



Virtual Case Study:

Florida International University

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Our Committee's Goals



- Research the speaker
- Gain insight on Campus Climate and their response to this speaker
- Provide a safe learning environment for all attending, protesting and/or, avoiding this event
- Contact speaker and their team to ensure open communication, expectations and needs for event
- Educate students on what it means to be a public university and how this plays a role in speakers coming to campus

Values In Mind

Students at our university have the right to exercise and observe the First Amendment. We will remind students that the university's values must be kept in mind when selecting speakers and interacting with others on campus.

Controversial Speaker Taskforce

Proactive measures to be taken prior to event:

- Allocated funds in order to fund security in the event of protest
- Collaborative relationship with University Police Department
- Conduct an open forum allowing students to voice concerns and to allow for voices to be heard
- Provide university with ample notice of the events date, time and location.
- Send university population alternative routes to take in the event they want to avoid the event.
- Giving notice of which pathways on campus will be blocked off for this event and between which times.

Message from the President

The President of the university will send a video message via email to all students, staff, faculty and alumni in regards to the speaker on campus which will include:

- University's Zero Tolerance for Violence, Weapons & Drugs on Campus
- The speaker is within their rights of Free Speech and we must respect that
- Create and support respectful dialogue on campus
- Acknowledging that student organizations can invite speakers of their choosing

Important Quote for University Officials

“As always, honoring an individual’s rights does not imply an endorsement of their message by the university and allowing someone to speak is not the same as welcoming their speech. This is true with any speaker who comes to our campuses.”

Setting

Public vs. Private Institution

We understand that rights and respect are something that both types of institutions uphold for their students.

If we act as a Private Institution, we would assume there are policies in place for Administration to Approve or Deny a speaker coming to Campus based on if they uphold the values of the institution.

Inciting Violence

Administration would also send out a memo with guidelines for free speech areas on campus as well as policies and procedures for protesting on the college's campus.

We encourage students to speak their minds and let their voices be heard as long as it is done in a respectful manner for both sides to voice their opinion and no one gets hurt.

Key Characters for this situation



VPSA & Dean of Students

These people will be in constant communication with our Committee. They will also be facilitating an open forum prior to the event for students' voices to be heard.



University Police Chief

The Chief of Police will be solely in charge of preparing Security and blockades of certain routes on campus the day of event. Also issuing statement and security for students on campus.



General Counsel

The General Counsel's team will be in charge of making sure all laws and rights are being followed and allocated to students/anyone involved. They will also be in charge of relaying information to the general public as well as combating false information.



Counseling & Psychological Services

This team will be readily available on campus during the event as well as prior and post to ensure resources are available for students.

Support for Staff

All Departments will be encouraged to have staff meetings prior to the event to provide support for staff members as well as go over protocol for the day of the event.

Support for Students

The Town Hall will be an open forum for students to express how their ideas, views and emotions in regards to the Speaker coming to Campus.

The Town Hall will be facilitated by a Dean of Students designee or the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Internal Conduct Process

University's Student Conduct Office will have guidelines in place for an internal process to handle students who disrupt speakers or incite violence at public events as such.

Statement Via Email Going Out to Student Body from the University President

Although this speaker has created controversy on a variety of campuses, it is important for us to remember that we are a public university where the First Amendment is exercised and observed. As members of our community, it is important that we be committed to our core values of:

- Truth- in the pursuit, generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge;
- Freedom- of thought and expression;
- Respect- for diversity and the dignity of the individual;
- Responsibility- as stewards of the environment and citizens of the world; and
- Excellence- in intellectual, personal, and operational endeavors.

If you walk by this event or attend and feel you want to talk to someone, please visit with one of the Student Affairs staff that will be there to support you. We recognize that this event may be upsetting to some members of the university community; however, we must maintain our campus as a forum for dialog and expression.

Proactive Measures to be Taken Before Committee Meeting

- Attendees must be made aware to review current guidelines
- Reach out to student leaders and Student Organization Advisors, have them also review the current guidelines and become familiar with them and then invite 3 student leaders to the committee meeting to allow for their input
- Make clear that the students' feedback will be taken into account but that the ultimate decision will be made by the committee voting. Students' votes will count.

Guidelines for Speakers and Events

At the time of the committee meeting to review guidelines, students expressed that the current guidelines were too vague, that repercussions for “misconduct” were too harsh and that the administration needed to think further ahead about how some speakers may affect the students on campus. Students asked that the administration make more efforts to be more in touch with the campus climate and student identities.

Professional staff members on the committee agreed with much of the students’ concerns and came to several conclusions after continued discussion.

The Results

- More specific guidelines were set in place for campus speakers and for designated free speech areas that would not obstruct the flow of traffic for students.
- “Misconduct” was more specifically defined and more appropriate consequences for negative actions were agreed upon by students and administrative staff.
- Students felt heard and cared about by being asked to join the meeting and *literally* having a seat at the table.
- University communication goes out explaining the recent changes. This results in students being more invested in the guidelines in place because they felt as though they (or at least their representatives) had a hand in putting them together.
- Students and administrative staff agree that it would be beneficial for all parties to include students and their perspectives more often. This situation has now inspired greater inclusion of students in the creation of campus guidelines and policies for the future.

Questions?



Thank you so much for your time!