

# THE DAILY ORANGE

## **Students should separate political views from their personal lives**

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When coined in the 1960s as a rallying cry for second-wave feminists, the phrase “the personal is political” struck a chord with many Americans.

Since then, the ethos of “the personal is political” has been broadened beyond feminism and incorporated into the general attitude of American politics and, especially, of college campuses such as Syracuse University. It is past time, though, to reclaim some space above the fray for the private, for the individual and for the intimate. The personal is not always political, and the political is not always personal.

Politics has thrust itself into just about everything these days. At SU, it’s inescapable. Now is a prime time to compartmentalize and relegate politics for its own time and place. The world is too cruel for us to quarrel needlessly with our fellow students. Instead, this moment calls for propriety and accord.

However, for conservatives at SU, the day-to-day experience of having to walk on eggshells around classmates, teachers and friends is real and disheartening. For some, conservative beliefs must be painted over with a progressive veneer for fear of stirring heated controversy and ruthless judgement from those with whom we associate.

SU is a diverse institution that brings to campus people from all corners of the political compass, and college is the time and place for tightly-held ideas to be challenged and subject to acute scrutiny. However, college is also a time to form lasting friendships and close rapport with some of the brightest and best students the nation has to offer.

We students at SU should aim to surround ourselves with friends who can appreciate the occasional political sparring match without letting it diminish the bonds of camaraderie. Such debate will make our minds sharper; after all, why attend such a fine institution just to stay stagnant in political complacency?

But, first and foremost, recognizing the ample opportunities for us to associate pleasantly with one another before resorting to unproductive partisan arguments is important .

Truth be told, we're all guilty of making a sport of politics from time to time. For political junkies like me, the best night of the semester is when the College Republicans and College Democrats face-off in Maxwell Auditorium, and it's not because we get to witness a calm, rational back-and-forth. I watch, on the edge of my seat, in the event that one of my conservative classmates hits the audience with a seismic one-liner that decisively ends the debate.

Afterward, I always head home daydreaming of my next conversation with one of my politically-liberal friends. I don't aspire to slam dunk on them the way the College Republicans do on their Democratic counterparts. I dream, instead, of the respectful civic discourse that defines the best collegiate encounters.

At times, looking past political differences and seeing what binds us together may seem difficult. Many SU bodies and organizations are no help when it comes to mending the politically-polarized divide that has scourged this nation and this campus.

It is no mistake that SU ranks in the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's top 10 worst colleges for free speech. Organizations such as SU's Student Association participate in a campus cancel culture against mainstream conservatives.

When College Republicans even mention hosting speakers like former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, SA makes a point of distancing itself from the views of the potential conservative speakers in a way that it wouldn't do for liberal speakers. SA in April went as far as passing a resolution condemning College Republicans' plan to host conservative commentator Ben Shapiro this fall.

Candidly, even The Daily Orange has found itself guilty of drawing the left and right farther apart and muzzling conservative voices. It's no surprise that 62% of Americans fear speaking their minds out of concern that such an act in today's unforgiving political landscape would cost

them jobs or friendships, according to a 2020 study from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. That percent, which would be fitting for a communist dictatorship, is unacceptable for this great, free country.

SU needs to set the example for our community and our country. In the halls of our colleges, the university can show the nation that it's above this culture of silencing and ostracizing — and separating the personal from the political is where SU can start.