

Everybody's Talking: Responses to ISFLC

Posted on February 22, 2011 by Blayne Bennett

As things geared up, SFL Executive Board member Pericles Niarchos and Campus Coordinator Michelle Fields went on [Judge Napolitano's Freedom Watch](#) to promote the conference:



The Libertarian Party produced a short video about their experience at the ISFLC:



All of us at SFL think the International Conference was amazing, but what do others have to say? Turns out, a number of people were impressed with the "normalcy" of ISFLC attendees, and meant that as a compliment! Take, for instance, [Bryan Caplan's impression of the attendees](#):

The Students for Liberty conference has to be seen to be believed: the attendance (about 500 students), the energy (off the charts), and most remarkably of all, the high social skills.

Caplan wasn't the only one that noticed. His GMU colleague, Ilya Somin, [also agreed that students were socially well-adjusted](#), stating:

... the SFL students I met had vastly better social skills and are generally much more socially "normal" than were the young libertarians of my own generation. ... A closely related trend is the high proportion of women among today's young libertarians. By my rough estimate, about 40–45% of the SFL attendees were female. That's a sea change from twenty years ago, when young libertarians were an overwhelmingly male group. Considering that [women are on average less](#)

interested in politics than men are in general, the percentage of women in SFL is roughly what one would expect in a student political group that isn't specifically focused on "women's issues."

Gene Healy was also impressed by the caliber of student attendees at the ISFLC, discussing the conference in an [article for the Washington Examiner](#):

... I started my own campus libertarian group in the early '90s, before Al Gore's "information superhighway" had come online. Back then, we considered ourselves lucky when we could get a couple of dozen socially awkward malcontents together to grumble about the government.

Maybe that's why I found the crowd at GW so impressive. The students at the SFL conference were extraordinarily well-read, highly motivated—and shockingly normal.

Perhaps my favorite line in Gene's piece is his disclaimer explaining that he works at the Cato Institute, which gives SFL office space, noting:

... where you can usually find three eager tykes crammed in among stacks of pizza boxes and subversive literature.

SFL has been able to do so much with so little. And while my fellow staff members and I work incredibly hard, it should not go without noting that the entire SFL Executive Board pulls off incredible feats all while attending classes, working, and attempting to maintain some semblance of a college student's social life.

I am so happy that SFL has been able to connect and develop a network of diverse, active, passionate, funny, kind, and intelligent libertarians – all of whom I think are anything but "normal" in all the best ways possible.



The "shockingly normal" attendees at the 2011 International Students For Liberty Conference

Cheers to you, pro-liberty students.

But that's not all! Keep an eye out for an announcement regarding the release of the [reason.tv](#) coverage and the airing of the STOSSEL show that was taped at the ISFLC!

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