



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 19, 2021

University of Chicago Students Fight Cancel Culture With New Website

While left-wing orthodoxy and the so-called cancel culture that goes along with it is now the norm on most American college campuses, one group of University of Chicago students is striking a blow for free speech. Conservative and libertarian students at the University have launched the [Chicago Thinker](#), a new website dedicated to defending “conservative and libertarian perspectives in a community that is increasingly intolerant of such voices.”

The Chicago Thinker’s mission statement explains its goal quite nicely: “Some things are too sacred to surrender to the mob, and the free exchange of ideas is one of them. The Chicago Thinker challenges the mob’s crusade against free speech by publishing thoughtful conservative and libertarian commentary, in addition to fact-driven reporting.”

The founders of the Thinker have taken up metaphorical arms against today’s campus leftism with courage, strength, and conviction. Their motto is “Outthink the Mob.” At their core is the idea that education is not meant to be a comfortable enterprise, where dogmas and groupthink are never challenged, but an argumentative free-for-all where truth can only be achieved through rigorous debate.

“We demand not to be coddled,” their editors declare in no uncertain terms.

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The University of Chicago has a longstanding commitment to free speech, codified in its [Chicago Principles](#), which lay out the university’s history and dedication to the debate and discussion of all viewpoints.

But while the university itself tolerates and encourages free expression and rigorous debate, the student community is infected by same the cancel-culture virus that currently afflicts the entire left wing of the political spectrum. The founding of the Chicago Thinker was at least partially inspired by a cancel-culture mob’s attack against one conservative student in 2020.

Evita Duffy, who describes herself as a conservative Hispanic woman, wrote an op-ed in *Chicago Maroon* in early 2020 explaining what she went through after she dared to voice the opinion that creeping socialism was far more dangerous than the coronavirus in a University of Chicago [Instagram message](#) about the importance of voting.



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“Fellow students attacked my character, my intellect, my family, my appearance, and even threatened me with physical violence, using foul and offensive language. I was called a racist and a xenophobe. Some compared me to animals. Others declared that they would personally stop me from voting, and many defended the personal attacks, saying I deserved to be bullied and that I don’t belong at the University of Chicago on account of my beliefs,” Duffy wrote.

Duffy went on to point out the respective death tolls from COVID-19 and socialism. At that time, the virus had killed 3,000 globally, which, Duffy pointed out, “pales in comparison to the tens of millions of people who have died at the hands of socialism and communism.”

Duffy is now one of the Thinker’s editors. The *Chicago Maroon* appears to have [removed](#) Duffy’s op-ed from its archives.

Other campus incidents triggered the creation of the Thinker. When a college council representative attempted to prevent mandatory student services fees from going to fund abortions, he was [pilloried and harassed](#) by not only students, but by Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion organizations. When Donald Trump ally Steve Bannon was invited to speak at the university, leftists complained until the invitation was finally rescinded.

But instead of forcing them underground in hope that the leftist mob on campus would leave them alone, these incidents led to conservatives on the campus finding their voice. And so was the Chicago Thinker born.

“We launched this summer because we believed it was time for conservatives and libertarians to speak up on our campus,” Chicago Thinker editor and publisher Audrey Unverferth told The College Fix.

“The University of Chicago is renowned for the Chicago Principles, meaning that the school very vehemently defends free speech, but even though those students don’t get in trouble for saying the wrong thing on campus from the administration, they are often penalized for wrongthink by their peers,” Unverferth said.

In this age of leftist dominance of mainstream media, social media, and Hollywood, it’s easy to get discouraged, throw up your hands, and give up. These students at the University of Chicago offer conservatives and all lovers of liberty an important lesson: In order to defeat the leftist mob, you have to engage them. Surrender is never a good option.



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