



The Usual Place, September 12, 2017,

Campus Safety as it Pertains to Current Events on Campus

The item for the good of the University was concerning campus safety in regards to recent demonstrations and controversies surrounding free speech on campus. Fellows wondered how should the University handle people who choose to be unsafe, and how to handle disagreements among personalities relating to campus safety.

Fellows described campus community based methods for minimizing risk and danger, such as crowd control training for UCPD and a system wide special response team.

Fellows mentioned the Milo event from last February and expressed concern that history could repeat itself. Many wondered what is being done to prevent such recurrence. Other Fellows remarked that the campus was overwhelmed by the external force last Spring and will be much more prepared this time around. There will be greater focus on a perimeter and strong enforcement of a prohibited items list to better ensure safety in demonstration.

Some Fellows inquired about an old system of neutral bystanders that served to discourage violence in demonstrations and also serve as objective witnesses. Others responded that such a system – the Observer Program – still exists and is in use. The campus will be putting monitors out in the area with “need help?” buttons for people to ask for assistance, inside and outside the perimeter during the event.

Fellows expressed optimism that most of the violent protest behavior is instigated from persons external to the campus community, and that in fact students lined up shoulder to shoulder to prevent that glass from being broken, and showed up at 5 AM the next day to clean up.

Fellows expressed concern that the perimeter will impact access to student services and programs in the student union, Chavez, and Eshleman. Other fellows responded that there will be announcements regarding contingency plans for those spaces.

A Fellow remarked that all ideas, no matter their intent or their desire, have to be equalized under the law independent of the merit of that idea. However the campus should consider the part it plays in serving as a platform and amplifier for ideas spread on the campus.

Some Fellows lamented that students and community members now often have shouting matches on the plaza instead of fruitful discussion, and this trend is mirrored nation-wide. They described the method of how ideas have been exchanged this past year have not been helping. It is less about ideas and now more about conflict and method of exchange.

A large portion of the conversation related to how best to respond to controversial speakers one doesn't agree with on campus. The national conversation has shifted. If one doesn't go to the event, they may be considered to be implicitly supporting or normalizing the ideas shared. However, attending puts oneself in danger or in

potentially violent situations. Additionally, attending potentially gives the speaker what they want, which is controversy and provocation. It is counterintuitive to try to shut them down if it emboldens their supporters and their narrative.

Another Fellow described the core problem – that the media is feeding ideology. Perhaps we can combat that by having faculty discuss these issues with students – give them a sense of ownership and caretaking for the University.

Fellows questioned if people can have conversational presence and change their own communities in response to these talks, in lieu of physical attendants. Fellows responded by saying that some people think they have no choice but to engage because their livelihood and identity is threatened, and we should find ways to support those people.

Other Fellows highlighted that monetary cost should not be the only cost considered in these situations. Fellows discussed how student histories with police could contribute to intangible yet significant mental costs on students. Fellows urged the campus to also consider non-monetary costs when weighing response options to controversial events.

In closing, some Fellows expressed dismay at the current level of conversation from the progressive left – in silencing opposing views, and assuming those with different views are enemies. Fellows declared that civil human conversations are needed in these times more than ever, and that people must be willing to look beyond the surface.

