



FIRE QUARTERLY

WINTER 2022

STICKER SHOCK

Students punished
for criticizing
China's government



A message on FIRE's alumni efforts: **Join the fight!**



As FIRE's alumni relations officer, I know that many of you remember your college years as fondly as I do. Those transformative years shaped us, made us who we are, and set us on our path. Yet, when I look at my alma mater today, I am forced to question how it has fallen so far. Censorship, irresponsible spending, and program cuts abound. This is not something I can support, financially or otherwise. Thankfully, as an alum, I can act — and you can too.

FIRE supporters are familiar with our work defending students and faculty, and our education programs that even reach K-12. Because of you, FIRE is able to fight at nearly every level to stem the tide of illiberalism in education. **In 2021, we expanded this fight to leverage one of the academy's most powerful constituents — alumni.**

American universities rely on graduates for everything from word-of-mouth endorsements to future generations of students to checks that further pad the endowment. Yet even as confidence in higher education continues to fall, alumni always seem to give back.

Alumni generosity not only helps colleges stay afloat, but also influences universities' placement in the U.S. News and World Report's annual college rankings — an important metric for administrators and students searching for a school to call home. That's why alumni have the opportunity to leverage this influence (and more) to ensure their schools uphold their obligations to the highest principles of free speech and academic freedom.

Colleges can ill afford to ignore the ideas and demands of alumni. Now, for the first time, with the help of FIRE, an alumni movement is beginning to use this leverage to publicly hold their institutions accountable to the basic tenets of free speech and expression.

Throughout this publication, you'll read story after story of speech violations on campuses across the country. I want to call your attention to one of the more heartening victories FIRE had this quarter — one in which the public outcry of alumni played a pivotal role.

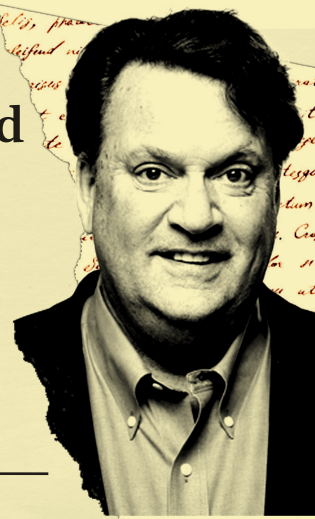
In September 2021, Dr. Steven Earnest was suspended from teaching at Coastal Carolina University for criticizing students who protested after they saw the names of students of color written on a whiteboard and mistook the list as malicious. A key piece of FIRE's strategy to help this professor who had done nothing wrong was an alumni "take action" campaign. Through this email campaign, hundreds of people — including alumni — expressed their concern directly to the university president. Within weeks, Dr. Earnest was reinstated.

Your support allows us to stand ready to advise and help alumni advocate for positive change at their alma mater. If you're interested in defending free speech and preserving academic freedom at your alma mater, sign up for FIRE's Alumni Network at go.thefire.org/alumninetwork. You'll receive breaking news curated specifically for you, including our latest legal developments, strategies for activism, and reporting.

Once again, thank you for helping make all of this possible!

Connor Murnane
Alumni Relations Officer

A theater professor wasn't sufficiently outraged about a list of names on a whiteboard. So his college tried to fire him.



Setting: Coastal Carolina University

Protagonist: Dr. Steven Earnest, theater professor

Antagonist: Administrators who put reputation over free expression

Act 1:

Coastal Carolina tries to close the curtain on a professor's job

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, a visiting artist was working with students of color, when one said she felt isolated and wanted to get to know other non-white students in the department. The trio wrote out the names of other non-white students on the classroom whiteboard while brainstorming ideas. The names were still on the board when the next class arrived, and several of the entering students were offended, believing that the list was malicious. A protest ensued.

COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY: The Department of Theatre's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has been informed of an incident that has caused harm and confusion in our community... we acknowledge that this list without context can affect those on the list in a dehumanizing and hurtful way.

NARRATOR: After receiving an email about the DEI investigation, Dr. Steven Earnest responded: Sorry but I don't think it's a big deal. I'm just sad people get their feelings hurt so easily. And they are going into theater?

STUDENTS: Read a book. Talk to people. Gain some perspective. You're far too old to be behaving this way. Also please do not respond to this email because I do not care. I repeat, I do not care.

NARRATOR: Students protested against Dr. Earnest, accusing him of being racially insensitive and dismissive of students of color. Several called for him to be fired and protested by boycotting theater classes.

***DR. EARNEST:** It was upsetting to be accused of racism by students and others with whom I have never interacted. But it was even more upsetting

to have these false accusations ratified by a university that I have called home for over 15 years.

***COASTAL CAROLINA DEAN:** Please do not come to your classes today.

Act 2:

The Faculty Legal Defense Fund swoops in to save the day

NARRATOR: After being suspended by Coastal Carolina, Dr. Earnest came to FIRE. We connected him with a local attorney through our Faculty Legal Defense Fund — all at no cost to him. When faculty are facing punishment for their expression, they shouldn't have to worry about money.

FLDF LAWYER: If CCU will punish a faculty member for the offense of publicly speaking a truth, your university has problems far beyond this one case.

NARRATOR: By November, Coastal Carolina backed away from a termination process. The university announced it would allow Dr. Earnest to return to his teaching duties this semester.

DR. EARNEST: Without the help and leadership of FIRE, I am certain that I would have been forced out of my career of over 25 years. FIRE's strong support and guidance helped me to survive the mob attack with which I was faced and allowed me to move forward from a very difficult situation. University faculty are often placed in a defenseless position and FIRE's support allows protection against cancel culture and the enemies of free speech.

NARRATOR: And with the Faculty Legal Defense Fund keeping watch, they all lived happily ever after.



What does MIT stand for? Faculty, alumni, and FIRE want answers.

MIT prides itself as a hub of brilliant minds and innovation. But in recent years, faculty and alumni have had to sacrifice time spent on innovation in order to fight against political orthodoxy. Now community members are organizing — and want answers.

While MIT is private, its mission describes a place prioritizing unfettered intellectual exploration. Yet according to FIRE's College Free Speech Rankings, only one-fifth of students believe their administration makes it "extremely" or "very" clear that they protect free speech. Just 17% believe that if a controversy over offensive speech were to occur, it is "extremely" or "very" likely that the administration would defend the speaker's right to express their views. These results, paired with an uptick in recent years of institutional censorship, show that the community's concerns are warranted.

The most recent and arguably most egregious failure occurred in October, when MIT rescinded an invitation to University of Chicago geophysicist Dorian Abbot. His offense: an op-ed arguing that DEI "violates the ethical and legal principle of equal treatment."

FIRE and others were highly critical of MIT's response. The Academic Freedom Alliance described the decision as an "egregious violation of the principles of academic freedom," while Abbot wrote a column in which he called out MIT for abandoning its mission.

Ultimately, Princeton University hosted Abbot's talk, which focused entirely on his research regarding climate change and planetary visualization. He did not mention the canceled lecture. (Abbot, unlike MIT, was able to separate scholarship from politics.)

Abbot's disinvitation was not the first time MIT signaled a weakening commitment to academic freedom. Among MIT's great innovators is Richard Stallman, who created the groundbreaking GNU Project and the Free Software Foundation at MIT's Artificial Intelligence Lab.

In 2019, Stallman was pressured to resign from his position as a visiting scientist and as president of the Free Software Foundation for an email about MIT's ties to Jeffrey Epstein. Stallman said it's an "injustice" to use the word "assaulting" to describe the conduct of a deceased MIT professor who allegedly had sex with one of Epstein's trafficking victims, because, he believed, the evidence did not make clear the professor's knowledge of coercion. The backlash from students was fierce and swift, and within days Stallman resigned.

In 2020, Rev. Daniel Moloney argued in an email that we do not know definitively whether racism was responsible for George Floyd's death. Students filed complaints to administrators, and Moloney was forced to resign as Catholic chaplain.

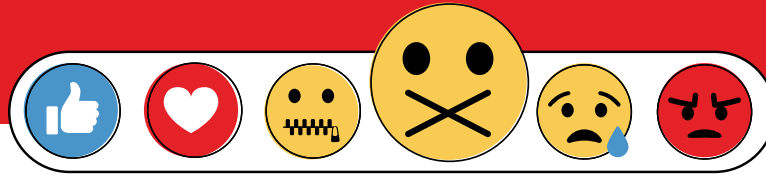
What makes this particularly disappointing is that until recently, MIT wasn't a bad actor. FIRE sends more than 100 letters every year to schools that violate students' rights. MIT was not among them until 2020, when FIRE wrote in to voice concerns about policies restricting student press rights. We received no response.

MIT's failures have not gone unnoticed. The MIT Free Speech Alliance formed after the Abbot situation. A secret ballot revealed that over three-quarters of faculty worry that their voice or their colleagues' voices are "increasingly in jeopardy." And two MIT alumni took a financial stand against MIT's intolerance: Tom Hafer and Henry I. Miller wrote that they will stop donating to the institute for caving to "woke" ideology.

Through FIRE's Alumni Network and partnership alumni, we offer concrete steps that universities such as MIT can take to defend free inquiry. We urge MIT to join over 80 institutions in adopting the Chicago Statement. FIRE, faculty, and alumni are determined to bring academic freedom back to MIT. Now the administration just needs to remember what it stands for.

NEW RATINGS:

Spotlight on Speech Codes 2022



In December, FIRE released its annual Spotlight on Speech Codes report, finding that 87% of American colleges maintain policies that restrict — or could too easily be interpreted to restrict — expression.

“Students’ expressive rights shouldn’t be determined by school administrators — they should be determined by the First Amendment,” said Laura Beltz, FIRE’s Policy Reform director. “College administrators should protect, not endanger, these rights when crafting school policies.”

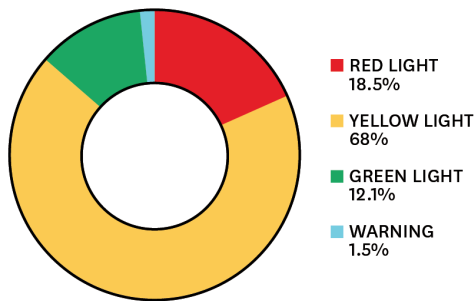
from only 2% in 2009. Meanwhile, the number of institutions earning a yellow light rating is swelling: from 21% in 2009 to 68% today. While less restrictive than red light policies, yellow light policies still prohibit or have an impermissible chilling effect on constitutionally protected speech.

The report also notes that 250 schools in FIRE’s interactive Spotlight database have an IT policy on the books that could be used to restrict protected expression. Of those, 34 are red light policies that substantially restrict expression — which is especially problematic given students’ continued reliance on technology during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite this, public institutions are trending in the right direction. For the first time, more public colleges earn FIRE’s top rating than our lowest rating. While only public institutions are legally bound to uphold students’ First Amendment rights, private institutions are bound by their promises of free expression.

“Any way you slice it, the vast majority of top institutions force students to check some of their speech rights the moment they step onto campus or log onto their classes,” said Beltz. “These restrictions have real consequences that ensnare hundreds of students every year, and chill the expression of many more.”

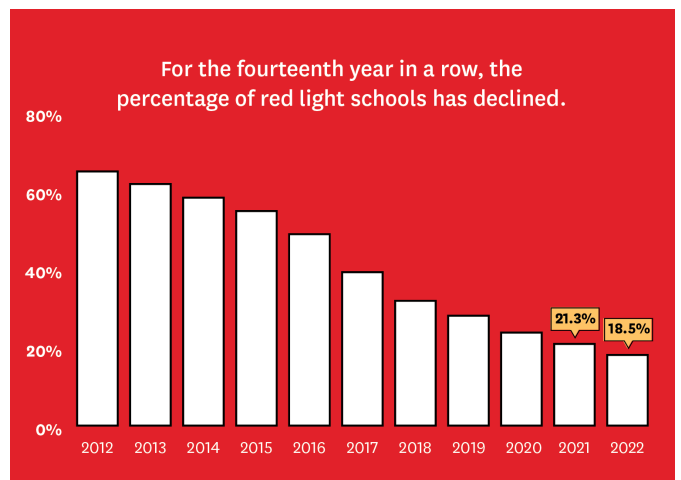
FIRE reviewed policies at 481 colleges and universities.



FIRE rates schools as “red light,” “yellow light,” or “green light” institutions based on how much speech protected by the First Amendment their policies restrict in a number of categories, including protest, online speech, harassment, and civility.

Almost a fifth of institutions — 18.5% — received an overall red light rating, FIRE’s lowest rating, for maintaining speech codes that both “clearly and substantially” restrict freedom of speech. This reflects a 3-point improvement from last year’s report.

Only 12% of institutions nationwide (58 schools) do not maintain any policies that compromise student expression, earning FIRE’s highest green light rating. This total is up significantly



See how your school stacks up at thefire.org/spotlight

Q&A with Inversity's Karith Foster

Diversity trainings routinely fail to recognize a critical component in their programming: ideological diversity. That's why FIRE is partnering with comedienne and diversity engagement specialist Karith Foster to lead an initiative focused on creating inclusive environments: the Inversity program.

Inversity takes traditional DEI programming to the next level by offering an inclusive way to communicate, learn, and grow. By emphasizing the power and significance of each individual's experiences and beliefs, Inversity encourages participants to engage in conversations about diversity without the shame, guilt, and politics.

Hi Karith! Tell us about yourself.

I always say I was raised in Texas but grew up in NYC since it's where I came of age. Stand-up comedy found me when I was trying to have a normal career in television production. I absolutely love to make people laugh and think. There is nothing I enjoy more than telling a good story, getting a giggle out of someone, and having them say, "You know, I never thought about it that way before."

I am in a good mood 93.7% of the time. (Yes, that's an incredibly specific percentage.) I married someone funny and gave birth to two hysterical human beings. I truly believe that humor makes the world go round—it is the glue that connects us and the salve that heals us.

Tell us about your Inversity program.

Inversity is my revolutionary version of addressing DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging). Some time ago it became apparent to me that the way we've been going about it wasn't working, for if it were we'd be in a much different place in society. Inversity is about taking the division and polarization out of what should always be helpful and healing encounters and conversations. Inversity also recognizes that if you want to change someone's heart and mind (those two things are congruent btw) then you're better off doing so through kindness, grace, conscious empathy and last but not least humor.

So what makes Inversity different from traditional diversity programs?

Inversity isn't about casting shame or blame; or creating victims or villains. Inversity is about recognizing and understanding that the human experience is just that—human. And these experiences, emotions,

encounters that we ALL have supercede ethnicity, gender, political affiliation, etc. When this is the consideration the results are magical and people feel connected, engaged and inspired to be better to themselves and their fellow human beings.

How does this fit into FIRE's overall work?

FIRE is all about freedom, freedom of expression and using one's voice. That is EXACTLY what Inversity was designed to encourage in individuals young and old alike.

Favorite book?

"Woke Racism" by John McWhorter and "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho

Podcast you never miss:

The Joe Rogan Experience

Quote you live by:

Endings are only disappointments for those who have no faith in life or love.

What is your biggest pet peeve?

God, there are SO many to choose from. But top one for this week is people who only wash their dish and leave the rest of the dirty dishes in the sink. Why?!?! What is wrong with you?!?! Oh, and mom jeans.

Who is your favorite human and why did you pick Dolly Parton?

Hahaha! Dolly, is a badass. But my favorite humans are my girls. They have such a brilliant, twisted, clever senses of humor.

So far, Karith's Inversity programming has appeared on almost 30 campuses — and growing.



LAWSUIT:

Fired for criticizing Mike Pence and campus COVID-19 response, a history professor sues to protect faculty rights

Collin College in Texas has sent a chilling message to its faculty: Shut up or you're fired. With FIRE, a former faculty member is sending a message back: See you in court.

Former history professor Lora Burnett filed a lawsuit in October against Collin College, its president, H. Neil Matkin, and other university officials for firing her for speaking out on important public issues. Collin College declined to renew Burnett's contract in February 2021 after she publicly criticized former Vice President Mike Pence and the college president's response to the pandemic.

"Professors like me shouldn't lose our jobs just because we have opinions," Burnett said. "In the classroom, my job is to teach the material and to hold open a space where students can freely express themselves and fully engage with the ideas we're talking about. Outside the classroom, I have the right to express myself too. I have the right to fully engage with any public debate. That right is for all of us, not just for professors whose politics match up with their college administrators."

During the 2020 vice presidential debate, Burnett tweeted: "The moderator needs to talk over Mike Pence until he shuts his little demon mouth up." The tweet was picked up by conservative media outlets and outraged Texas State Rep.

Jeff Leach, who texted Matkin to ask if Burnett was "paid with taxpayer dollars." Matkin responded that Burnett was "[a]lready on my radar" and he would "deal with it." (The college spent \$14,000 on legal fees seeking to conceal the text exchange between Matkin and Leach from the public.)

Burnett landed on Matkin's radar again last January when she criticized the college president's response to the pandemic. Burnett challenged Matkin's earlier assessment that the pandemic was "blown utterly out of proportion," by adding commentary about a former Collin College professor's death. She tweeted: "Another @collincollege professor has died of COVID."

During this time, FIRE wrote repeated letters to Collin College advising the school of Burnett's rights and reminding the college of its constitutional obligations. Public institutions like Collin College are bound by the First Amendment, and it is unconstitutional to terminate a faculty member based on her comments about matters of public concern.

Last February, the college notified Burnett that her contract would not be renewed, citing "insubordination, making private personnel issues public that impair the college's operations, and personal criticisms of co-workers, supervisors, and/or those who merely disagree with you."

"A professor expressing their political views on social media is not insubordination, it's core protected speech," said FIRE attorney Greg H. Greubel. "If professors like Lora Burnett cannot inform the public about their views on public issues and problems on campus, our democracy is weakened."

"Professors like me shouldn't lose our jobs just because we have opinions." — Lora Burnett



A professor expressing their political views on social media is not insubordination, it's core protected speech.

STICKER SHOCK:

Boston's Emerson College doubles down on censorship, punishes students for distributing stickers criticizing China's government



Criticizing a foreign government is a serious offense at Emerson College. That's the message Emerson's administration sent to students by denying the appeal of a conservative student group that passed out stickers critical of the Chinese government.

"Emerson's actions from start to finish are extremely worrying," said Sam Neves, president of Emerson's Turning Point USA chapter. "They're trying to bully us into submission, and we will use all the tools at our disposal to make sure they won't. They can't cancel us if we don't let them."

On Sept. 29, several TPUSA members passed out stickers featuring a hammer and sickle with the caption "CHINA KINDA SUS" — slang for "suspicious."

Under pressure from other student groups, including

the Emerson Chinese Student Association, which accused TPUSA of anti-Asian bias and xenophobia, the college launched an investigation into the group. In an Instagram video, the TPUSA chapter said the stickers are critical of the Chinese government, not the Chinese people.

"So for me this was a very strange situation, being half Asian and living in Asia the majority of my life," said KJ Lynum, vice president of the group. "I was born in Singapore; I've lived in the Philippines, Japan, and mainly traveled in Asia where most of my family is. So to be called anti-Asian was very strange."

Emerson itself acknowledged that the group wasn't targeting the Chinese people.

"They're punishing us while acknowledging that we are innocent," Neves said.

Shockingly, Emerson stood firm. Despite that acknowledgement, the conduct board still found the group responsible for violating the school's "Bias Related Behavior" policy and issued them a "formal warning."

"They're punishing us while acknowledging that we are innocent."
—Student Sam Neves

“FIRE is issuing a ‘formal warning’ to Emerson,” said FIRE attorney Adam Steinbaugh, who wrote FIRE’s initial Oct. 5 letter to Emerson. “Emerson violated its own promises by making it clear that speech criticizing foreign governments will not be tolerated if it angers supporters of those states. Authoritarian censorship should be rejected, not embraced, by any institution committed to freedom of expression — as Emerson claims to be.”

The students appealed Emerson’s decision. On Nov. 12, Vice President and Dean for Campus Life Jim Hoppe denied the appeal. This means TPUSA needs to tread carefully, because another violation of Emerson’s policies would carry harsher penalties given the prior warning.

Emerson’s decision to punish the group despite the facts shows the school’s utter disregard for its own free speech promises. Emerson’s Statement on Freedom of Expression touts “the high importance” of the First Amendment on campus and “encourages students to present ideas, express their individuality and culture, and be open to thoughts or life styles that differ from their own.”

“Emerson administrators think they only silenced TPUSA, but this decision will have far-reaching effects,” said Steinbaugh. “By trampling the expressive rights of a few students, they cast a chilling effect on the speech of all Emerson students.”



“I was born in Singapore; I've lived in the Philippines, Japan, and mainly travelled in Asia where most of my family is. So to be called anti-Asian was very strange.”

But we’re not stopping there!



In late January, FIRE launched a publicity campaign on Emerson’s campus to hit them where it hurts — their reputation. FIRE hired a mobile billboard to drive around campus and sponsored ads in two nearby stations of the Boston subway. We’ll keep you posted on the latest.



“Our vice president is Asian herself. One third of all of our members were Asian, many of them from China. So it's very weird for Emerson to call us anti-Asian when we are one of the most welcoming clubs at Emerson.”



Donor Spotlight:

Susan Lebovitz-Edelman &
Joseph Edelman



We passionately support FIRE and the essential work they do to secure individual rights in higher education and K-12 schools. The FIRE team never ceases to amaze us with their deep intellect, hard work, and strategic decision-making. Most of all, we admire their fierce non-partisan commitment to the founding principles that make this country so special. As Thomas Paine said, “He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.” Amen to that.

Suzy and Joe are valued members of FIRE’s Ember Club. Their investment in FIRE has enabled us to grow our core advocacy work as well as new initiatives like the 2021 Campus Free Speech Rankings. FIRE is deeply grateful to have them on our team.

You can learn more about The Ember Club at thefire.org/donate. If you would like to discuss membership and benefits, please do not hesitate to contact us at support@thefire.org or **215-717-3473**.

University of Washington: Professor created ‘toxic environment’ by deviating from university-approved language about Native American land



If professors at the University of Washington want to include a statement of land acknowledgment on their syllabi, they must parrot the administration’s viewpoint or stay quiet.

It has become increasingly common in academia to promote statements that recognize indigenous ties to the land occupied by a university, but UW’s computer science and engineering department encourages professors to include such a statement at the expense of professors’ First Amendment rights.

Stuart Reges learned this the hard way when a land acknowledgement on his syllabus was censored by administrators because it didn’t match the university-approved language. On Jan. 11, FIRE called on UW to ensure that faculty, if they choose to address this topic, can use the university’s statement or craft their own.

“UW pays lip service to inclusivity, but censorship is incompatible with inclusivity,” said FIRE Program Officer Zach Greenberg.

On Dec. 8, Reges criticized land acknowledgment statements in an email to faculty and included a modified statement he put in his syllabus: “I acknowledge that by the labor theory of property the Coast Salish people can claim historical ownership of almost none of the land currently occupied by the University of Washington.” (His statement was a nod to John Locke’s philosophical theory that property rights are established by improving land.)

“I decided to see whether it was acceptable to present an alternate viewpoint,” said Reges. **“Obviously their version of diversity does not include conservative viewpoints.”**

Administrator and professor Magdalena Balazinska ordered Reges to remove the statement from his syllabus, labeling it as “inappropriate” and “offensive,” and saying it created “a toxic environment.” Reges refused and criticized the department’s inconsistency in allowing other professors to include less critical modified statements.

Balazinska countered that she’d ask others to remove any modified version, meaning the only position professors’ syllabi can take is the one approved by administrators. She then emailed Reges’ class to apologize. Stay tuned for updates from FIRE.

“I believe that the remedy for speech we find offensive is more speech, not censorship,” said Reges.

Audio reveals Stanford student senate engaged in viewpoint discrimination to deny funding for Pence appearance

Newly uncovered audio sheds more light on the Stanford University student government's decision to deny funding for an event that seeks to bring former Vice President Mike Pence to campus in February.

The senate debated the denial of funding for the event and considered a vote that would have imposed certain restrictions. It is important that legitimate public health concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 be identified and addressed, but assertions that safety demands the suppression of speech must be scrutinized to prevent censorship under the guise of security concerns.

"So if you're against the individual speaker, then I think it's fine to vote in that way," said one senator, adding "if you think that you don't want to morally give them the money, that is perfectly fine."

Another: "I personally voted to abstain from the funding request personally because I don't want that blood on my hands."

The Stanford College Republicans told FIRE it is in touch with administrators to discuss other options. But forcing student groups to bypass the traditional senate funding process sets a chilling precedent. FIRE calls on the Undergraduate Senate to reverse its denial of funding and to adopt reasonable safety protocols to facilitate Pence's appearance.



Duke University denies pro-Israel club

FIRE and other civil liberties groups continue to press Duke University leaders to step in and approve a pro-Israel club that was denied recognition by the student government. In November, Duke's student government president vetoed the recognition of a Students Supporting Israel chapter based on one of the group's social media posts, which she deemed uncivil.

Despite receiving a letter from FIRE urging it to grant SSI recognition, Duke's student senate upheld the veto. Administrators so far have offered a creepy "separate but equal" compromise — one that violates Duke's own promises of free expression.

FIRE has worked with a prospective Students for Justice in Palestine chapter at Fordham for four years. Duke should take it from Fordham: FIRE won't relent until the university stops punishing student groups for their viewpoints.

Did Emory go full Grinch? University tells students they can't hang Christmas decorations.

While children and nostalgic adults across the nation enjoyed the whimsical story of Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," festive college students at Emory University found themselves in trouble for their Christmas decorations under a policy that would make the Grinch snarl with a sneer.

Emory charged the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity chapter on Dec. 3 with violating the university housing policy for hanging a wreath and garlands on its front door. In our letter to Emory, we remind the university that every student in its academic community, both tall and small, has an equal right to free speech, student groups and all. When universities that promise free speech impose content-based restrictions on expression, the policy must be narrowly tailored to a compelling university interest.

Why push this strange rule in the peak Christmas season? Please don't ask us why; no one quite knows the reason. It could be Emory's shoes were two sizes too tight, or its knowledge of free speech just wasn't quite right. But the most likely reason for ATO's fall was that rule-writers' hearts were two sizes too small.





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FIRE launches new national ad campaign highlighting urgency to protect free speech



In January, FIRE launched its first national advertising campaign. The initial ad in *The New York Times Magazine* invokes the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech to bring home to Americans across the political spectrum what would be lost if our nation lacked the right to free speech. Proclaiming "No Free Speech, No I Have A Dream," the double-page ad kicked off a print and digital marketing campaign that stresses the need to be able to speak freely and respect our fellow Americans' right to do so, regardless of their viewpoint.

"Across history, people have fought for the right to express themselves, speak their minds, and share their dreams for a better future," said FIRE Vice President of Communications Nico Perrino. "Unfortunately, the importance of free speech in a free society is too often forgotten or taken for granted. The argument for this precious right needs to be made directly and unapologetically to every new generation. That's what this campaign hopes to accomplish."

Students learn about FIRE's new Let's Talk program at its September conference in Miami.

Fervent discussion is vital to the success of a robust intellectual community, and FIRE calls upon colleges and universities to actively cultivate a free speech culture. Officially launched at its inaugural conference in September, FIRE's new Let's Talk program gives students the resources they need to create spaces on their campuses for open discussion about controversial issues. The goal of Let's Talk forums is not to teach students what to think or what to say, but to counsel them in how to think and speak with intellectual and personal integrity, humility, and curiosity.



Let's Talk groups will vary in size and structure and can be customized to meet the needs of the campus community. Regardless of the size and structure, they are united in their mission to promote free, fruitful, and civil discussions. This spring, FIRE staff will visit developing Let's Talk groups and recruit new student leaders.

BUT WAIT! There's more...