



Conservative Perspectives On Campus Are Being Dismissed

Stephen Talik

September 2, 2020

Let's come out and say it. Conservatives feel like they cannot safely espouse their thoughts and opinions out loud and in public. Unfortunately, reprisals against conservatives are taking place nationwide, but this is especially true at colleges and universities. Unfortunately, it happens everywhere even on campus. Conservative students on campus are receiving retaliations against them, and they feel the pressure. Thankfully these retaliations have mostly been limited to name calling and insults.

Alexander Chapa, sophomore political science major, has experienced this response firsthand.

“Socially...I have felt discriminated against because I am a Hispanic conservative. White liberals have called me a ‘fake Mexican’, traitor, whitewashed, or other racial and derogatory terms because I do not share the same ideological perspectives as them,” Chapa said.

Some professors here have made it perfectly clear in class which side of the political spectrum they fall on, and many students on campus are actively involved in movements or organizations they feel passionately about. It is well-known that conservatives are in a strong minority here, and that's perfectly okay. While the vast majority of schools in this country tend to be more liberal, there is a few that are majority conservative.

The issue comes when it doesn't feel safe to express opinions. Some of the cases around the country have been reported. Recently, ABC reported on freshman students at the University of Texas Austin being threatened with “doxing” which is making public private and sensitive information such as address, zip codes, personal documents, and more, for joining conservative clubs or organizations. ABC also reported on a republican student at University of California, Berkeley being punched and beaten, while an employee of the university cheered on his attacker making it evident that conservatives need to be careful what they say, and who they say it around. And this fear of being attacked is widespread. A national survey done by The Cato Institute found that strong majorities of independents and republicans say that the climate around them prevents them from saying things they believe and forces them to keep their opinions to themselves.

There has also been other incidents around the country like Alliance Defending Freedom's press release from March 2019 reporting that Louisville professor, Allan Josephson, was fired for appearing at a conservative think tank. Recently, Forbes reported on a boycott that was launched against the food company Goya because its owner is a supporter of President Trump. On Aug. 18, Fox News reported on a professor at Iowa State who threatened to dismiss any students who disagreed with her opinion on a number of things, such as abortion, gay marriage, and more.

Luckily, nothing quite that extreme has happened so far at St. Mary's. But there is no guarantee it will stay that way. Students need to be able to speak their mind without having to watch their back, and that means this behavior needs to stop.

Other students feel sympathetic for the conservative students. Although, they themselves might not believe in it they value discourse and a diversity of thought.

Sophomore political science major, Omar Herrera-Miramontes, personally identifies as a moderate, but feels for the conservative population as he strongly believes in that student discourse.

“As a moderate student—we are living during changing times and I feel it has been difficult for students to express their views,” Herrera-Miramontes said. “At many other campuses there are active Young Republicans or Young Democrats chapters. At St. Mary's they exist, but they're rebuilding. This might be were some of the problems are.”

Fortunately, such things have not happened at St. Mary's and the community on campus is unlikely to end up doxing students. But we have seen mild harassment and name calling like in Chapa's case. Students may feel that because of examples like these they need to remain silent and not rock the boat.

Look, let's not pretend that conservatives have all the answers. Nor are they always right. But by the same token, the same also goes for the liberals. Part of what makes America great is the freedom to express opinions and to be able to discuss political ideals and dreams out loud without fear. The conversation about how to make America better requires opinions from all sides and that conversation is impossible to have if half the voices are silenced.