of Trustees endorsed in 1991. In my tenure at Drake, I found this document—which clearly articulated the

In my tenure at Drake, I found the “Drake University Statement of Principles” tremendously valuable in the incidences, thankfully few, that challenged our ability to live up to our values.

Drake community's commitment to academic freedom and civil discourse, while identifying the kinds of speech that we would not tolerate—tremendously valuable in the incidences, thankfully few, that challenged our ability to live up to those values.

One of those challenges arose in April 2010, when the Drake University Law School's annual Constitutional Law Symposium focused on the constitutional aspects of same-sex marriage. True to the symposium's mission, this was not an advocacy event, but one that brought together experts with a broad spectrum of views. A few weeks before the event, the Des Moines Police Department learned that members of the Westboro Baptist Church—a hateful group that had gained national attention picketing at the military funerals

of members of the armed forces killed in the line of duty, pronouncing their deaths the consequence of America's tolerance of gays—were planning to come to Drake to protest the symposium.

An Opportunity to Show Commitment

Soon after the planned Westboro protest became public, members of the campus community asked me why we were allowing the protest at Drake (admittedly, on a very small patch of land across the street from the main campus)—a question that deserved a reasoned answer. At the same time, not surprisingly, I learned that a substantial number of students, faculty, and staff

were planning a counterprotest. While I personally welcomed the counterprotest, I had concerns that it might play into Westboro's hands.

To address both protests, I sent a memo (written in careful consultation with legal counsel and several of my administrator and faculty colleagues) to the entire campus community during the week before the event. The memo emphasized our collective responsibility to the values articulated in the Statement of Principles. I began by acknowledging that “our commitment to the role of the university as a haven for free and open discourse” would “be sorely tested” by the demonstration, and went on to state that “our response as a university community . . . must be consistent with our core values.”

I then cited several passages from the Statement of Principles, including the following:

Drake University upholds freedom of thought and freedom of expression as central to its educational mission. Drake therefore carefully refrains from restricting the exchange of ideas or regulating the content of speech. We realize that freedom of thought and freedom of expression produce conflict and challenge. We encourage civil debate and discussion of divergent perspectives and opinions in a manner that affirms our community.

I emphasized the vital role of the university as precisely the place where the community *should* come together to debate critical issues—a place where

public censure by the administration, faculty, and students. . . . To rebuke a speaker for the error of his or her ideas or for the odious nature of their expression is part of the robust and vigorous public debate that is the central purpose of the university.

The memo concluded with the following statement (originally in italics): *“This is an opportunity to put our words into action—to show that we can act with dignity, restraint and wisdom in the face of challenges to our own standards of discourse and behavior, and to our core commitments as a community to inclusion and tolerance.”*

A Valuable Constitutional Document

On the following Saturday, a bright and sunny day, 450 to 500 people gathered

There is no question that having the Statement of Principles as the reference point for my message to the campus was a critical factor in the outcome—as was confirmed in numerous conversations with students, faculty, and staff. In recent months, several institutions have issued articulate, thoughtful, and compelling statements in reaction to well-publicized campus incidents; my experience at Drake suggests that having a “constitutional document” in place before an incident, and using it wisely, can be extremely valuable.

Nonetheless, the question of whether or not to allow Westboro to protest on our property would be far more difficult to unravel in the current context than it was seven years ago. The issues roiling our campuses are far more complex, far more fraught with raw emotion, and far more politicized than what I experienced at Drake. I am not naïve enough to believe that if every campus had such a “constitutional document,” everything would be right with the world. But I am, perhaps, foolish enough to suggest that having such a document might help. And I’ll go one step further, and suggest that careful attention to a statement of principles (that should be formally endorsed by all bodies of the institution—by the board and by faculty, student, and staff councils), and the invitation for every member of the campus community to commit to it (and I am *not* proposing requiring any kind of formal commitment!), should be a component of new student, faculty, staff, and board orientation.

The message can be quite simple: “This is who we say we are. By voluntarily joining this community, you are committing to doing everything in your power to speak and act in a manner consistent with these principles.” ☐

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DRAKE UNIVERSITY. 1991. “Drake University Statement of Principles.” <http://www.drake.edu/acad/policies/statementofprinciples/>.

I am not naïve enough to believe that if every campus had such a “constitutional document,” everything would be right with the world. But I am, perhaps, foolish enough to suggest that having such a document might help.

people are encouraged and supported in expressing their views without fear of reprisal. But, I noted, that does *not* mean without consequence; people must take responsibility for their words and actions, and subject them to the scrutiny of others. Again, from the Statement of Principles:

Drake University declares its abhorrence of statements that demean, denigrate, humiliate, or express hatred toward members of the university community. . . . Any individual who uses bigoted or vicious speech and thereby betrays the ideal of mutual respect and goodwill toward all members of the university community may expect strong and

in front of the university’s administration building, facing a small band of Westboro people (including small children) across the street. The Drake contingent held signs saying “Iowa is Love” and kept up a wonderful chorus of the Beatles’ “All You Need Is Love” until the Westboro contingent departed after about thirty minutes. I immediately went to my office and violated one of the most important prohibitions of a university president: never send an email when you’re reacting emotionally to an issue. The email was short and simple, noting the counterprotest and saying that while I was proud every day to serve as Drake’s president, I had never been more proud of the Drake community than I was that morning.

[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Community Days of Learning: Building Capacity for Challenging Conversations

■ **KIMBERLY CASSIDY**, President of Bryn Mawr College

■ **RUTH LINDEBORG**, Secretary of the College at Bryn Mawr College

In spring and fall 2014, the Bryn Mawr College community was rocked by several bias and racist incidents, and more broadly by the police shootings of African Americans that sparked the Black Lives Matter movement. Over the course of the meetings, demonstrations, and discussions that followed, the college recognized that we had to find a means of engaging the entire campus—students, faculty, and staff—in a shared conversation about race and racism as one important step in working toward greater equity and inclusion.

With less than a three-month planning window, Bryn Mawr created a Community Day of Learning (CDL) for which all classes would be cancelled and all offices closed. To communicate the importance of building a cross-institutional commitment to addressing racism in our community and to emphasize our belief that each one of us had much to learn, we asked the campus as a whole—all faculty, staff, and students—to participate in this event. We also opened up the opportunity to plan and execute the event to anyone who wished to help as a way of building positive momentum for working together for change.

A Democratic Experience

The President's Office scheduled weekly planning meetings, and an open invitation to participate in planning went out to all faculty, staff, and students. Programming for the CDL was crowd-sourced: anyone in the community could submit a proposal to lead a session, committee members brainstormed additional ideas and sought out possible

session organizers, and all proposals for sessions were accepted. The committee actively encouraged varied topics and modes of participation so that every community member could find meaningful ways to take part, regardless of each person's comfort level or specific expertise in addressing difficult issues of race and racism. Finally, the committee removed barriers to participation by effectively closing the college for regular business and strongly encouraged rather than required attendance, recognizing that mandated diversity training can produce resentment as much as change.

Letting go of ordinary forms of planning and project management was both challenging and liberating. The compressed timeline and crowd-sourced approach required us to accept imperfections. The committee prepared for unpredictable participation levels by including performances by a social justice-oriented theater group in a space that could accommodate a large audience. Fabulous ideas for the day surfaced from many sources, ranging from a passionate student who came to the President's Office to share a dozen wonderful topics for sessions to the conferences and events staff who structured the opening plenary session to facilitate engagement among people who did not ordinarily interact. Finally, we deliberately set modest, but meaningful, goals: that every participant would learn at least one new thing about race and racism, and that every participant would have a conversation with someone the participant had not previously known. We emphasized that this day of shared

learning was critical, but only one step in ongoing work to address bias.

The result was a powerful democratic experience of teaching and learning. More than eight hundred participants (of twenty-three hundred student, faculty, and staff members in the college community) took part in more than forty sessions; formats included performances, workshops, panel discussions, facilitated dialogues, and lectures. Presenters reflected the range of experiences and knowledge represented in our community, and included undergraduates, archivists, facilities and dining services staff members, faculty, student services staff, graduate students, administrators, and others. Some sessions focused on the history of the college, including the ways in which policies and campus buildings have reflected and created the racial and class barriers of different eras. Others concerned the experiences of current students, staff, or faculty; possibilities of changing pedagogy or curriculum; the nature of microaggressions and the existence of implicit bias; strategies for bystander intervention; and the history of racism in the United States or in the nations of origin of our many international students and faculty. The participation of many student and staff presenters helped realign ordinary expectations regarding who is an expert on a college campus, and why.

Learning and Action

Race and racism—like the topics of class and of belonging, which have been the themes of subsequent CDLs—are difficult issues to address, especially in public settings. Some participants chose sessions where they could listen rather than participate more actively, in part for fear of saying the wrong thing. By providing opportunities to listen, we increased willingness to participate and, ultimately, the number of people engaged in learning. But we also



Members of the Bryn Mawr College community participate in the 2017 Community Day of Learning. (Photo courtesy of Bryn Mawr College)

encouraged and supported openness and risk-taking by establishing ground rules for respectful engagement. The college's assistant dean for inclusion and diversity brought both her professional expertise and the respect she has earned across campus to bear when she shared these ground rules at the opening plenary session.

The planning committee was aware that many on campus were looking for action as well as learning. We ended the day by asking all participants to make a written commitment to a personal action—however large or small. These statements were subsequently shared publicly (without attribution) at a campus gathering. Planning committee members were also charged with developing priorities for institutional action that surfaced during the course of the day, and with communicating these priorities to senior administrators and faculty.

The 2015 CDL catalyzed the development of an institutional diversity plan and annual report that were published in spring 2016. Orientation for new faculty now features a session on inclusion and equity, as does the required noncredit course for first-year students intended

to enhance their ability to thrive in a diverse community. Following the 2016 CDL, which included a session on the \$15-per-hour living-wage movement, the college has directed part of annual increases in staff salaries to a multiyear goal of achieving the living wage rate for all employees. We also have reviewed student employment practices and have changed policies to create pay equity across types of campus jobs and to direct budget dollars to support a higher base for student salaries. Students have also acted. For example, several who organized a session on the problem of disrespect for student workers in dining services created a new initiative (Humanizing the Hat) and successfully lobbied to offer a session at first-year student orientation to help change campus culture and behaviors.

Assessing Outcomes

In a post-event survey following the 2015 CDL, 95 percent of respondents said that they wanted to see more CDLs in the future. Most reported that they had learned something about race and racism on campus and/or in the world, and survey results indicated particularly strong interest in learning about the

histories of race at Bryn Mawr. An unintended but powerful outcome was the value that so many placed on the experience of meeting and learning from others across campus.

The college subsequently hosted Community Days of Learning in 2016 and 2017; the 2016 event focused on socioeconomic class, while in 2017 we explored an intersectional approach to belonging (and not belonging) in the campus community. In 2016, the planning committee was concerned that an event not prompted by crisis might have less impact than the original CDL. In fact, increased outreach contributed to increased participation (with over nine hundred total participants) and the response remained highly positive. In 2017, the percentage of students attending and participating in session offerings increased. Campus members appeared to participate more selectively in sessions, but their satisfaction with the quality of sessions was extremely high. Following this third year of programming, we are assessing goals, format, and outreach strategies to sustain campus-wide engagement with the ongoing work of building equity and inclusion.

Bryn Mawr recognizes that its Community Days of Learning are not sufficient in and of themselves to address the challenges of inequity and exclusion on our campus, but the democratic approach that characterizes the CDLs has offered us a valuable means of surfacing new ideas and important issues, as well as a vehicle for learning and building campus commitment, responsibility, and accountability. We look forward to keeping this new campus tradition as a vibrant strategy for education, community building, and change. ☐

Editor's note: More information about the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Community Days of Learning is available at www.brynmawr.edu.

[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

World Ready: Incorporating Interfaith Learning into General Education

■ **ESTHER BOYD**, Manager of Curriculum Development at Interfaith Youth Core

■ **KATIE CRUGER**, Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of the Master of Professional Writing Program at Chatham University

During the first week of class at Chatham University in fall 2015, all first-year students read about an anonymous street artist whose controversial work has been described as criminal and activist, feminist and antifeminist, pro-Muslim and appropriative of Muslim imagery. Faculty in ENG105, a required first-year communication seminar, used the reading to prompt discussions about fluidity, identity, gender, religion, perception, and culture. Student participation in these conversations was light but pleasant, so faculty were surprised when, in their response papers, some students lauded the artist for fighting against Islamic oppression of women—a troubling oversimplification of both the author’s and the artist’s positions. Faculty members worried that their attempts to engage with the complex piece had been counterproductive, and that they were not equipped to navigate the fraught topics related to religion that the reading raised.

As this story shows, undergraduate campuses remain spaces where students are challenged to engage with worldviews and commitments different from their own—and the implementation of programs that facilitate such engagement is not without its trials. Communicating across divides is an important skill for active citizenship in the United States, especially as the country is experiencing both rapid diversification and rabid polarization. According to unpublished data collected by Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), a nonprofit organization that

promotes interfaith work in higher education, nearly forty colleges and universities have launched or are developing programs in the new field of Interfaith Studies to help students grapple with these issues. Others, including Chatham University, engage religious difference through the general education core curriculum.

Interfaith Skills and Competencies

IFYC defines interfaith studies as an interdisciplinary field examining the multiple dimensions of how individuals

Undergraduate campuses remain spaces where students are challenged to engage with worldviews and commitments different from their own—and the implementation of programs that facilitate such engagement is not without its trials.

and groups who orient differently around religion interact, and the implications of this interaction for communities, civil society, and global politics (Patel 2013). Classroom experiences provide a context for interfaith learning that goes beyond what most students encounter through cocurricular interfaith clubs and events. By engaging with interfaith topics in their courses, students practice thinking

intersectionally about the many ways in which one aspect of their own identities influences other aspects of their lives, while considering the depth and nuance of differences among individuals. They also practice thinking critically about the day-to-day experiences, needs, and concerns of religious practitioners at a time when hostility toward difference seems to be increasing. When interfaith topics are situated in core courses, students learn that interfaith skills and competencies can affect aspects of other fundamental college learning outcomes related to communication, critical thinking, and relationship building.

Since fall 2015, all first-year Chatham students have taken ENG105. As in many required general education courses, students in ENG105 practice college-level writing, speaking, and critical thinking. But ENG105 is unique in that all sections focus on the themes of identity formation and dialogue across difference, an emphasis faculty felt would make

explicit our commitment to gender equity and social justice as Chatham was becoming a coeducational institution. Since the course’s establishment, all sections have shared the same syllabus, readings, assignments, and deadlines, creating a common experience for all first-year students. Moving forward, faculty are exploring models that will allow for more customization to account for faculty expertise.

Early Lessons Learned

Chatham's experience suggests five initial recommendations for institutions seeking to include interfaith learning in their general education curricula. First, schools should allocate resources to train and engage faculty early in the course development process. While most faculty readily embraced the project of incorporating race, class, and gender into ENGI05, many felt unqualified to discuss religion, having internalized during their doctoral training the idea that religion is private and has no place in the classroom. Many faculty uncritically categorized religious affiliation as voluntary, distinct from identities like race or gender that may be understood as mandatory. It took significant reflection—through lesson planning, consultation with IFYC, and seeing students' engagement with the material—to overcome these misgivings.

Second, start small. Explore how two faith traditions, one dominant and one less familiar, approach one aspect of everyday life. Consider making interfaith understanding relevant by tying the discussion to a current event, preferably a local one. Case studies, like those developed by IFYC and Harvard University's Pluralism Project, are popular pedagogical tools that require students to examine one issue or encounter from multiple perspectives.

Third, use class discussions of readings and course concepts to help students develop the dialogue skills necessary to communicate across difference. In their response papers and informal writing, many students initially equated talking about race with racism and talking about religion with bigotry. They worried about revealing ignorance, hurting feelings, or injuring newly formed relationships. Faculty found that the concept of a "brave space" resonated with students (Arao and Clemens 2013), as did the practice of collectively formulating community standards as a class.

Popular guidelines included using "I" statements and refraining from sharing others' stories.

Fourth, faculty need not be religious studies professors to hold discussions about religious identity, but they do need accurate information about the religious traditions they plan to discuss in class. For interfaith learning to be a positive experience for students from both dominant and marginalized identity groups, faculty must avoid tokenizing or implying that students are responsible for explaining or representing all members of a group. Faculty training can be helpful in this regard, as can invited speakers or panel discussions that offer a variety of viewpoints.


Finally, frame interfaith learning as something of value to all members of the campus community, beyond the boundaries of campus life. According to the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (designed by Alyssa Rockenbach and Matthew Mayhew in partnership with IFYC), 83 percent of first-year students surveyed entered college already believing that the world can overcome many of its major problems if people of different religious and nonreligious perspectives work together, and 65 percent expected to encounter curricular opportunities to learn about different religious worldviews (Mayhew et al. 2016). These data, along with the rise of Interfaith Studies programs around the country, demonstrate a growing recognition that the skills and knowledge needed to engage across religious worldview differences are applicable far beyond college graduation.

Promising Indicators

Students ended the fall 2015 semester by reading the autobiography of a Muslim interfaith leader whom Chatham welcomed to campus to speak with first-year students during a luncheon and daytime lecture, and who also

gave an evening address to the larger Chatham community. Students deeply engaged with the final reading, listened attentively during the lecture, and asked thoughtful and thought-provoking questions. While some of the first papers of the semester had illustrated unexamined prejudices about unfamiliar religions and the majority had indicated discomfort with expressing any opinion about religion, most final essays demonstrated students' ability to articulate more sophisticated understandings of identity, with many students making unprompted connections between patriarchy and Islamophobia, racism and ageism.

More than half of first-year students enrolled in the fall 2015 course reported that the unit exploring religious identity was the one course component they would keep without changes. An additional 12 percent suggested that the course should spend more time exploring religion. As one student argued in the final paper, such exploration "opens your mind to being more accepting of others. It just reminds us to be understanding of others and what we *don't* know about others."

Chatham University's mission is preparing women and men to be world ready: to build lives of purpose, value, and fulfilling work. Our work promoting students' interfaith learning is helping us fulfill this mission. 

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

A Whole-Institution Approach to Civic Engagement

■ MICHAEL J. SORRELL, President of Paul Quinn College

Paul Quinn College (PQC) is a 145-year-old institution that over the last ten years has completely remade itself, establishing a new standard for higher education civic engagement. The college has accomplished this transformation in large part by identifying and embracing a core set of beliefs and values that shape everything from our worldview to our pedagogical practices, including our approach to civic engagement.

PQC's work is structured around the beliefs that (1) poverty is evil; (2) urban colleges should turn themselves outward and address the needs of the communities they serve; and (3) students and underresourced communities have the capacity to be more than mere subjects of other people's research, experiments, and exercises in poverty tourism. At Paul Quinn, we maintain that given the right environment, urban colleges and their students can transform not just the lives of those enrolled, but also the community at large. Furthermore, we believe that when such a climate exists, a significant blow can be dealt to long-term poverty.

Key to actualizing these philosophies are PQC's three sets of institutional values. The first is our Institutional Ethos: "WE over Me," which translates to "the needs of a community supersede the wants of an individual." The second set of values is captured in our Four Ls of Quinnite Leadership: Leave places better than you found them, Live a life that matters, Lead from wherever you are, and Love something greater than yourself. Lastly, borrowing from the

Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, we strive to teach our students to always choose the harder right over the easier wrong, without regard for self-interest. These values define the college and form the foundation of its civic engagement programming.

Civic Engagement in an Era of Growing Poverty

The data show that America has a poverty problem. More than 43 million Americans were living in poverty as

At Paul Quinn, we maintain that given the right environment, urban colleges and their students can transform not just the lives of those enrolled, but also the community at large.

of 2015 (Proctor, Semega, and Kollar 2016). In 2013, the majority of K-12 public school students were receiving free and reduced lunches for the first time in at least fifty years (Layton 2015). Furthermore, far too many students are accruing long-term debt in an attempt to buy their way out of poverty through a college education. Forty million Americans have student loan debt, with graduates owing an average of \$29,000 (Holland 2015).

Such data illustrate the need for America's institutions of higher education to do more than simply educate students. Our colleges and universities need to address the great problems of our day. Thankfully, American higher education is not unfamiliar with this role. Higher education in the United States has always played a significant part in addressing the nation's challenges; one could even argue that American higher education was founded on such a premise. However, the exact role that a college or university should play has not always been clear (Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton 2009).

Higher education has struggled for years to define its role in addressing national challenges. Among the earliest evidence of tensions between competing interests in this struggle is the debate between Booker T. Washington and

W. E. B. Du Bois. Their dispute was not about the role of a specific institution or economic development in a traditional sense, but rather the proper role of higher education as the anchor institution of the black community.

Washington believed that the best service higher education could provide blacks immediately after slavery and Reconstruction was to teach them to work and save in order to create wealth (Washington 1901). Du Bois, on the other hand, believed that the most



Photo courtesy of Paul Quinn College

prudent first step was to provide an education in the liberal arts to a group of elite individuals, a “Talented Tenth” who would be charged with leading the masses out of the darkness (Du Bois 1903).

Neither man was incorrect. Their opinions were products of their individual positions and experiences. Their debate provides a natural starting point for any conversation on civic engagement in higher education, especially one concerning Paul Quinn College, one of the nation’s Historically Black Colleges.

University–Community Partnerships

The Washington–Du Bois model of university–community partnerships, where community is understood in relation to a group of people connected by their deep reliance on an institution, serves as one source of inspiration for the Paul Quinn model of civic engagement. At Paul Quinn, civic engagement is not a class. Rather, it is the entire focus of the institution. To paraphrase the college’s mission statement, PQC exists to

produce servant leaders and agents of change in the global marketplace. While servant leadership is a well-worn phrase,

To paraphrase the college’s mission statement, PQC exists to produce servant leaders and agents of change in the global marketplace.

PQC offers two examples that prove this version of the concept is anything but common.

The WE Over Me Farm. Paul Quinn College sits in the Highland Hills neighborhood of Dallas, Texas, a community that has struggled with food insecurity for more than thirty years. In an effort to address this issue, the college has waged a fight against food deserts that has become central to our radical reinterpretation of civic engagement. PQC began this work by

converting its football field into the two-acre WE Over Me organic farm (made possible through partnerships with philanthropist Trammell S. Crow, Pepsi Co., and Yale University). Over the last seven years, the farm has produced more than fifty thousand pounds of food and brought national attention to the college and the issue of food insecurity. With the exception of the Farm Director and a part-time assistant, students run the entire enterprise. The goal was never to transform students into farmers; instead, it was to engage them in entrepreneurial thought and action so they could become empowered community leaders who see what is possible instead of what is improbable.

Community Engagement and Education Program House. Several years ago, PQC entered into a partnership with Habitat for Humanity that allows Paul Quinn students to live in an off-campus Habitat home in exchange for serving as community organizers

in an underresourced community. This arrangement builds on the college’s philosophy of using all its institutional assets in service of the surrounding community.

The Urban Work College Model

Working while pursuing an undergraduate education has become a fundamental way of life in America (Perna 2010, xiii). More than 75 percent of dependent undergraduate students and 80 percent of independent


undergraduate students are working more than twenty-four hours per week while enrolled in school (Perna, Cooper, and Li 2007). At PQC, 80 to 85 percent of attendees are Pell Grant-eligible, so almost all students are working while taking classes. In response to the realities of both our students and the current higher education landscape, PQC created a new model of higher education, the Urban Work College.

The model is built on the foundation of the Work College, an approach that arose because schools were looking for ways to help poor students finance their educations (Young and Hobson 2011). Work Colleges integrate on-campus work assignments into all residential students' academic requirements, so students typically perform between eight and fifteen hours of labor per week (Work College Consortium n.d.).

Paul Quinn's corporate work program differentiates it from the traditional work college model. After gaining experience working on campus, students are assigned to off-campus work placements. This format allows students to see the direct connections between the classroom and the workplace, earn money to support themselves, gain a competitive advantage when seeking postcollegiate employment, and reduce their reliance on student loans.

But there is another benefit to this format that is closely related to PQC's values. By placing students in supervised off-campus work environments, the college is creating an advanced form of civic engagement. This system encourages students to develop professional relationships and skills that they can then bring to bear in addressing community issues.

Conclusion

Paul Quinn College represents the evolution of civic engagement in higher education. PQC is using the entire institution as a vehicle for both student and community empowerment. This model presents an intriguing option for small colleges seeking to move beyond simple community improvement projects and wanting to play a more substantive role in their communities. 


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Free Speech Is Not Enough

continued from page 20

competing claims. And they can help to build social and political capital that leaders may draw upon when the next values-related incident arises.

Those who see the recent rash of free speech-related incidents on US campuses as a sign of the decline of higher education and of a generation of coddled students are misdiagnosing the problem. These incidents might just be an opportunity and a cry for more: More inclusivity. More nuance. More understanding. And yes, more speech. We owe it to ourselves, our higher education institutions, and society to capture this opportunity. To paraphrase President Ford's 1975 address, "Let us make [US higher education] once again and for centuries more to come what it has so long been—a stronghold and a beacon-light of [free inquiry and discourse] for the whole world." 

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[PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT]

Free Expression, Liberal Education, and Inclusive Excellence

■ LYNN PASQUERELLA, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities

The following statement was originally issued on Tuesday, April 4, 2017.

In 2006, during a time when challenges to academic freedom were emerging on college and university campuses from both ends of the political spectrum, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Board of Directors issued a comprehensive

also as essential to enabling students to acquire the learning necessary to contribute to the public good. It recognizes that if we fail to help our students connect their education to broader societal issues in ways that inspire them to lead change in a society still challenged by profound inequities, we abnegate our responsibility to promote engaged citizenship, cultural empathy, pluralism,

AAC&U remains dedicated to playing a leadership role in promoting freedom of expression as a hallmark of liberal education within the context of the current landscape.

statement exploring the concept of intellectual diversity as grounded in AAC&U's foundational commitment to liberal education. "Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility" was designed as a resource guide for framing and informing discussion around the principles of academic freedom established and set forth by AAC&U and the American Association of University Professors in the trailblazing 1940 "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure." Yet, it was also intended to provide guidance on the application of these principles in response to evolving controversies.

"Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility" was equally groundbreaking in its insistence that academic freedom and tenure be considered not only as required for professional autonomy in teaching and research, but

and diversity as the foundation for our nation's historic mission of educating for democracy.

AAC&U remains dedicated to playing a leadership role in promoting freedom of expression as a hallmark of liberal education within the context of the current landscape through a reaffirmation and reframing of the core principles embedded in the statements produced in 1940 and 2006. The 2006 statement built upon the "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" by foregrounding the capacity of liberal education to foster agency in thought, speech, and action, serving as an accelerator for the emergence of a diversity of informed perspectives and for the development of critical listening skills that invite the broadest possible range of voices to engage in more speech, not less.

Six years later, AAC&U expanded its mission to recognize the inextricable link between equity and quality in liberal education. The incorporation of inclusive excellence as a mission-level commitment invites viewing issues of freedom of expression through this new lens. None of today's students arrive on college and university campuses devoid of past experiences, pain, and suffering that influence their worldviews. Redressing past and present injustices mandates aligning our expertise as teachers, scholars, researchers, and artists to rewrite the dominant narrative that consigns to the lower shelves of history the contributions of marginalized groups that have shaped American society and culture in profound, albeit often unacknowledged, ways. A commitment to inclusivity, as well as respect for others and free inquiry, must be paramount in maintaining an environment in which the free exchange of ideas can thrive and in guiding the determination of whether speech is protected under academic freedom.

Indeed, an increasingly visible and complex identity politics has fueled controversies over the legitimacy of "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces," the disinvitation and shouting down of speakers, and accusations of a pervasive enforced illiberalism on campuses. Student protests around a wide range of diversity and inclusion issues highlight the extent to which the conclusions we draw regarding whether arguments and assertions in support of limiting speech are rational and warranted depend, in part, on whose stories are being told and who is doing the speaking. They offer a counternarrative to the dominant discourse that has traditionally marginalized the voices of women, students and faculty of color, religious and ethnic minorities, and members of the LGBTQIA community. Like those who blocked recruiters from campuses during the Vietnam War, these protestors regard

their actions as justified on the grounds of necessity and attempts to stop them as further silencing those representing the most vulnerable members of society.

At the same time, those expressing politically conservative views or who have criticized such protests on other grounds, have simultaneously expressed feelings of alienation due to harassment and threats of retribution for exercising free speech. Dissent over the issue of whose voices should be heard and who should decide what constitutes unacceptable speech persists. Discussions regarding how to resolve conflicts between competing claims with respect to freedom of expression on college and university campuses often conflate the First Amendment with academic freedom. Not all speech protected outside of the academy by the First Amendment is permitted within higher education. While the First Amendment protects individual freedom of speech and assembly from government interference, the same protections do not necessarily apply within private organizations. Private colleges and universities are not bound by First Amendment considerations, except under certain specified state laws, and public institutions routinely constrain speech in classrooms, open forums, and through the refusal to grant the use of their facilities. They are permitted to do so if the restrictions constitute reasonable regulations, consistent with their missions, and are deemed necessary to achieve their objectives.

One of American higher education's greatest strengths is its diversity of institutional types—from community and state colleges and research universities, tribal colleges and historically black colleges and universities to faith-based and single-sex institutions, independent four-year colleges and online universities. Nevertheless, though the missions of these various institutions of higher education may be distinctive, they are

united by the shared goals of educating students and advancing knowledge. There are circumstances under which the achievement of both objectives entails restrictions on free expression.

While all views have equal standing in the public square under the First Amendment, this is not the case in the classroom. Faculty members on public and private college and university campuses can mandate respectful dialogue by proscribing certain types of language and other forms of expression and can stipulate rules for being recognized in a discussion. During classroom discussions, on exams, and in essay assignments, not all perspectives are considered uniformly valid. Content and viewpoint are dictated to the extent that one's contributions must not only be relevant to the topic at hand, but must also demonstrate certain reasoning and communication skills.

Moreover, students are not the only ones whose speech is circumscribed. Faculty members themselves are subject to peer review based on the standards of their profession. Professional autonomy, while valued on college and university campuses, does not extend to freedom from review of one's teaching and scholarship or judgment based on content and viewpoint. To ensure academic integrity and quality, experts within a field apply agreed-upon methodologies for discerning truth and knowledge, as well as identifying what constitutes reliable and accurate evidence. This is a critical component of educational responsibility since the faculty bears the primary obligation for knowledge production and student learning.

Liberal education is grounded in a commitment to intellectual diversity and protection against the suppression of unpopular viewpoints as a means of guarding against political indoctrination. Insofar as colleges and universities are sites for encountering divergent perspectives, assessing conflicting ideas,

evaluating competing claims of truth, creating new knowledge, and upholding intellectual integrity, a liberal education is designed to develop students' capacities to think critically and to make themselves vulnerable to criticism by welcoming dissenting voices. When preparing students for the future, faculty members should offer curricula that include a diversity of intellectual perspectives appropriate to their disciplines, and they must also be aware of the extent to which their positionality, framing of issues, and syllabi, together with written policies, campus cultures, and comments by other members of the community, can serve as inhibitors of speech.

To prepare the next generation of informed citizens who will shape our democracy, colleges and universities must remain free from entrenched and intellectually rigid forms of political partisanship and engage students from across the political spectrum. In fact, the honest and genuine pursuit of truth, at the core of a liberal education, mandates tolerance for ambiguity and respect for those bearing radically different perspectives. As members of college and university communities come together and appeal to their institutional values in guiding the determination of whether speech is protected, a commitment to respect for others, free inquiry, and inclusivity must be paramount in maintaining an environment in which the free exchange of ideas can thrive. ☐

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- ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.** 1970. "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments." Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors. <https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure>.

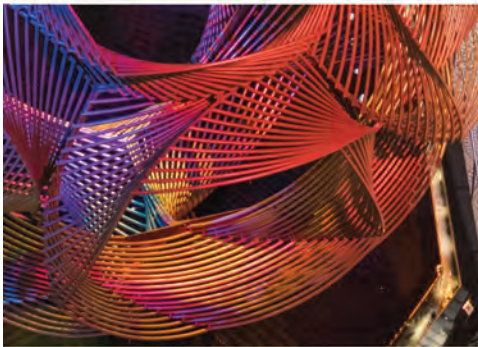


Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities

2017–2018 Meetings and Conferences

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises nearly 1,400 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size.

AAC&U offers a wide range of meetings and conferences throughout the year at locations around the country. They are open to all, with significant discounts for member institutions. To see if your institution is a member—or to sign up for AAC&U news and information—please visit www.aacu.org.



“AAC&U curates convening experiences that are intellectually rich, elegant, innovative, and most of all generative. The meetings are critically important spaces designed to foster robust interdisciplinary exchanges that lead to action and transformation in higher education.”

—Timothy K. Eatman, Rutgers University–Newark



2018 Annual Meeting

Can Higher Education Recapture the Elusive American Dream?

January 24–27, 2018 • Washington, DC

Pre-Meeting Symposium:

**The Power of Civic Engagement—Across Campus,
Within Communities, Beyond Borders**

9th Annual ePortfolio Forum:

**ePortfolios and the American Dream: Empowering
Students' Ownership of Their Future**

Network for Academic Renewal Conferences

AAC&U's annual series of Network conferences provides a forum for deep reflection and engagement on emerging issues in undergraduate teaching and learning. Collaboratively designed and led by experienced practitioners, the conferences foster discovery and problem solving through idea sharing and community building. Network conferences engage participants from across the spectrum of higher education focused on translating vision into practice.

Global Engagement and Social Responsibility: Higher Education's Role in Addressing Global Crises

October 12-14, 2017 • New Orleans

Wajahat Ali, *Affinis Labs* • Richard Kiely, *Cornell University*
Kassie Freeman, *African Diaspora Consortium* • David Ware, *Ware Immigration*
Yolanda Moses, *University of California-Riverside*

Transforming Undergraduate STEM Education: Discovery, Innovation, and the Value of Evidence

November 2-4, 2017 • San Francisco

Michael M. Crow, *Arizona State University* • Timothy McKay, *University of Michigan*
Kumar Garg, *Society for Science and the Public*

General Education and Assessment: Foundations for Democracy

February 15-17, 2018 • Philadelphia

Richard K. Miller, *Olin College of Engineering* • Claire Howell Major, *The University of Alabama*
José Moreno, *California State University-Long Beach* • Jason A. Tyszko, *US Chamber of Commerce*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Democracy: The Inconvenient Truths

March 22-24, 2018 • San Diego

Jeff Chang, *Stanford University* • Hari Stephen Kumar, *Springfield Technical Community College*
Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux, *University of Southern California*
Sheila Radford-Hill, *Dominican University* • Lorenzo Esters, *Strada Education Network*

AAC&U Summer Institutes

AAC&U's team-based institutes offer a time and space for sustained collaborative work to advance campus change agendas.

- Institute on General Education and Assessment
- Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success
- Institute on Integrative Learning and Signature Work

The **PKAL STEM Leadership Institute** is designed for both early- and mid-career STEM faculty engaged in leading projects aimed at transforming undergraduate STEM education in their classrooms, departments, and institutions.



www.aacu.org



The Academic Minute Seeks Submissions

AAC&U President Lynn Pasquerella hosts the radio segment *The Academic Minute*, produced by WAMC Northeast Public Radio in partnership with AAC&U. *The Academic Minute* features faculty and researchers from colleges and universities around the world discussing what's new in the academy and the ways in which academic research contributes to the public good. In addition to being broadcast widely on radio stations around the country, each segment is featured daily on *Inside Higher Ed* and across *The Academic Minute's* and AAC&U's social media portals.

The Academic Minute's production team is seeking submissions for upcoming programming. Whatever the focus of your research, *The Academic Minute's* producers invite you to submit it for consideration. Recent segments have focused on topics such as free speech in advertising, empathy, teaching critical thinking, and economic inequality.

Archives and more information can be found at <http://academicminute.org/>.

Please send submissions to David Hopper at dhopper@wamc.org.

Resources on Free Expression in Higher Education

The following publications may be of interest to educators and students considering issues of free expression on campus.

And Campus for All

PEN America's recent report, *And Campus for All: Diversity, Inclusion, and Freedom of Speech at U.S. Universities*, takes a sweeping look at contemporary debates occurring at the intersections of diversity, inclusion, and free speech on campus. Featuring case studies from various universities and delving into a range of legal and cultural issues, the report offers a set of "Principles on Campus Free Speech" that may be useful to anyone considering the implications of these issues within higher education. The full report is available at <https://pen.org/and-campus-for-all-diversity-inclusion-and-free-speech-at-u-s-universities/>.

The Contours of Free Expression

In the spring issue of *Liberal Education*, Frederick M. Lawrence, secretary and CEO of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, writes about "the relationship between free expression and civility in the public square." Lawrence explores the limits of free expression and examines how educators can and should respond to hate speech in higher education contexts; ultimately, he proposes a set of "principles for respectful disagreement." The article, titled "The Contours of Free Expression on Campus: Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Civility," can be downloaded at <http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2017/spring/lawrence>.

Addressing the Real Crisis

In "Addressing the Real Crisis of Freedom of Expression on Campus," Jeffrey Herbst, president and CEO of the Newseum, describes young people's current attitudes toward free expression and the implications of these attitudes for campus free speech. In keeping with the Newseum's mission of defending the First Amendment, Herbst calls for robust support for free speech and invokes the role such speech plays in protecting "minorities and those who are alienated." The white paper can be downloaded at http://www.newseuminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/WhitePaper_Herbst_FreeExpressionOnCampus.pdf.

Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility

In 2006, the AAC&U Board of Directors issued a statement, much of which remains relevant today, on "Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility." The statement is intended to "provide the larger context missing from current public debates about intellectual diversity in undergraduate education," including by clarifying "the vital role of diverse perspectives in helping students develop their own knowledge and intellectual capacities." The document, which AAC&U President Lynn Pasquerella builds upon with her recent statement on "Free Expression, Liberal Education, and Inclusive Excellence" (see page 34 of this issue of *Diversity & Democracy*), is available at <http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/about/academicFreedom.pdf>.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Calendar

The following calendar features events on civic learning sponsored by members of the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network and others focused on education for democracy. For more information, please visit AAC&U's CLDE Calendar online at <http://www.aacu.org/clde/calendar/>.

MONTH	DATES	CLDE EVENT	LOCATION
AUGUST 2017	11-13	Interfaith Youth Core: Interfaith Leadership Institute	Chicago, Illinois
SEPTEMBER	14-16	International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement: Annual Conference	Galway, Ireland
	24-27	Engagement Scholarship Consortium: Annual Conference	Birmingham, Alabama
OCTOBER	8-11	Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities: Annual Conference	Denver, Colorado
	12-14	AAC&U Network for Academic Renewal: Global Engagement and Social Responsibility	New Orleans, Louisiana
	12-14	Imagining America: 17th Annual National Conference	Davis, California
	26-27	Anchor Institutions Task Force: Annual Conference	New York, New York
NOVEMBER	2-4	AAC&U Network for Academic Renewal: Transforming STEM Higher Education	San Francisco, California
	16-17	Netter Center for Community Partnerships: Higher Education-Community Partnerships for Democracy and Social Change	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
JANUARY 2018	24-27	AAC&U Annual Meeting: Can Higher Education Recapture the Elusive American Dream?	Washington, DC

AAC&U and the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network

As part of its commitment to preparing all students for civic, ethical, and social responsibility in US and global contexts, AAC&U has formed the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network. The CLDE Action Network builds on the momentum generated by the 2012 White House release of the report *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*. Coordinated by Caryn McTighe Musil, AAC&U senior scholar and director of civic learning and democracy initiatives, the network includes twelve leading civic learning organizations that are committed to making civic inquiry and engagement expected rather than elective for all college students. *Diversity & Democracy* regularly features research and exemplary practices developed and advanced by these partner organizations and their members:

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Anchor Institutions Task Force
- Association of American Colleges and Universities
- The Bonner Foundation
- Bringing Theory to Practice
- Campus Compact
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
- The Democracy Commitment
- Imagining America
- Interfaith Youth Core
- Kettering Foundation
- NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education



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Upcoming AAC&U Meetings

MEETING	LOCATION	DATES
NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL Global Engagement and Social Responsibility	<i>New Orleans, Louisiana</i>	OCTOBER 12-14, 2017
NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL Transforming STEM Higher Education	<i>San Francisco, California</i>	NOVEMBER 2-4, 2017
AAC&U ANNUAL MEETING Can Higher Education Recapture the Elusive American Dream?	<i>Washington, DC</i>	JANUARY 24-27, 2018

About Diversity & Democracy

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today's interdependent but unequal world. According to AAC&U's Statement on Liberal Learning, "By its nature... liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives." *Diversity & Democracy* features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision. To access *Diversity & Democracy* online, visit www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises nearly 1,400 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at www.aacu.org.

AAC&U Membership 2017

