

**LET**

**THEM**

**SPEAK!**

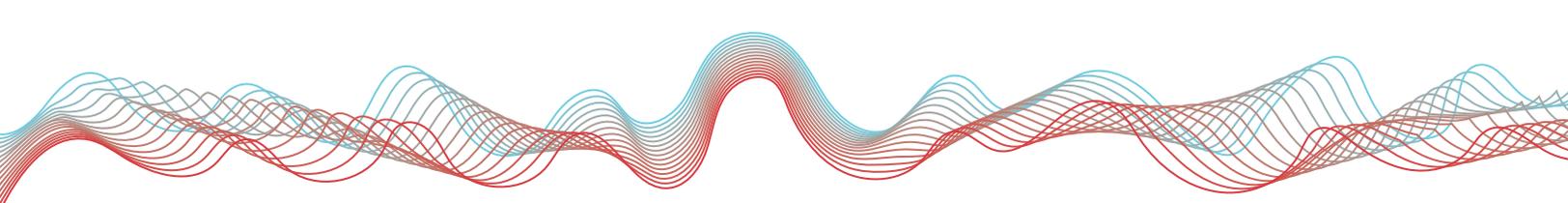
**CAMPUS ACTIVISM TOOLKIT**

**SPRING SEMESTER 2018**



**FIRE**

**THEFIRE.ORG**



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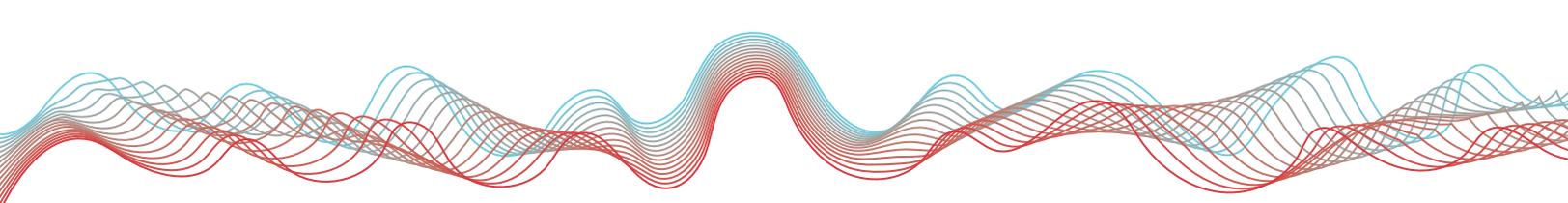
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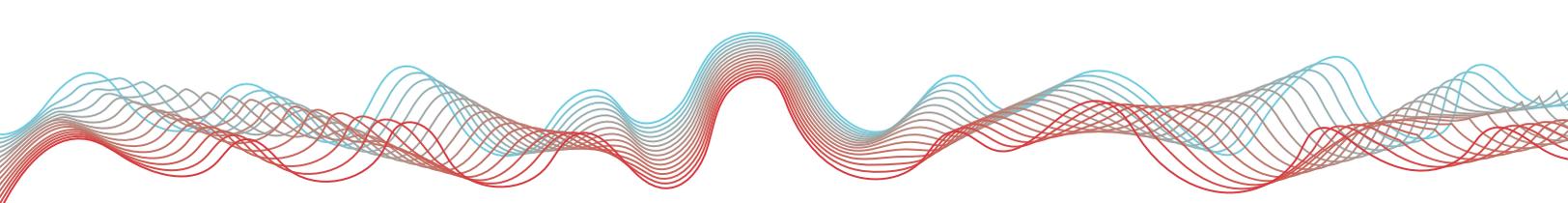


# THE CHALLENGE

## WE CHALLENGE YOU TO:

- 1** Coordinate one or more of the toolkit's campaign activities with the goal of educating your campus community about why all voices need to be allowed to be heard.
- 2** Take proactive and reactive steps to protect free speech for everyone on campus, including a speaker's right to speak, the audience's right to listen, and student's right to react with speech of their own.
- 3** Use your voice to help foster a campus culture that celebrates and embraces robust intellectual discourse and eschews censorship, shout-downs, and calls for disinvitations.

**Are you ready to take on this challenge?  
Let FIRE know that you are by [signing up](#) today!**



# THE PRIZES

On May 30, 2018, FIRE will announce three (3) winners for the best-executed campaigns on campus.

**In order to qualify for a final prize, you must update FIRE about your work on campus.**

[Report your results here.](#)

Consider taking photos of events, posting on social media, writing follow-ups after each activity, or documenting your efforts in other ways that you can share with FIRE and other students on campus. See THE RULES section of the toolkit for more details.

All prizes can be adjusted based on the particular needs and dynamics of your group.



“Let Them Speak” T-shirt(s)

\$1,000 activism grant for a future initiative

Honor at the FIRE Student Network Summer Conference

Feature on FIRE’s Newsdesk

Feature video produced by FIRE about your campaign

Sponsor of a FIRE speaker to speak at your school

Kit of exclusive FIRE swag

Certificate(s) of Achievement



“Let Them Speak” T-shirt(s)

\$500 activism grant for a future initiative

Honor at the FIRE Student Network Summer Conference

Feature on FIRE’s Newsdesk

Sponsor of a FIRE speaker to speak at your school

Certificate(s) of Achievement



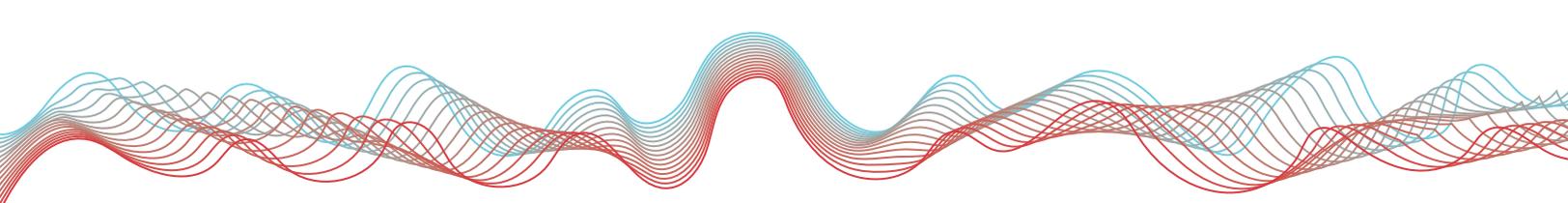
“Let Them Speak” T-shirt(s)

\$250 activism grant for a future initiative

Honor at the FIRE Student Network Summer Conference

Feature on FIRE’s Newsdesk

Certificate(s) of Achievement



# THE RULES

This contest is sponsored by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). Contest entrants must be undergraduate or graduate students at colleges or universities in the United States.

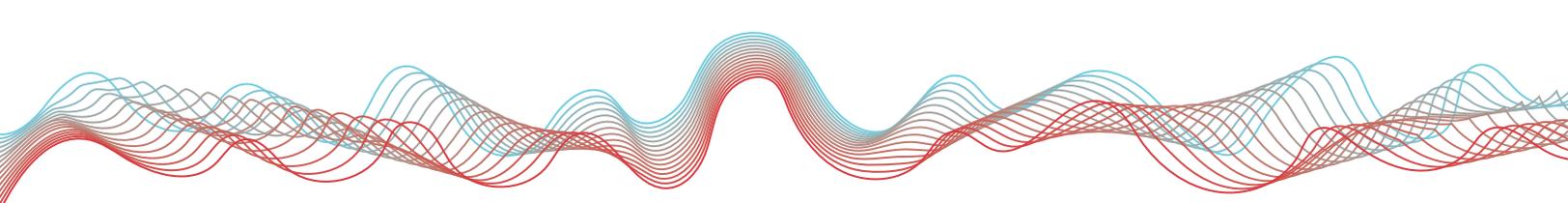
The contest will launch on 2/14/2018 and ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on 5/18/2018 (the “Contest Period”). To be eligible for the prizes you must perform each of the following steps within the Contest Period.

- 1 [Sign up](#) for the Let Them Speak Activism Toolkit.
- 2 Engage in free speech related activism on campus in furtherance of the “Let Them Speak” campaign.
- 3 [Report](#) your results to FIRE and earn a **free** “Let Them Speak” T-shirt.

All contest entries will be judged by a panel of judges with expertise in free speech and campus activism. Initiatives must help to forward students’ right to speak their minds.

In awarding prizes the following criteria may be taken into account:

- The number of campaign actions completed.
- The impact made on campus and in the larger community.
- Creativity in the execution of the campaign.
- Work with diverse coalitions.



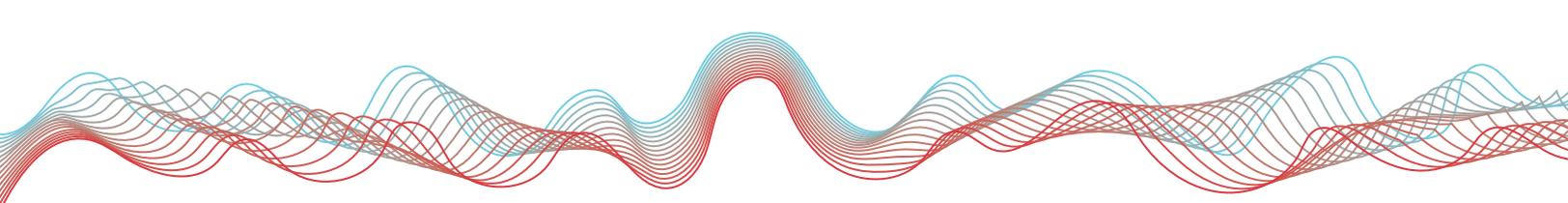
# THE RUNDOWN

Today on college campuses, there is a worrisome trend undermining open discourse, namely: “[disinvitations](#),” shout-downs, and the censoring of invited speakers. The sad reality is that the situation on campus has not gone away. Disinvitations rose to unprecedented proportions in 2016 and a [survey conducted in 2017](#) revealed that most students (56 percent) support disinviting some guest speakers.

This trend also signals a dangerous development: the increasing unwillingness to allow members of the campus community to make their own decisions about the ideas they would like to engage with. Worse still, the speech policies on the books at many universities do little to address these issues and often even exacerbate tensions. At this time more than 90 percent of universities maintain at least one policy that either restricts protected speech or can too easily be interpreted to do so.

Disinvitations, disinvitation attempts, shout-downs, heckler’s vetoes, and the shutting down of speaking events are just a few symptoms of a much larger problem: the lack of awareness and education on the importance of the First Amendment, and the disregard for and miseducation regarding the fundamentals of free speech — such as the right to listen. One way to solve this problem is to highlight the importance of productive discussions for how to respond to speech without resorting to censorship.

It’s up to students like you to challenge censorship on campus and bridge this education gap. Help to teach your campus community about the dangers associated with the disinvitation of speakers and how it robs members of the campus community of their right to listen, which is an essential component of freedom of expression. Show your campus that there are alternatives to censorship and offer tactics for how all members of the campus community can use their own First Amendment rights to speak their minds.



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

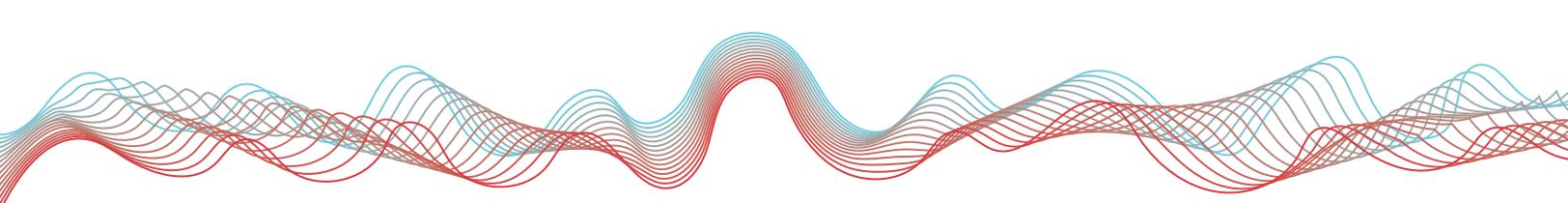
While there are many ways to show your campus community the importance of letting all voices be heard, there is not just one “right way” to do it. The campaign actions outlined below are designed to help inspire you to make an impact on campus. Feel free to be creative and tailor these activities to your particular needs or to come up with something entirely new!

If you need funds to help with your campaign activities, email [students@thefire.org](mailto:students@thefire.org) with a note detailing how much funding you’ll need and an explanation of how you plan to use these funds. Please be as specific as possible.

- 1 Attend an Event or Program That Expands Your Horizons
- 2 “Let Them Speak” Shout-Out
- 3 Host a Speaker on Campus
- 4 Organize a Reading and Discussion Group
- 5 Event: How to Engage with Controversial Speakers and Ideas
- 6 Advocacy Campaign

## ATTEND AN EVENT OR PROGRAM THAT EXPANDS YOUR HORIZONS

- Attend an event that showcases or gives voice to a perspective that differs from yours.
  - Participate in the event by yourself or with a friend, or coordinate with a campus organization of which you are a member.
- Stay for the Q&A
  - Engage peacefully, offer constructive and thoughtful challenges, and apply what you have learned to your own life.
    - If there isn’t a Q&A, host a discussion afterwards.
- Share your experience
  - Follow up on the event by writing an op-ed, creating a podcast, or using other avenues to detail the insights you gained from your experience.
    - Channel Ralph Waldo Emerson: “In my walks, every man I meet is my superior in some way, and in that I learn from him.”



## LET THEM SPEAK SHOUT-OUT

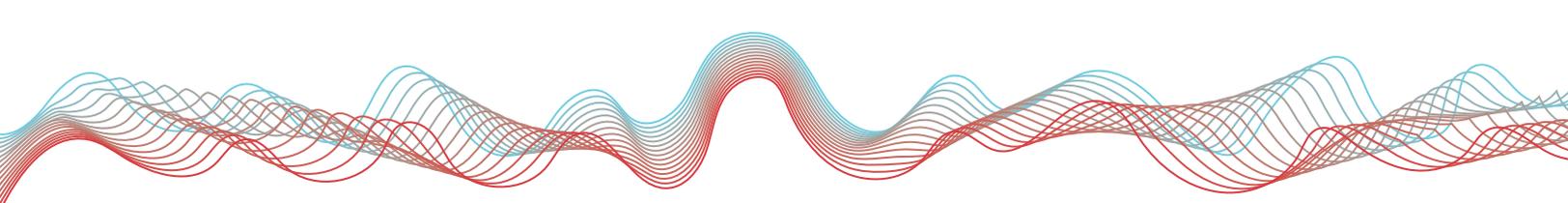
- Keep your eyes open for members of your campus community who are working to promote and preserve open discourse. Recognize their work with a social media shout out and/or a token of appreciation.
  - Remember, it doesn't matter whether you agree or disagree with a particular message.
- FIRE has created special “Let Them Speak” campaign pins. [Request pins here](#) and offer them as a token of appreciation for those who stand up for free speech and against censorship on campus.

## HOST A SPEAKER ON CAMPUS

- Educate your campus community about the importance of free speech and the right to listen by hosting a speaker on campus.
  - Host a member of [FIRE's staff](#) to discuss any number of topics related to FIRE's mission, the First Amendment, and the philosophy of free speech.
    - If you can't swing travel costs, ask us about hosting a Skype session. If you prefer an in-person event but don't have the funds, ask us about FIRE grants.
  - Invite members of your campus community, local experts, or even national figures or authorities to participate in a lecture, panel discussion, or debate.
    - Ask us about [FIRE's debate grants](#)!

## READING AND DISCUSSION GROUP

- Organize a group of students on your campus to read and discuss an article, book, short story, poem, or other work authored by someone with opposing or controversial views. Consider engaging with the work of someone who writes from a different social, political, cultural, or religious perspective.
  - Discuss the work as a group. Engage with the ideas and identify areas of agreement and disagreement. Discuss with a group why it is valuable to engage with opposing viewpoints.



## EVENT: HOW TO ENGAGE WITH CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS AND IDEAS

- Host an event to share free speech-friendly tactics for approaching controversial speakers and ideas on campus and in the community at large.
- Bring students, faculty, and administrators together to discuss free speech issues. Educate your campus community about the right to listen and the many lawful and productive ways to engage with ideas one disagrees with.
  - To get started, see Will Creeley’s op-ed, “[How to Respond to Richard Spencer](#),” and “[Five ways to react to speech you don’t like \(besides censorship\)](#)” from FIRE’s Newsdesk.
  - [FIRE speakers](#) are available to offer guidance on these issues.
- Be proactive! Schedule something soon before a major speaking event or speaker comes to campus.

## ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

- Become an ambassador for free speech on your campus. Table, pass out flyers, write op-eds, and work with other groups to educate your campus about the importance of protecting free speech and allowing all voices, even those one might disagree with, to be heard.
- See this toolkit’s GRAPHICS AND TOOLS section for flyers to distribute.

# GRAPHICS AND TOOLS

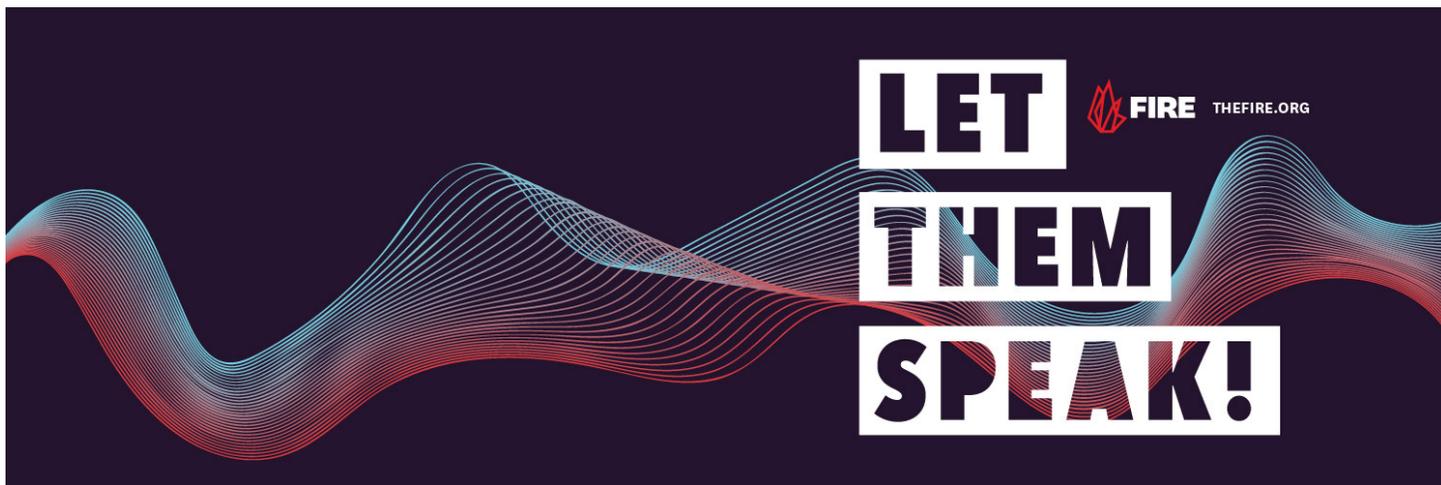
## [DOWNLOAD GRAPHICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA KIT.](#)

Use these graphics to promote and enhance your “Let Them Speak” initiatives on campus.

### TWITTER



Shareable Graphic 900x450px



Cover Photo 1500x500px

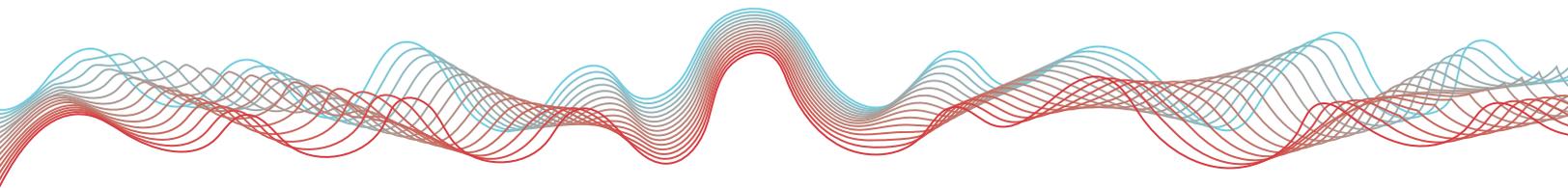
### INSTAGRAM



Profile Photo 400x400px



Graphic 1080x1080px



FACEBOOK

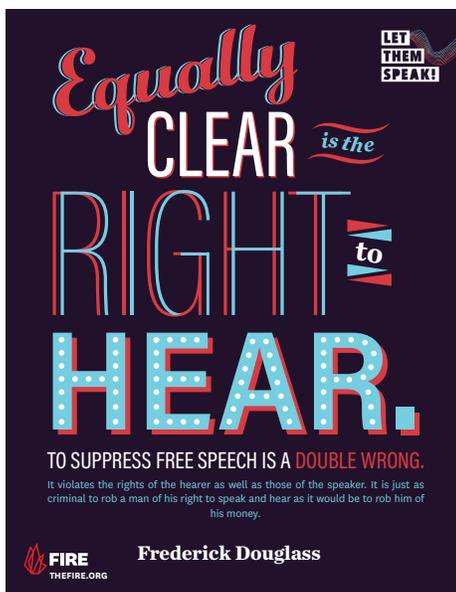


Cover Photo 851x315px

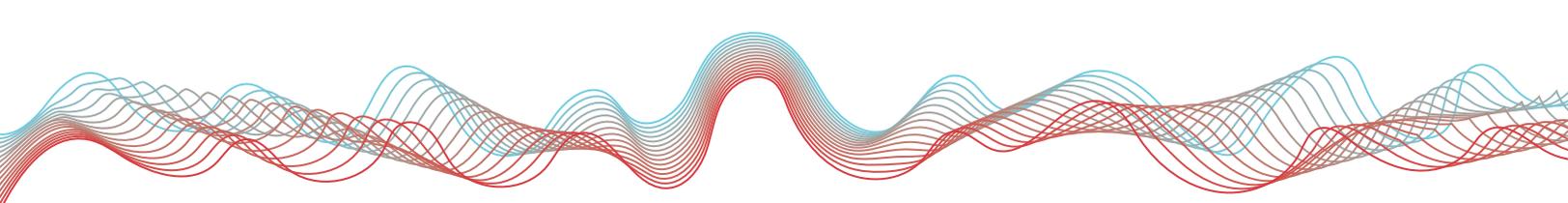


Profile Photo 170x170px

PRINT



Posters 8.5x11in



# TIPS AND RESOURCES

[FIREside Chats 07: Let Them Speak! FIRE activism toolkit](#)

[FIRE's Disinvitation Database](#)

[Free Speech Includes the Right Not Just to Speak but to Listen and Judge](#)

[Say it again for the people in the back: Freedom to Speak Includes the Freedom to Hear](#)

[Rejecting The Hecklers Veto](#)

["How to Respond to Richard Spencer," Will Creeley, The New York Times](#)

[Five ways to react to speech you don't like \(besides censorship\)](#)

[A defense of dialogue: What I learned from Daryl Davis](#)

[Host a FIRE Speaker on your campus](#)

[Tips for hosting an event on campus](#)

[Guide for Creating Your Own Debate Program](#)

[Checklist for hosting an event](#)

[Do's and don'ts of campus activism](#)

[Tips for coalition building](#)

[Tips for effective tabling](#)

[Using social media to bolster your activism](#)

[Placing an op-ed or letter to the editor in your student newspaper](#)

[How to get your op-ed placed in a professional publication](#)

[Press release and media advisory tips](#)

**GOOD LUCK!**

If you have any questions or need advice, don't hesitate to reach out to the FIRE Student Network staff.

Let us know how your campaign is going along the way! Feel free to keep us in the loop over email and by tagging us in your Twitter and Instagram posts.

 @FSNspeaks

 @FIREStudentNetwork

 students@thefire.org