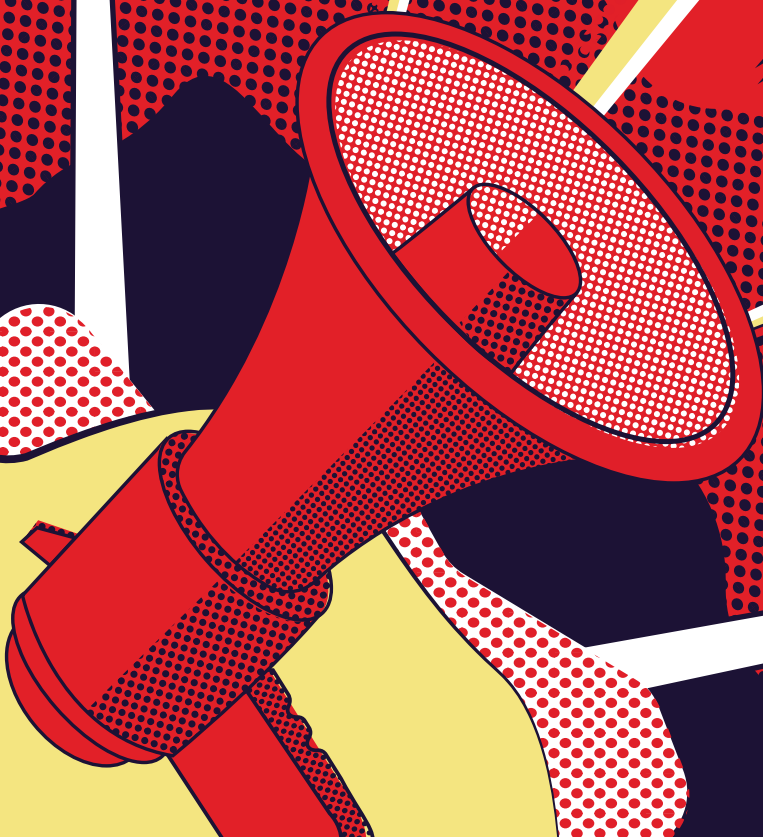




FIRE

Foundation for Individual
Rights in Education

**AMPLIFY
THE
ACTIVISTS**



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THE RUNDOWN

The warning signs of over-restrictive speech codes can be difficult to spot—unless you know what you’re looking for. Universities strive to be bastions of free expression, but it’s far too common to find policies that censor the voices of students and faculty on college campuses. Therefore, **protecting free speech on campus means being proactive—learning to spot the signs of restrictive speech policies, educating your campus community, and working to reverse problematic policies.**

This kind of censorship isn’t always obvious. Restrictive speech policies can be hidden in plain sight, buried in pages of dense conduct codes and in ancillary policy materials. Threats to free expression often go unexamined unless students know what to look for. Here are some [common examples of censorship](#) on campus for student organizers—and those who help student organizers—to watch out for. If you see any of these red flags, pull the FIRE alarm and [get in touch](#) with us:

- Requiring permission to hold protests or demonstrations
 - Administrators might demand [advance approval](#) to hold a protest, post flyers, or distribute literature on campus.
- Restricting speech to “free speech zones”
 - Administrators may [limit advocacy](#) to a small or isolated area on campus.
- Subjective criteria—or no criteria—for granting recognition or funding to student organizations
 - Administrators or student governments may try to deny official recognition to a student organization because of its message or beliefs, or because [chapters at other schools](#) have engaged in civil disobedience. Sometimes [recognition is refused](#) when the school believes a group is too similar in its beliefs to an existing organization. Student governments may try to deny funds for an organization, event, or speaker because of the message.
- Requiring students to pay fees for security because of the potential for disruption, protests, or controversy
 - A college might require student organizations to [pay for the cost of security](#) for an event because it might draw protesters or because the event’s message is controversial.
- Punishing students for social media posts
 - College officials sometimes try to punish students for protected [speech over social media](#), especially when the speech draws unwanted attention and [goes viral](#).

- Curbing speech on political issues and campaigns,
 - College officials might [move to censor](#) student political expression because of a misguided [concern](#) that student speech regarding an election or candidate could jeopardize the school's non-profit status.



**Educate your
campus community
about the warning
signs of censorship,
and advocate for
meaningful change
at your school.**

THE ACTIVITIES

There is no single “right way” to alert your campus to the red flags of restrictive speech codes. The following examples of campaign activities are designed to inspire you, but they certainly aren’t comprehensive. Feel free to be creative and tailor your campaign to your individual campus’s needs — or come up with something entirely your own!

If you need funds to launch your campaign, please email students@thefire.org. Include a note detailing how much funding you’ll need and an explanation of how you plan to use these funds. Please be as specific as possible.

For more details, see FIRE’s campaign activity suggestions below:

- 1** Find and read your school’s policies. [Explore FIRE’s Spotlight Database](#) and find out if your school denies students and faculty the rights they are granted by the Constitution and/or by institutional promises. If the school you are looking for is not included in the database, you can request more information about its speech codes by [filling out this form](#).
 - Reach out to FIRE’s Policy Reform team at speechcodes@thefire.org to discuss your school’s policies and explore speech code revision strategies.
 - Advocate against censorship by writing an op-ed in your school’s paper discussing your school’s policies.
 - Op-eds are a great way to capture the attention of your peers, the administration, and alumni. Check out FIRE’s op-ed resources [here](#). For inspiration, read these [examples](#) of other students’ articles!
 - If you see an instance of censorship, [pull the FIRE alarm](#). Consider writing an op-ed calling attention to potential violations of the First Amendment.
 - Conduct a meeting with your university’s administration. Discuss your concerns about the infringement of student rights on your campus. Advocate for revisions to your student handbook and university policies.
 - Find and contact the administrator in charge of the handbook. At many institutions, this will be an administrator in the Student Affairs office.
- 2** Launch a social media campaign in support of the First Amendment.
 - Follow FIRE on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).
 - Become an online advocate by sharing posts, hashtags, and other content about the importance of free speech.

- Highlight problematic policies and share instances of censorship with your audience.
- Advocate for students and educate them about their rights. Create awareness and spread information about each red flag and how to look out for it.
- Tag FIRE in your posts (@TheFIREorg).

3 Create a YouTube video that outlines your university’s specific speech restrictions or displays and describes common forms of censorship.

- For example, check out [FIRE Presents: The Do’s and Don’ts of Campus Activism](#), created by FIRE’s 2016 summer interns for inspiration.
- Subscribe to [FIRE’s YouTube channel](#).

4 Become a free speech ambassador, and launch your own advocacy campaign.

- Table in your student union, distribute [free speech guides](#), and publicly identify problematic policies such as free speech zones at your university (if your university [has one](#)).
- See this toolkit’s Graphics and Tools section for flyers to distribute.
- [Request](#) “When to pull the FIRE alarm” palm cards to distribute.

Create and share a presentation on your campus. Tailor the presentation to the unique speech codes at your university.

5

- Prepare a presentation for your peers so that they can learn how to identify censorship. Use [FIRE’s template](#) to get started!
- Aim to present for at least 15 minutes, and leave ample time for questions and discussion.
 - Take attendance and ask for participant contact information. Follow up with students who attended the presentation and ask for feedback. Use our [post-event survey](#) for reference.

Create, launch, and participate in a censorship scavenger hunt game on your campus. Invite as many student organizations to participate as is possible.

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- Use FIRE’s [game template](#) to get started or create your own activity.
- Take photos at the event to share with FIRE.

Host a FIRE Speaker Event on your campus.

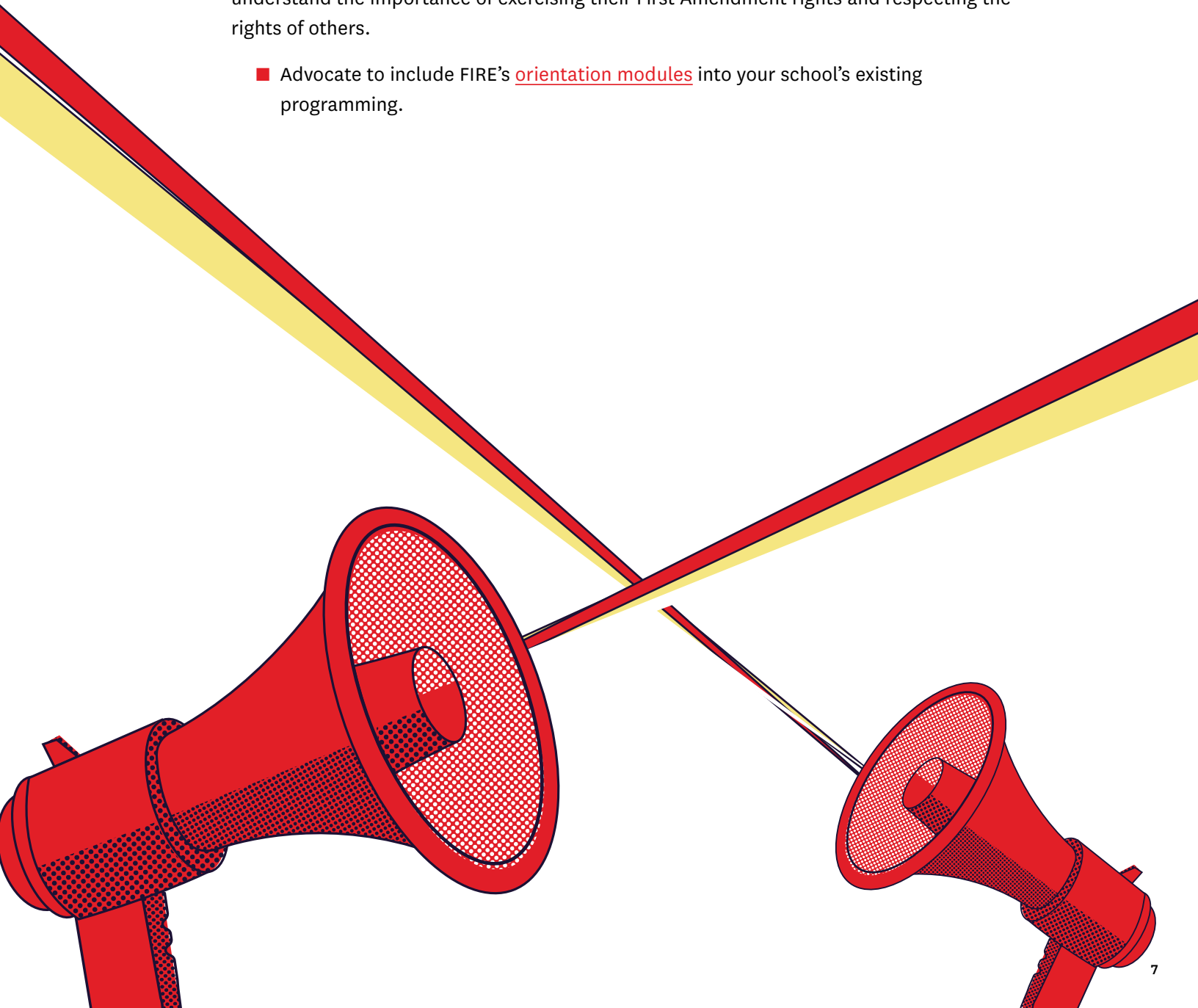
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- Schedule a FIRE speaker to present on your campus about censorship and how to take action. Be prepared to discuss your on-campus free speech plan with the FIRE speaker. Email students@thefire.org to schedule a speaker.
 - Tailor the discussion to the interests of your peers on campus.
- Advertise your event. Spread the word on social media, post flyers, and recruit attendees. Aim to draw as many student attendees as possible.
 - Prepare a follow-up discussion with the students who attended, in order to share ideas and discuss possible issues on campus.

8

Incorporate a presentation on campus censorship into your college orientation program. To ensure an open and robust campus climate for free expression, incoming students should understand the importance of exercising their First Amendment rights and respecting the rights of others.

- Advocate to include FIRE's [orientation modules](#) into your school's existing programming.



THE CHALLENGE

WE CHALLENGE YOU TO:

- 1** Recognize and identify possible “red flags” or forms of restricted speech on campus. Using this toolkit and other resources from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) Student Network, learn when to pull the FIRE alarm — if you see speech being restricted, contact FIRE at <https://thefire.org/alarm>.
- 2** Educate your campus community on how to identify problematic policies and how to respond when faced with censorship on campus.
- 3** Coordinate one or more toolkit campaign activities, and work to improve policies that suppress academic freedom and free expression at your school.

4 Let FIRE know how you became a resource to other student activists. Be an advocate for the advocates!

5 Sign up to be part of the FIRE Student Network, and take down censorship.

Are you ready to take on this challenge?
Let FIRE know that you are by [signing up](#) today!

THE RULES

This contest is sponsored by FIRE. Contest entrants must be undergraduate or graduate students at colleges or universities in the United States.

The contest will launch on November 23, 2020 and end on April 30, 2021. To be eligible for a prize, you must perform each of the following steps within the aforementioned timeframe.

- 1 [Sign up](#) for the Amplify the Activists Toolkit challenge
- 2 Engage in free speech-related activism efforts, using the “activities” section as inspiration
- 3 [Report your results](#) to FIRE as specifically as possible

All contest entries will be reviewed by a panel of judges with expertise in free speech and campus activism.

In awarding prizes, the following criteria may be taken into account.

- The number of campaign actions completed.
- The impact on your campus community
- Your creativity in the campaign’s execution
- Your creativity in the campaign’s execution
- The extent to which the campaign worked alongside diverse coalitions on campus
- The specific descriptions of your activism efforts
- Any follow-up efforts occurring after the completed campaign activities

THE PRIZES

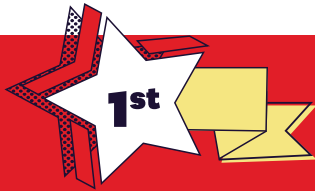
To recognize students who distinguish themselves through their First Amendment advocacy, FIRE will select three winners to receive an assortment of prizes.

In order to be considered for a prize, participants should submit an activism report by April 30, 2021.

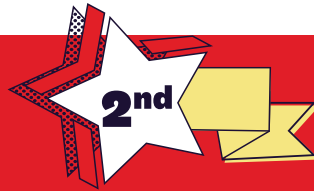
Please be very specific in describing your efforts. Consider taking photos, posting on social media, writing follow-ups after each activity, and otherwise documenting your efforts.

The winners will be announced by **May 14, 2021**.

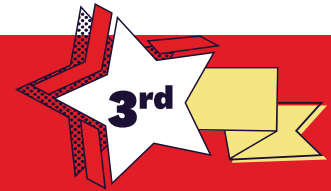
All prizes may be adjusted based on specific needs and group dynamics.



FIRE crew neck sweater
Kit of exclusive FIRE swag
Your prize-winning initiatives will be featured on FIRE's Newsdesk
\$1,000 activism grant for a future initiative
Full travel costs for a FIRE Student Network conference if accepted to attend
Sponsor of a FIRE speaker to present at your university

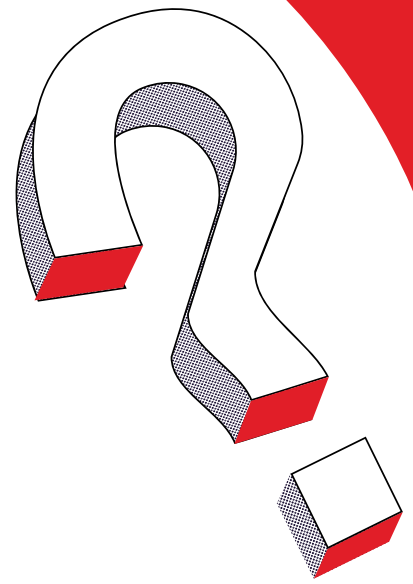


FIRE crew neck sweater
Kit of exclusive FIRE swag
\$500 activism grant for a future initiative
Sponsor of a FIRE speaker to present at your university



FIRE crew neck sweater
Kit of exclusive FIRE swag
\$250 activism grant for a future initiative

TIPS AND RESOURCES



TIPS

[Tips for Activism](#)

[5 Steps to Fight Campus Press Censorship](#)

[Student Press Resources](#)

[How to Host a FIRE Speaker](#)

[Checklist for Hosting an Event](#)

RESOURCES

[Learn more about your student rights](#)

[Student Rights on Campus Guides](#)

[When to Pull the FIRE Alarm](#)

[Correcting Common Mistakes in Campus Speech Policies](#)

[Free Speech Zones](#)

[MSTU First Amendment Encyclopedia: Free Speech Zones](#)

[Free Speech at Freshman Orientation Modules](#)

[Learn More About Student Rights](#)

[FAQs for Defending Rights](#)

[FIRE's Spotlight Database](#)

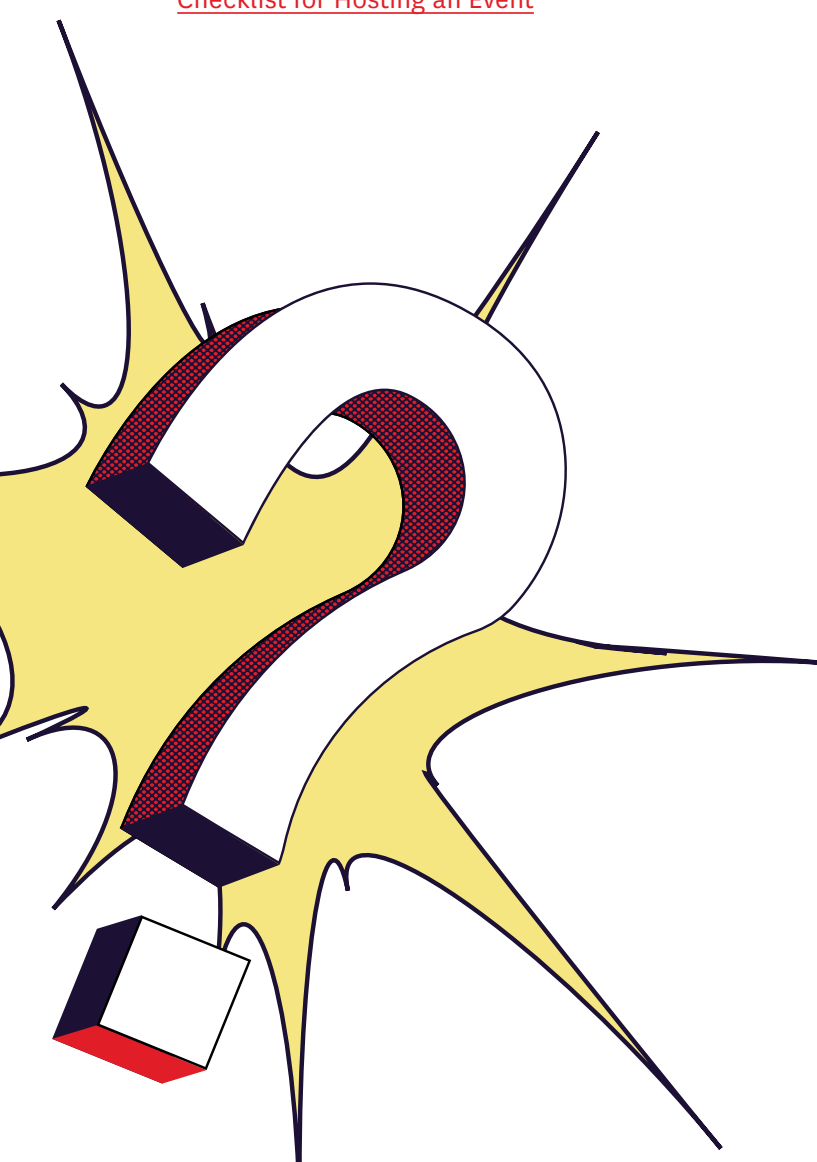
[First Amendment Library](#)

[List of colleges and universities that have adopted the "Chicago Statement"](#)

[So to Speak: The Free Speech Podcast](#)

[All Minus One: John Stuart Mill's Ideas on Free Speech, Illustrated](#)

[Campus Expression Survey Manual](#)



GRAPHICS AND TOOLS

[DOWNLOAD THE GRAPHICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA KIT](#)

Use these graphics to promote and enhance your “AMPLIFY THE ACTIVISTS” initiatives on campus.

TWITTER



Shareable Graphic 1200x675px



Profile Photo 400x400px



Header Photo 1500x500px

FACEBOOK



Cover Photo 851x315px



Profile Photo 170x170px

INSTAGRAM



Graphic 1080x1080px



Story 1080x1920px