

# UC San Diego

## Student Affairs

### Student Affairs Book Club

*Building better practices through shared knowledge and dialogue*

**Book: Free Speech on Campus by Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman**

**Wednesday, October 25, 2017**

**12:15pm-1:30pm | Conference Room 111A, Chancellor's Complex [1hr 15 mins]**

### AGENDA

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#### A. Introductions

#### B. Group Discussion Agreements

#### C. Intro Activity

Participants answer a series of brief questions on free speech by moving to the side of the room corresponding to their answer (Example: *Move to the left side of the room if you agree with the statement, move to the right side of the room if disagree with the statement*)

#### D. Book & Scenario Discussion (book overview handout)

#### E. Closing

Announcements/ Choose book for next book club

### CONTEXT SETTING & BOOK DISCUSSION

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#### Context Setting

##### University of Michigan – Student Conduct Codes

In 1988 the University of Michigan adopted speech codes aimed at combating hate speech and discrimination after a series of racist incidents directed specifically at Black students the previous year. Following the policy's implementation, the University witnessed a number of complaints, "not against the kinds of purely hateful slurs that inspired its passage but against people who expressed opinions that others objected to" (p.99). A federal judge subsequently struck down the policy, stating that University of Michigan's speech codes were too broad and vague.

#### Discussion Questions

- According to the authors, free speech discussions have polarized into two camps: one side is dismissive of protecting students from harmful speech and considers issues of "coddling" and "political correctness", the other side believes that free speech rights are secondary to protecting the learning experience of students. As a student affairs professional, how do you balance free speech concerns with the responsibility of creating positive, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments for all students?  
P. ix-xi

- The authors state that the “historic link between free speech and the protection of dissenters and vulnerable groups is outside the direct experience of today’s students and it was too distant to affect their feelings about freedom of speech.” Do you agree with this statement? Pg. 11
- What responsibility do you believe you play in educating students about free speech/hate speech issues? How these teaching moments play out?
- In your work, what challenging conversations have you had about Freedom of Expression? How did those conversation play out? Where did you feel that you were lacking and could have used help in the discussion?
- Do you agree with the authors’ position that, “although advocates for speech codes claim that hate speech plays no part in the legitimate expression of ideas, we believe that censorship of words leads inevitably to the censorship of ideas.” Pg. 109-110