



Looking Outward

Dan Glode
Columnist

Don't shield students from things they don't like

Political correctness has become a straightjacket.

— Gary Oldman

Sometimes before I begin a column I just know it is going to get someone angry. This seems like one of those times. For a guy like me, sometimes the present day seems like a verbal minefield.

Hey, I'm a lawyer, so in the way of a disclaimer/apology let me explain a bit of my background. I was born and raised on the East Coast: New Haven, Connecticut to be exact. We are New York Yankee fans from where I come, so you can forget the Sox and the green wall. I went to a Catholic

all-boys high school, Notre Dame. I was educated by the Brothers of the Holy Cross at a time when corporal punishment was liberally applied. The Brothers were devoted to prayer and teaching, and they took both seriously.

New Haven was a very diverse city, and many ethnic groups were represented and my high school illustrated the community at large and was mostly a mixture of kids of Italian, Polish, Irish and German decent. We referred to each other by a multitude of slang expressions designating those groups. We can't print them anymore. We were best friends, and to us the words had no offensive sense or valence about them. There were limits, however, and all knew what they were and didn't step over that invisible line.

That brings me to a letter John Ellison, Dean of Students at the University of Chicago, sent incoming first-year students. He said that the University specifically rejects the culture of political correctness and referred to a report by a Committee on Freedom of Expression:

"It is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive...

Although the University greatly values civility, and although all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community."

He also said they don't support "trigger warnings" (warnings about offensive content in written material) and "safe places" where students can retreat from ideas at odds with their own.

As you can imagine, Ellison's letter triggered a cultural tidal wave of epic proportions.

He was accused, among other things, of trying to promote a backlash of the elites against political correctness, of not understanding the role of power and its use against certain groups, and a countless other infractions large and small.

Perhaps I'm archaic (I've been called worse) and out of touch but I thought he was trying to tell incoming students they would be exposed to a wide variety of ideas and some of these ideas they wouldn't like, some they

might find offensive and some would just piss them off. I always thought that at a university we were supposed to foster ideas of every type, to foster honest debate, to change minds, to accept new concepts and help people grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Ellison was specifically *not* promoting rudeness but the free exchange of ideas. A free exchange, by its very definition, means no one gets to agree with everything that is said. That is central to a university and a part of it since they were invented in the middle ages. Isn't that a reason that tenured professors came into being?

In spite of recent occurrences at some universities they remain safe places.

What better place is there to learn how to understand and cope with adversity? Conflict? People with Neanderthal ideas and beliefs? People of all colors and cultures? Most of all, learning how to adapt to an environment where all don't agree with you and don't understand you. I think Professor Ellison was preparing students for the fact that at some point they leave the rarified air of the university and open the door to the world.

They need to be prepared for this. They will have to find their own safe places when that day comes. It's either going to be a shock to them or a transition. I think Professor Ellison was hoping for the latter.

Serving Sisters Since 1976

HOYT'S HARDWARE & BUILDING SUPPLY, Inc.

Need to get going on fall projects? We've got everything you need!

FREE Local Delivery

**Lumber • Hardware • Paint
Fencing & Decking • Doors & Windows**

**Hours: M-F 8 to 5, Sat. 8 to 4:30, Closed Sundays
440 N. Pine St. • 541-549-8141 • www.hoyts.net**

Please Connect Your Ray's All Access Rewards Program Account to Furry Friends Foundation

**It's FREE and we get 1% back on your purchases.
It's an easy and great way to donate!**



Shop locally, donate locally!
Thank you for your support.



With your Access Rewards account information in hand (the number is on the back of your card), you can call, email, or visit Ray's to connect to Furry Friends Foundation.

- Call 541-412-0005
- Email AllAccess@ckmarket.com
- Visit the Ray's Customer Service Counter and ask to connect your account number to Furry Friends for the All Access Community Rewards Program.

FURRY FRIENDS FOUNDATION

501(c)(3)

www.FurryFriendsFoundation.org

Sisters Pet Food Bank • Spay/Neuter Sponsorships • Emergency Medical Assistance