



Oklahoma College President: This Is Not a Daycare. This Is a University!

With protests sweeping across America's college campuses, designed to impose a progressive worldview devoid of free speech, one college president in Oklahoma has decided to speak out. In a recent opinion piece, Oklahoma Wesleyan University President Dr. Everett Piper told students who do not wish to hear contrary viewpoints, "This is not a daycare. This is a university!"

With hundreds of college presidents no doubt quaking in fear after the student-forced resignation of University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe, Piper has stood up for the free exchange of ideas that has been the cornerstone of universities since the Middle Ages.

Piper began his column, posted on the university's website, by recounting an incident that took place after a chapel service at Wesleyan. A student told Piper he felt "victimized" by the sermon taken from the 13th chapter of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth — the famous "love chapter" of the New Testament. Piper wrote,

It appears that this young scholar felt offended because a homily on love made him feel bad for not showing love. In his mind, the speaker was wrong for making him, and his peers, feel uncomfortable.

"I'm not making this up," Piper felt compelled to explain, in case anyone thought this was a joke, based on recent events at other colleges across the nation. He continued,

Any time [students'] feelings are hurt, they are victims. Anyone who dares challenge them and, thus, makes them feel bad about themselves, is a "hater," a "bigot," an "oppressor," and a "victimizer."

Piper offered advice for a student who is interested in playing the "hater" card:

If you want to be enabled rather than confronted, there are many universities across the land (in Missouri and elsewhere) that will give you exactly what you want, but Oklahoma Wesleyan isn't one of them.

Oklahoma Wesleyan is not a "safe place," but rather a place to learn.... This is a place where you will quickly learn that you need to grow up.

In a previous column, Piper diagnosed the problem that has caused the present conditions in the universities. Referencing Richard Weaver and his famous book *Ideas Have Consequences*, Piper placed much of the blame for the student unrest on campuses on the universities themselves. "Run by the State and its thought police," Piper asserted, "colleges across the land have become indoctrination camps



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Written by [Steve Byas](#) on December 1, 2015

more so than campuses of open inquiry. Propaganda and power now reign.”

Piper zeroed in on the hypocrisy of American progressives who dominate the universities today:

The American university is imploding in its self-refuting duplicity. Safe zones are anything but safe. People are bullied by those decrying bullying. Rather than celebrate liberty, liberals now demand conformity. Campuses have become bastions for speech codes rather than free speech.... The banner of tolerance has become a dark flag of tyranny almost overnight. What was academic freedom yesterday has become ideological fascism today.

But where are all the thousands of other college presidents across the land who should be joining President Piper in his articulate defense of liberty and free speech?

At Princeton, protesters have occupied the president’s office, demanding changes, including stripping the name of former Princeton President Woodrow Wilson from all buildings. (Certainly conservatives can sympathize with those who have a low opinion of Wilson, but that is an article for another day.) Instead of simply having the trespassers arrested, the administrators at Princeton are cowering in fear that they will be targeted next for removal from office.

At most colleges and universities, the administration will not dare stand up for the free exercise of expression that should be the ideal of such institutions. On the contrary, the administrators usually join the mob, and demand conformity from the non-protesting student body and faculty in worshipping at the shrine of censorship of any ideas not acceptable to the progressive fascists. They force students to take certain courses in order to indoctrinate those who are not sufficiently “politically correct.”

But students at California’s Claremont McKenna College — journalists of the *Claremont Independent* — have challenged not only the student radicals, but also the administrators who have buckled to the demands of those who would suppress free speech on campus.

Their challenge is in response to the recent episode in which Claremont McKenna’s Dean Mary Spellman resigned following student protests of an e-mail she sent to a “Latina student,” in which she pledged to work with those who did not fit the “CM mold.” But Dean Spellman’s attempt to mollify students who use their “minority” status as a weapon did not work, and now she finds herself without a job.

In response to the protesters, and the weak reactions from Claremont McKenna’s administrators, the three student journalists of the *Claremont Independent* — Editor-in-chief Hannah Oh, Publisher Steven Glick, and Managing Editor Taylor Schmitt — authored a column entitled “We Dissent,” in which they expressed disappointment not only with Dean Spellman for allowing herself to be bullied into resigning, but also with those students who bullied her.

Their opinion piece mirrored the diagnosis of Dr. Piper of Oklahoma Wesleyan. They blamed the college for teaching the students at Claremont that emotional and angry reactions will force administrators to act as the protesters want.

Continuing to address Dean Spellman, the Claremont journalists wrote,

We are disappointed that you and President [Hiram] Chodosh put up with students yelling and swearing at you for an hour.... Above all, we are disappointed that you and President Chodosh weren’t brave enough to come to the defense of a student who was told she was “derailing” because her opinions regarding racism didn’t align with those of the mob around her.

They expressed disappointment that President Chodosh stood “idly by” and watched students “berate,



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course at, and attack Dean Spelling,” accusing her of being a “racist,” adding,

That only further reinforced the fear among the student body to speak out against this movement. We needed your leadership more than ever this week, and you failed us miserably.

Turning their attention to the students involved in the protests, they continued.

We are disappointed in your demands. If you want to take a class in “ethnic, racial, and sexuality theory,” feel free to take one, but don’t force such an ideologically driven course on all CMC students.

The disrespect for the concept of free speech is rampant on college campuses. For years, conservatives have either not been invited to speak, or if invited, they were often shouted down and even threatened with physical harm. Some have been hit by pies in the face, and some have even been driven from the stage by angry students.

Is this lack of regard for the open sharing of ideas limited to only a small group of radicals? According to a recent poll of 800 undergraduates across the country conducted by McLaughlin & Associates, 30 percent of students who identify as “liberal” believe the First Amendment is outdated. In addition, a majority (51 percent) of students favor codes on campus limiting free speech. Fifty-two percent of students surveyed agreed with the statement, “My college or university should forbid people from speaking on campus who have a history of engaging in hate speech.”

One presumes that the previous question was in regard to guest speakers. But what about the free exchange of ideas among the students and faculty already on the campus? A startling 72 percent of those queried agreed that “Any student or faculty member on campus who uses language that is considered racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise offensive should be subject to disciplinary action.”

One must ask: Who will make these judgments as to what is racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive? After all, the accusation of racism is thrown around incredibly loosely today. In some circles, simple opposition to a policy position of President Obama is considered racist. Others regard the Catholic Church as sexist for its doctrinal position of not ordaining women to the priesthood. A Christian student or faculty member who expresses a belief in the Bible as the word of God will be labeled homophobic by many.

As of now, student journalists such as those at the *Claremont Independent* and college presidents such as Dr. Piper are lone voices speaking out against this assault on liberty, free speech, and all the values that have been largely taken for granted as part of the purpose of the university.

Will other students, faculty, and administrators join them in defense of freedom of expression on campus?

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