

ANOTHER JESUIT-RUN SCHOOL TANKS ON FREE SPEECH

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For the past several years, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) has published a survey on the status of free speech on college campuses. In my [remarks](#) on the 2021 study, I pointed out that three Jesuit-run institutions—Fordham University, Boston College and Marquette University—were listed among the worst in the nation. In the 2022-2023 survey, another Jesuit school, Georgetown, was rated #200. Only three schools out of a total of 203 were rated worse; Columbia University was dead last.

Georgetown shows such contempt for free speech that it merited a special section in the study. Three specific cases, all very serious, were cited.

In 2022, Ilya Shapiro was suspended over a tweet thread in which he criticized President Biden's pledge to nominate a black woman to the Supreme Court. Dean William Treanor issued a statement denouncing the tweets, insisting that Georgetown is committed to "inclusion, belonging, and respect for diversity." [Note: Treanor said nothing about Georgetown's commitment to academic freedom.] Shapiro was eventually reinstated, but the damage was done; he subsequently resigned.

In 2021, Sandra Sellers was fired over a viral video in which she was unknowingly recorded talking to her colleague, David Batson, about the relatively poor performance of black students in her class. Dean Treanor condemned the two of them, pledging commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Batson later resigned following the backlash.

In 2021, Timothy Wickham-Crowley made jokes in class that evoked racial stereotypes and for dropping the n-word when

reading aloud from a course textbook. He was investigated by the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Affirmative Action. While it was determined that his conduct was not “severe or pervasive,” he was no longer asked to teach again.

These incidents say nothing about the way students, especially conservative students, feel about freely expressing their thoughts on campus. But Georgetown didn’t earn a lousy rating on the basis of muzzling the free speech of faculty alone.

It should be pointed out that Georgetown’s fidelity to Catholic teachings has long been questioned. It has two pro-abortion clubs on campus: H*YAS for Choice for undergraduates, and Georgetown Law Students for Reproductive Justice. It has no racist clubs on campus—nor should it—but it has no problem allowing pro-abortion clubs. For liberals, racism is clearly more offensive than child abuse in the womb.

As I said with regard to Fordham, Boston College and Marquette, the time has come for these schools “to have a campus-wide forum on the root causes of Jesuit intolerance for freedom of speech.” Georgetown needs to do the same.