



Make Free Speech Again On Campus (MFSAOC) Program Executive Summary

The Make Free Speech Again On Campus (MFSAOC) Program is an interactive forum and nexus for high school and college students to start S.A.P.I.E.N.T. Being clubs, chapters, and alliances on campus—where conservative, independent, and liberal minded students can meet, discuss, and debate critical issues without cancel culture and free speech suppression by utilizing the sapient principles of intellectual humility, viewpoint diversity, and freedom of expression.

The S.A.P.I.E.N.T. Being is a new 21st century organization whose philosophical roots and principles of wisdom focus on a world view with a humanistic approach to debating and addressing our most pressing issues with sapience.

Acting as a leader, consensus builder and nexus for public policy debates on and off campus, S.A.P.I.E.N.T. Being organizations and members can rise above political party lines and ideologies, and learn, connect, and advance their sapient skillsets for the betterment of themselves, their schools and society in general—and reach a higher state of being in the process. From a personal perspective, our vision through your involvement and participation is to develop sapience (wisdom) through character development.

Throughout your intellectual journey, our “mission” is your activism be it on campus or off—and our “vision” of your character development is reaching a higher state of being of sapient being—that will benefit themselves and humanity. Together, our long-term goal is to create a society advancing personal enlightenment and intelligence now together (S.A.P.I.E.N.T.).

Our immediate goal is to provide high school and college students the opportunity to start and experience S.A.P.I.E.N.T. Being campus clubs, chapters, and alliances and their membership and activism programs with the mission of making free speech again on campus, enhancing viewpoint diversity and developing intellectual humility as essential prerequisites for sapience explained in more detail below.

Make Free Speech Again On Campus

Censorship in the academic community is commonplace. Students and faculty are increasingly being investigated and punished for controversial, dissenting or simply discomforting speech. It is time for colleges and universities to take a deep breath, remember who they are and reaffirm their fundamental commitment to freedom of expression.

Enough is enough. Our colleges and universities should redeem the promise of the new academic year by reaffirming their commitments to freedom of expression. The level and ranking of freedom of speech on campus must be restored with an A+ report card.

Backed by a strong commitment to freedom of expression and academic freedom, faculty could challenge one another, their students, and the public to consider new possibilities, without fear of reprisal. Students would no longer face punishment for exercising their right to speak out freely about the issues most important to them.

Instead of learning that voicing one's opinions invites silencing, students would be taught that spirited debate is a vital necessity for the advancement of knowledge. And they would be taught that the proper response to ideas they oppose is not censorship, but argument on the merits. That, after all, is what a university is for.

Free speech and academic freedom will not protect themselves. With public reaffirmation of the necessity of free speech on campus, the current wave of censorship that threatens the continuing excellence of U.S. higher education can be repudiated, as it should be, as a transitory moment of weakness that disrespects what our institutions of higher learning must represent—truth.

Enhancing Viewpoint Diversity

Colleges and universities—and their students, educators, administrators, boards of trustees, and alumni—must maximize support for free expression, intellectual pluralism, and most of all viewpoint diversity.

A 2016 Gallup survey found that more than one in four college students felt colleges should be able to restrict students from “expressing political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups,” while nearly half were open to restricting press access to public events.

Given the current undergraduate tendency toward intellectual orthodoxy, one wonders: Would the advances of the feminist movement even have happened, had the campus conformists of a half-century ago had their way?

Respect for freedom of speech and diversity of thought are essential for achieving civil and thoughtful discourse, but also for enabling societal progress itself. Progress relies on early agitators, who are willing to speak out and press forward, no matter the backlash they engender. Many ideas once considered heretical have become accepted wisdom, thanks to early dissenters challenging the tide.

Real change relied on the courage of young women during the 1960s and 1970s, who stood up for equal opportunity in higher education and the workforce. They faced vocal opposition from many college alumni, professors, and fellow students. Nevertheless, these women persisted, no matter how “problematic” their efforts may have been considered. Their determined activism paved the way for the generations to come.

Today's campus conformists are in danger of squandering this legacy. How can students learn, think, and grow without exposure to unexpected, challenging ideas? How can any campus fulfill its mission of preparing tough-minded and capable students if it instills in them a desire to squelch opposing views rather than a willingness to consider and confront them?

Perhaps some unwise ideas will be presented with which students will vociferously disagree, but this debate will strengthen campus discourse and help students become independent thinkers. In the end, students—and society—can only benefit from embracing the free marketplace of ideas.

Developing Intellectual Humility

Intellectual humility is a mindset that guides our intellectual conduct. In particular, it involves recognizing and owning our intellectual limitations in the service of pursuing deeper knowledge, truth, and understanding.

Saint Augustine famously called humility the foundation of all other virtues. Sir John Templeton himself spoke and wrote about the need for a humble approach to knowledge and discovery that touches on the “big questions” of science such as philosophy, theology, and human nature.

Intellectual humility speaks to people’s willingness to reconsider their views, to avoid defensiveness when challenged, and to moderate their own need to appear “right.” It is sensitive to counter-evidence, realistic in outlook, strives for accuracy, shows little concern for self-importance, and is corrective of the natural tendency to strongly prioritize one’s own needs.

When we discuss important, controversial issues with others, our initial responses to their arguments tend to be shaped by our preferences, identities, and prior opinions. Intellectual humility buffers against those responses so that we can become more “truth-oriented.” It helps us overcome our self-centered inclinations in discussion and learning, making us more likely to follow the evidence where it leads and positioning us to better understand the truth.

Humbly stated, our understanding of intellectual humility has expanded considerably over the last decade, but much more remains to be explored and clarified. The S.A.P.I.E.N.T. Being can help.