

Executive Summary

The Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry and Inclusion was charged by President Maud S. Mandel with recommending to her a set of speaker invitation guidelines that would demonstrate Williams College's full commitment to both inquiry and inclusion. We were asked to come to these recommendations through a process that allowed for input from anyone in the Williams community with opinions or ideas to share on the subject.

Community Outreach

Throughout our work, we considered the College's historical efforts to uphold its twin values of free inquiry and inclusion and reflected on the issues raised by recent campus events. We engaged with many students, faculty, staff, and alumni in individual and small-group conversations and provided numerous opportunities for others interested in our charge to share their perspectives. Through our outreach, we heard a range of views on free expression, harmful speech and how it should be addressed, and what Williams should do to promote inclusion.

Key findings from our outreach:

- Issues surrounding speaker and performer invitations and events reflect broader challenges in the Williams community related to inquiry and inclusion.
- Many in the campus community voiced concerns about their ability to express their ideas and viewpoints in a range of settings—from public events to classroom conversations to other venues.
- Many expressed concerns about campus climate. These included perceptions that not all were listened to when important decisions were made, and that those who disagreed with each other rarely spoke with one another. We often heard that community members would not feel included on campus if someone else invited a speaker or held an event they felt was personally denigrating.
- Few we heard from believed that Williams' hosting an outside speaker or performer constituted endorsement of the visitor's point of view.
- Overall, there was little support in the Williams community for adopting a no-platform policy or for disinviting speakers and performers, although some shared strong opinions to the contrary.
- There was strong support from both students and faculty for speaker event formats that allowed for multi-sided exchanges, debate, and panels and that featured strong moderation that facilitated engagement with speakers around challenging topics.

Current Policies

Our recommendations are informed by this outreach but also by our review of current College policies related to speaker and performer invitations.

In the absence of an institutional statement on the foundational values of intellectual and academic freedom, the College has aimed to follow the guidelines of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). These hold that academic freedom affords faculty members unfettered discretion in inviting speakers to campus, and that students, too, should be able to “invite and hear anyone of their own choosing,” as long as the events are “conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community.” Current Williams policies for speaker invitations are consistent with these guidelines.

Philosophical Context

Our recommendations also took into consideration readings in law, philosophy, critical theory, and higher education governance.

Based on the tenor of national and campus conversations, it is tempting to conclude that free inquiry and inclusion are irreconcilable. We examined and rejected this assumption. Our recommendations are guided by a variety of perspectives in which these principles are seen not as mutually exclusive but as mutually reinforcing.

Consonant with this framing is the idea of “inclusive freedom,” a term used by University of Pennsylvania political theorist Sigal R. Ben-Porath. Ben-Porath defines inclusive freedom as “an approach to free speech on campus that takes into account the necessity of protecting free speech in order to protect democracy and the pursuit of knowledge while recognizing the equal necessity of making sure that all are included in the ensuing conversation.” Similar themes are sounded by others who have written on free expression and inclusion on college campuses, including University of California leaders Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman, PEN America (an organization devoted to protecting freedom of expression in the written word), and Phi Beta Kappa President Frederick Lawrence ’77.

Such a formulation applies, of course, only to legally protected speech. Within that domain, there are two broad classes of speech that, while legal, have also been deemed potentially harmful. The first constitutes speech that offends—sometimes deeply so—but is part of the everyday debates, discussions, and deliberations that occur on a college campus. This speech threatens *intellectual safety*: “the attachment to one’s unquestioned beliefs.” Such safety, by definition, cannot be maintained on college campuses, as the questioning of beliefs is at the very heart of a college’s educational mission. The second type of protected, but potentially harmful, speech is that which threatens *dignitary safety*: “the sense of being an equal member

of the community and of being invited to contribute to a discussion as a valued participant.” The College has a duty to maintain this type of safety, particularly in the face of what is commonly called hate speech: “speech that is intended to menace, intimidate, or discriminate against an individual based upon a personal characteristic or membership in a group.” Such speech, inimical in all respects to a college’s educational mission, is worthy of contempt and may warrant an institutional response. As Frederick M. Lawrence ‘77 writes:

We bind ourselves to an impoverished choice set if we believe that we can either punish speech or validate it. There is a middle position, expressed in [Supreme Court Justice] Brandeis’s dictum of “more speech,” that allows us to respond without punishing. In the face of hate speech, the call for more speech is not merely an option; it is a professional or even moral obligation.

Recommendations

In reviewing College policies, we saw opportunities for strengthening commitments to inclusion that did not come at the expense of free inquiry. In light of our findings, and applying the lens of “inclusive freedom” to our recommendations for speaker invitation guidelines, we have prioritized efforts to ensure that all members of the Williams community are confident they can exercise free expression and to foster constructive dialogue across difference. Our recommendations are:

1. **Adhere to policies and principles regarding campus speakers articulated by AAUP and PEN America:** These guidelines encourage a decentralized approach to speaker invitations, suggest dialogue between stakeholders before controversial speaker events, consider disinvitation as an option only in the rarest circumstances, and prioritize the rights of protesters.
2. **Publish and affirm a statement on expression and inclusion:** The College should adopt and centrally display a statement about the centrality of freedom of expression to its educational mission as an inclusive residential liberal arts institution. Statements by the AAUP, PEN America, and, perhaps, other peer campuses should guide this work.
3. **Plan ahead for occasions of institutional response:** College leaders should be prepared to respond to any potentially controversial event that calls into question the values of the institution. The response should be framed by the educational mission of the College, should acknowledge harm, and should clarify boundaries regarding acceptable forms of expression.
4. **Support vigorous campus dialogue:** The College should support programs to facilitate conversations and build empathy and understanding across difference both on campus and in response to campus events. This might include a voluntary ad hoc group of faculty, staff, and students trained to assist members of the community in organizing counter-events as well as anticipating the need for post-event workshops, teach-ins,

mediated campus conversations, or restorative justice efforts. Alerting such volunteers via a group email list and other means as appropriate might lessen the burden often placed upon those who feel most harmed or upset by an event.

5. **Hold workshops on best practices for event planning:** We recommend that the College consider holding a voluntary speaker and event planning workshop each fall for any students, faculty, and staff or unit representatives who might benefit from attending.

Insofar as the Committee's recommendations concerning speaker and event guidelines are designed not to prevent invitations, but rather to promote more thoughtfulness and transparency in the invitation process, it is possible that speaker or performer events—including exhibits as well as other incidents or events—will take place that some members of the community find offensive or harmful. Given this possibility, we also recommend the College:

6. **Revise OSL guidelines:** We recommend that a short online form be developed to replace the current form found in the Office of Student Life handbook in the section titled "Events Planned by Students." Our suggested revised form would include questions about the intended goal and educational component of the event as well as the organizer's plan for handling disagreement that might arise during, or even before, the event.
7. **Facilitate protest:** The College should develop guidelines about how freedom of expression policies apply to campus activism and protest, especially as related to speaker events and performances.
8. **Foreground its educational mission on publicity and contracts:** A statement that affirms the College's commitment to both inquiry and inclusion should appear at the top of any communication (internal as well as external) regarding invitation of outside speakers/performers/artists or other presenters.
9. **Ensure safety:** Campus Safety and Security must ensure that there are clear procedures in place in case an event, speaker, or protest threatens the safety and security of the invitees, audience, or any other member or part of the campus community.

Conclusion

Our recommendations are meant to support the educational mission of the College, to promote dialogue, and to distribute the responsibility to maintain a healthy learning environment in a fair and equitable manner. Our goal is to encourage the selection and programming of events in a way that respects a diverse and inclusive community while maintaining the free exchange of ideas necessary for the finest possible liberal arts education.

To: President Maud Mandel
From: Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry and Inclusion
Subject: Committee Recommendations
Date: June 5, 2019

The Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry and Inclusion was charged by President Maud Mandel as follows:

Williams, like other schools around the country, is debating how to uphold principles of open inquiry and free expression. The debate has focused on how to do so while not providing a platform for hate speech, racism, or other forces that are corrosive to a learning community.

This issue was identified as a concern in Williams' Fall 2017 accreditation self-study, which was shared with campus at the time:

"intellectual freedom... is defined broadly at Williams to include the unfettered exchange of diverse points of view, the dissemination of original scholarship, and respect for faculty, students, staff, alumni, and others who wish to share their opinions on how the college is governed. This 'basket of rights' must sometimes be actively managed." (pp. 103–4)

The conversation at Williams has recently focused on speaker invitations, as it has elsewhere. I am charging an ad hoc committee with recommending to me, by May 2019, a set of speaker invitation guidelines that would demonstrate our full commitment to both inquiry *and* inclusion. This targeted project will complement our broader attention to learning and campus climate through the strategic planning process. I further ask that they do so through a process that allows for input from anyone in our community with opinions or ideas to share on the subject.

Following are a few framing questions the committee might consider in this work:

What obligation do liberal arts colleges have for exposing students to new ideas and ways of thinking about the world?

What responsibility has Williams assumed (or should it) for helping students achieve equal footing from which to study, expound, and challenge diverse ideas?

Given the wide range of content available online, including many speeches, what types of presentations (in both form and content) best support our educational mission?

What support, if any, should Williams give to campus members seeking to host, engage, or debate speakers?

Are College guidelines related to campus activism toward speakers adequate?

Once the committee presents its recommendations in May, I will share this information with the community, and we will organize next steps for when people return in the fall. It will be helpful if the report identifies the historical, philosophical, and other considerations that influenced their recommendations. The report should also identify likely costs and benefits of any proposals.
(President Mandel's Charge to the Committee, January 9, 2019)

I. Committee Members

Jana Sawicki, Chair of Philosophy and Morris Professor of Rhetoric (Committee Chair), Sandra Burton, Lipp Family Director of Dance and Senior Lecturer in Dance, Michael Crisci '21, Eli Miller '21, Eli Nelson, Assistant Professor of American Studies, Hale Polebaum-Freeman, Reference and First-Year Outreach Librarian, Rachel Porter '21, Mark Robertson '02, Director of the 50th Reunion Program, Cheryl Shanks, Professor of Political Science, Fred Strauch, Chair and Associate Professor of Physics, Conrad Wahl '20, Alysha Warren, Staff Therapist, Integrative Wellbeing Services,¹ Rabbi Seth Wax, Jewish Chaplain

II. Historical Background and Recent Events on Campus

The questions included in the President's charge invite us to attend to the current historical juncture at which the College finds itself. The following brief narrative about Williams' past tests and transformations situates the present conversation within that context.²

Confronted by challenge, Williams has long revealed a capacity to engage in self-reflection and robust debate and, when appropriate, to recommend and initiate change. Early examples include: the response to student petitions against professors (then tutors) in 1807-1808; the storied departure of President Zephaniah Moore with multiple trustees and professors (ending with the creation of Amherst College) in 1821; the support by President Mark Hopkins for

¹ Alysha Warren chose to withdraw from the committee due to a conflict with her professional obligations.

² See R. Cragin Lewis, ed. *Williams 1793-1993: A Pictorial History*; Frederick Rudolph, ed. *Perspectives: A Williams Anthology*; John W. Chandler, *The Rise and Fall of Fraternities at Williams College*; Benjamin Aldes Wurgaft, *Jews at Williams: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Class at a New England Liberal Arts College*; Frederick Rudolph, *Mark Hopkins and the Log*; and Francis Oakley, *From the Cast-Iron Shore: In Lifelong Pursuit of Liberal Learning*.

Professor Arthur Latham Perry, whose writing on and support for free-trade policies in the 1860s and 1870s drew the ire of alumni; a class boycott of strict attendance policies in 1868 (capably defused by President Hopkins); the abolition of daily chapel in 1935 (one of many radical reforms by President Tyler Dennett, with all compulsory chapel ended by President Jack Sawyer in 1962); and the inclusion of Catholic and Jewish students and professors in increasing numbers in the early 20th century.

In the modern era also, the College has worked to preserve academic freedom and freedom of expression and to promote greater inclusion amid the political, social, and cultural movements of the day. The College strongly defended the academic freedom of politically liberal Professors Frederick L. Schuman, Max Lerner, and Robert Brooks in the face of McCarthy-era inquisitions and demands from alumni that they be fired. To promote inclusion, the Angevine Report of 1962 started a five-year endeavor ending fraternities on campus. Greater shifts came with the occupation of Hopkins Hall in 1969 (leading to the creation of the Afro-American Studies Program, now the Africana Studies Department), the phased admission of women from 1969 to 1971, and the creation of a Women's Studies program in 1983 (now the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department).

Since then, the curriculum has expanded to include Latino/a Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Environmental Studies, and there are currently efforts to establish Asian-American Studies. Such curricular innovation is another hallmark of Williams history. Other significant changes have included the College's removal of the compulsory Latin and Greek requirement, the introduction of electives and majors, and the creation of the signature tutorial program in 1989.

Student activism has also featured prominently in campus life over the past 50 years. In addition to the actions mentioned above, this has included the May 1970 vote to strike against the Vietnam War; protests of the College's investment policies in apartheid-era South Africa in the mid-1980s; the student occupation of Jenness House—then the home of the Dean's Office—in 1988, which led to the creation of the Multicultural Center (now the Davis Center) in 1989; hunger strikes in 1993 and 2001 in support of the creation of a Latino/a Studies Program; and recent calls to divest the College's endowment of investments in fossil fuel companies.³ Such activism has been met, by and large, with institutional sympathy, and it has often effected change.

Other structural changes designed to advance the goal of making Williams a place where a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff can learn and thrive

³ See archives of *The Williams Record* available online at <https://specialcollections.williams.edu/williams-record/digitized-williams-record/>.

include establishing the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, increasing the number of student deans and associate deans, expanding financial aid, and recruiting more first-generation and international students. This past year Williams decided to admit more transfer students, among them nontraditional students including U.S. veterans from community colleges and re-entering parents.⁴

In short, questioning the nature of the College, its educational mission, and its commitments to inquiry and inclusion has played, and continues to play, a vital role in our history.⁵ And while the Williams of today sees the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to its educational mission and commitment to social change, it also recognizes that there remain hierarchies of power along axes of race, gender, class, and other forms of difference. How to recognize, interrogate, and address these structural challenges effectively is a question being faced by many institutions of higher education across the country.⁶

Our committee was established in response to a recent series of events and conversations that revealed serious challenges on campus related to inquiry and inclusion. This past fall, a faculty petition initiative⁷ led by Professors Luana Maroja of Biology, Steven Gerrard of Philosophy, and David Gürçay-Morris of Theatre was circulated to the President and all voting members of the faculty. The petition's purpose was to start a broad discussion among faculty concerned about freedom of expression on campus.⁸ To that end, it proposed that

Williams College should affirm its commitment to the principles of freedom of expression and academic freedom as essential to fulfilling its mission and goals by adopting the Chicago Statement.

Over 100 members of the faculty, representing a range of disciplines and identities, signed the petition. The Chicago Statement, also known as the Chicago Principles (CP), refers to the 2014 Report of the Committee on Freedom

⁴ These changes were outlined in Leticia Smith-Evans Haynes' "[Diversity and inclusion at Williams](#)," [The Williams Record](#) (February 13, 2019).

⁵ Most recently, the College has completed a [2017 Accreditation Self-Study](#) and is in the process of [Strategic Planning](#).

⁶ PEN America, [And Campus for All: Diversity, Inclusion, and Freedom of Speech in U.S. Universities](#), 2017 and [Chasm in the Classroom: Campus Free Speech in a Divided America](#), 2019.

⁷ "Timeline of the Williams College Faculty Petition regarding the Chicago Statement," Appendix E.

⁸ "[Students, faculty discuss free speech](#)," [The Williams Record](#) (December 5, 2018).

of Expression⁹ chaired by Geoffrey Stone of the University of Chicago. Versions of this statement have been adopted by many other colleges and institutions, including Amherst, Princeton, Smith, and Colgate. Some of these have been verbatim endorsements (e.g., Princeton), while others have been adapted to the particularities of the institution (e.g., Colgate).

In response to that petition, a group of students circulated another petition addressed to faculty that was later posted online.¹⁰ This petition contained over 300 signatures of current and former Williams students. In the petition, students raised concerns regarding the aims of the faculty petition (interpreting it as an attempt to unilaterally create College policy), its motivation (given the politically polarized discussions of free speech in traditional and social media), its potential consequences (allowing purveyors of hate speech to be given a campus platform), and its priorities (promoting such speakers while prohibiting certain forms of student protest). Several students, coming together as a group called Coalition Against Racist Education Now (CARE Now), subsequently raised questions about College policies regarding speaker invitations and challenged its level of commitment to inclusion.¹¹

One source of student complaints was the activities of Uncomfortable Learning, which, as an unofficial student group in the academic year 2015-2016, generated considerable controversy and national news. First, a planned protest of the invitation of author Suzanne Venker prompted the student group to cancel that event. Second, the group invited John Derbyshire, whose writings have been widely decried as racist, prompting a cancellation by then-President Adam Falk.

There were procedural issues involved in these events, which were subsequently addressed by the Office of Student Life; Williams' 2017 self-study discussed the larger principles at issue:

[Intellectual] freedom is defined broadly at Williams to include the unfettered exchange of diverse points of view, the dissemination of original scholarship, and respect for faculty, students, staff, alumni, and others who wish to share their opinions on how the college is governed. This "basket of rights" must sometimes be actively managed. For example, while input is typically welcomed, few administrative decisions are submitted to a referendum. And

⁹ Geoffrey R. Stone *et al.*, "[Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression](#)," University of Chicago, 2015.

¹⁰ "In Response to the 'Chicago Statement' Petition," Appendix F.

¹¹ "[Changing the terms of the 'free speech' debate: Confronting national anxieties towards campus diversity](#)," Coalition Against Racist Education Now (CARE Now), [The Williams Record](#) (December 5, 2018).

*sometimes free speech interests brush up against competing prerogatives of campus security—the notion that “my freedom to swing my fist stops where the other fellow’s nose starts.” The appraisal section below includes discussion of how Williams is responding to this latter question, which is lately occupying a significant share of public attention. That said, in approaching the question, Williams starts from a presumption of absolute intellectual and academic freedom as one of our foundational values.*¹²

The self-study concludes that: “The college will continue to develop processes and communications that reinforce our dual commitments to free speech and inclusion.”¹³

It was in this spirit that our committee took up its charge to evaluate the speaker policies and investigate the underlying issues revealed by the discussion of the Chicago Statement. Early in our process, we aimed to develop a policy that embraced the idea of “inclusive freedom,” a term used by University of Pennsylvania political theorist Sigal R. Ben-Porath in which she posits that inclusion and free expression are not directly opposed but rather mutually reinforcing.¹⁴

In the following sections we describe the process and methods we used to address our committee’s charge, the results of our process, and our recommendations for the College. In our conclusion, we reflect on our work and some challenges that have arisen concurrently.¹⁵

III. Committee Process and Methods

President Mandel’s process for constituting this group of faculty, student, staff, and alumni representatives involved allowing each group to use their own governing bodies to nominate potential members. Knowing that the issues involved are complex and that the process would be challenging as well as time and energy consuming, we each agreed to join the committee because it presented an opportunity for a diverse group to chart the first steps on a path toward, in the President’s words, “building the most vibrant educational community possible.” We understood from the beginning, when we first met at a working dinner at the President’s house, that our very process as a committee

¹² Williams College [2017 Accreditation Self-Study](#), pp. 103-104.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.108.

¹⁴ Sigal R. Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2017).

¹⁵ Many of these events have been written about in [The Williams Record](#) and in communications from [President Mandel](#).

would involve establishing a working model of inclusive dialogue among a diverse group.

Some of our members signed the faculty-led petition to endorse the Chicago Principles; some removed their names from it in the wake of considerable dissent to learn more about the meaning of the petition; some signed the student-led petition; and some did not sign any petition at all. While at the outset each of us may have had different visions of the optimal outcome, we agreed to be open to listening and learning as the process unfolded and to engage in a process that was both transparent and inclusive.

Moreover, early in our deliberations we emphasized the importance of thinking not only about aspirational ideals concerning free expression and inclusion, but also about devising a set of committee practices that might enhance both free expression and a sense of inclusion within the committee itself. Among the experiments with practices that we conducted was participation in a spectrum exercise in which we learned more about the reasons behind underlying points of agreement and disagreement.¹⁶ We also conducted an anonymous internal poll and discussed the results. We had two dinner meetings off campus so that we might have more opportunities to get to know one another. In addition, we met regularly in smaller subgroups in which we not only performed committee work but also had further opportunities to discuss some of the difficult questions with which we were tasked.

This attention to practice led to our collective desire to convey in our report how important it is that members of our campus community reflect carefully about current practices related to speaker/performer/artist invitations and events so that such practices will effectively and creatively further both intellectual and humanistic values. Just as educators are encouraged to reflect regularly on their pedagogical practices, we as a group thought about how we might use resources for invited speakers/performers/artists to create more opportunities for modeling constructive engagement, discussion, and interaction among students, faculty, and staff.

The Committee established the following four subgroups with overlapping membership:

1. Faculty and Staff Outreach
2. Student Outreach
3. Research and Reading

¹⁶ See Appendix A.

4. Practices

Our outreach goal was to enable everyone in the Williams community either to meet with us or to share ideas and suggestions in other ways. In order to include alumni perspectives, we also held sessions with four alumni bodies, which met on campus this spring, to solicit their input.¹⁷ Our outreach efforts included:

- Over 30 individual and group meetings with faculty, staff, students, and alumni including representatives, both current and former, from the following: Lecture Committee, Director of Commencement and Academic Events, Director of Human Resources, Oakley Center, Alumni Executive Committee, Alumni Fund Vice Chairs, Office of College Relations, Gaudino Fellows, English Department, Latinx Studies, American Studies, Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies, Dean of the College, Davis Center, Office of Student Life, Office of Special Academic Programs, Libraries, OIT, Facilities, Integrative Wellness Services, WCMA, Theater and Dance Department, Board of Trustees, Presidential Advisory Committee, members of Staff Advisory Committee, Bolin Fellows, Society for Conservative Thought, Committee on Diversity and Community, various Junior Advisors, MinCo, Trans Inclusion Committee, the Chaplains’ Office, and Dining Services.
- An online survey developed by student members to poll not only students’ opinions concerning a series of questions, but also to elicit comments about their experiences in the current campus climate. Out of the roughly 2,000 emailed students, 534 responded to the 15-question survey.¹⁸
- A postcard campaign with a QR code linked to a “share your ideas” page on our web page containing seven questions. We received over a dozen submissions on this form.
- Open office hours in Sawyer Library for six days from one to three hours each day and seven days of tabling in the Paresky Center for two hours each day.

IV. What We Learned from Outreach Efforts¹⁹

¹⁷ See Appendix B for a list of questions used in alumni discussions.

¹⁸ See Appendix C.

¹⁹ See Appendix D for a list of common questions used for outreach.

Because our charge was narrow and our time and expertise limited, we do not systematically analyze, or even report, all of our findings from surveys and interviews here. We plan to pass the whole of what we learned—interview notes, response transcripts, and the 64 pages of student questionnaire comments—to whichever group the College designates to address inquiry and inclusion in the long term. These reports, opinions, and personal stories will take time, expertise, and attention to understand and accommodate.²⁰ What follows summarizes our findings in broad terms and describes the context in which we considered our charge and drafted our current recommendations.

General Themes from the Community

The procedures for event planning and speaker invitations are quite varied and decentralized, and there was a general consensus among faculty that this approach is desirable and appropriate. Williams has myriad sources of funding that include endowed funds, departmental unit budgets, and student activities funds, among others. In our conversations it became clear that no one-size-fits-all set of procedures for speaker invitations and event planning could apply to all situations, which encompass classroom events, departmental speakers, theater and dance productions, art exhibits, and many others.

Some faculty and staff expressed concern about the sheer number of events and the difficulty of coordinating and communicating these throughout the community. Many faculty were concerned that Williams maintain a strong commitment to academic freedom and stressed the importance of academic freedom as it relates to speaker policies. Others pointed out that we make decisions about expressive content all the time, including the decisions about outside speakers/performers/artists in order to complement the curriculum and further our educational goals.

Some faculty with significant experience teaching difficult topics and exploring provocative artworks and performances stressed the importance of building trust. This point was particularly important to the Theatre Department, for which the cancellation in the fall of a planned production of *Beast Thing* prompted the question: “How are we *all*—students, artists, staff, faculty, administrators—going to feel safe making and producing meaningful art on our campus?”²¹ While creating feelings of trust among campus community members is a significant challenge, our recommendations reflect the view that the best way

²⁰ Reports from interviews will be placed in the College archives after this report is submitted.

²¹ Amy Holzapfel, Associate Professor of Theatre, quoted in “[Theatre department cancels *Beast Thing*](#),” [The Williams Record](#) (November 7, 2018).

to do so is to have more conversations across differences and more modeling of constructive, respectful disagreement.

Overwhelmingly, faculty members agreed that the invitation of outside speakers does not constitute an institutional endorsement and saw educational value in presenting ideas and perspectives with which they do not agree. However, the question of endorsement was a source of some confusion among faculty, students, and staff: many perceived that an invitation did confer some sense of legitimacy upon the invited speaker. In addition, many shared the sentiment that some speech could be harmful and that a thoughtful process for the selection of speakers and the planning of events is essential. Nevertheless, only one faculty member who participated in our outreach process proposed we develop a plan for disinviting speakers once invited.

Primarily, though, we learned that outside speaker issues manifest broader challenges to ensuring both free inquiry and inclusion on campus. While it is true that disinvitations are extremely rare at Williams—among hundreds of events that take place every year there have been only two disinvitations in the past decade—it is also true that because speaker events and performances are prominent manifestations of campus expression, they weigh heavily in the community consciousness.

Although we initially asked specifically about outside speakers and the Chicago Principles, we came to learn, unsurprisingly, that people on campus were concerned about numerous issues related to campus climate more generally. Among these issues is what some perceive to be harmful, even hateful, speech (whatever its source) and how the community should respond. A paramount complaint of student protestors was a sense that their concerns on a range of topics were not being adequately recognized, their voices not heard. We heard about affinity housing, speaking in classrooms, self-censorship, and the power dynamics at play in public discourse. Others noted the lack of conservative voices on campus and the erosion of respectful disagreement. Inclusion, more broadly, was mentioned by many. Junior faculty and some senior faculty spoke about structural barriers to inclusion within departmental and program units and in the College at large. Some perceive generational inequities and differences as barriers to inclusion. Other faculty expressed a range of views about recent events on campus and about faculty members' being publicly challenged or "called out," or having fears of being called out, for their speech or behavior.

Many staff described feeling a lack of respect from faculty and students regarding their perceived or actual lack of knowledge and/or educational attainment. A variety of staff expressed the view that campus events are "not for

us,” a belief that leads many staff to limit the ways they engage with the larger campus community. Some staff said they do not feel free to express their views on campus for fear of reprimands or loss of their jobs and suggested that class, racial, and generational differences exacerbate this problem.

In the many meetings with individuals and groups of faculty, as well as with some administrative staff members, several other themes emerged, all of which generally supported the idea that Williams must work to better align our practices with our values and mission. Among the questions and issues that surfaced were: What, if any, are the values we aspire to as a liberal arts institution and the skills we seek to develop? Curiosity? Knowledge building? Intellectual integrity? Duty to preserve a sense of humanity? Equal access to learning opportunities? Respect? Service? Good citizenship? Critical thinking? Lifelong learning? Cultivating skills in interpreting and listening as well as speaking? What messages about any of these values do we signal through our practices, symbols, buildings, architecture, and other forms of expression?

Student Survey Summary

The results of our student survey reinforce our understanding that outside speaker issues are, in and of themselves, not a primary concern for Williams. Of the roughly 25% of the student body that responded:

- As a best solution to controversial speakers, 68% supported creating formats that better challenge the speaker’s opinion, 12% supported coordinating counter-events and peaceful protest, and 20% supported speaker disinvitation.
- 22% consider themselves or others to be disrespected or hurt when certain outside speakers are brought to campus
- 19% responded that, by inviting a speaker to campus, Williams is implicitly agreeing with that speaker’s beliefs.
- About 50% feel comfortable expressing their opinion without fear of judgement.
- Over 60% say people who disagree on campus do not talk to each other.
- Less than 20% say discourse among students who disagree is respectful and reasoned.
- Over 50% say there is a problem with freedom of expression at Williams.

By comparison, a 2018 Pomona College survey²² found roughly similar results (e.g., 27% are comfortable sharing ideas or opinions that are probably held by a minority of people, about 50% are comfortable having conversations

²² [Perceptions of Speech and Campus Climate: 2018 Gallup Survey of Pomona Students and Faculty](#)

with people whose views differ from their own, and 25% feel that colleges should be able to restrict offensive political views on campus), as did a 2017 national survey of college students by the Knight Foundation²³ (e.g., 61% agree that the climate on their campus prevents some students from expressing their views).

These are only a few examples suggesting the range of student perspectives. It is important to note also that some rejected the Committee's legitimacy altogether. In an email to the committee dated May 2, CARE Now said "We do not think it would be productive to meet with you. The debates on free speech have largely been focused on the desire of white supremacists to be allowed to spread hate speech, while ignoring protections for free speech such as CARE Now is currently engaged in." In response to a request for suggestions, survey respondents said "This survey is evidence of the lack of critical thinking that lives within foolish white liberal thought," and "Maybe stop carefully probing with surveys to discover what we're already yelling at you, that people of color suffer through oppression enforced not even overtly but at the hands of a system the privileged remain complicit to." These respondents were echoed by others who expressed concerns about how the committee could adequately capture and respond to the political, cultural, and social paradigms present on campus.

Those who did participate in the survey held many different points of view. Responding to a question about problems or sources of harm²⁴ on campus, for example, some pointed to institutional roots: the problem was the "campus historical legacy of theft and dispossession"; therefore, the committee's soliciting opinions was "a pointless pursuit." Some saw categories of speech and speakers as the problem, specifically those forwarding "archaic and sexist rhetoric," or speech by "people with explicitly hateful and dehumanizing perspectives." Other students identified the problem as the way listeners/organizers/audience handled harmful speech: "harm occurs when students do not have the ability to feel and be heard before, during, and after a speaker's visit"; or "harm is not inherently present due to [the speaker's] attendance. Harm comes when we, for whatever reason, don't engage in dialogue about what the speaker says." Some students maintained that there was no problem with a laissez-faire approach—"I think that students are harmed when Williams supports the expectation that they will and should be shielded from those they disagree with," one wrote—and others that the main problem was the exclusion of conservative views: "Just because someone may hold political views and opinions that aren't consistent with the progressive leanings of

²³ [Free expression on campus: What college students think about the First Amendment](#)

²⁴ "Harm" was how CARE Now framed its concerns.

the Williams community, that doesn't mean their opinion is less valid." Finally, many believed that there was no problem.

Recommendations from the Community

Asked for suggestions, the Williams College community came up with many. Notably, most centered on education through discussion, using practices with which we are familiar. Many resonated with ideas in Williams' mission statement about learning in a small community, including the aim "to develop in students both the wisdom and skills they will need to become responsible contributors to whatever communities they join, and the richly textured inner lives that will make them rigorously self-reflective, ethically alert, and imaginatively alive."

Suggestions included small-group discussions, ranging in formality and structure; all-campus events in which the community would consider questions in groups and then reconvene as a body for further discussion; larger community events designed for reflection on the state of the Williams community (similar to the events that occur during Claiming Williams); and panels, workshops, or structured debates.

Other formats were also popular. Several students suggested anonymous or written-response opportunities to register fears and hopes. One advocated posting infographics about student opinion to spark spontaneous dialogue. Others advocated bringing the conversation inside upper class housing. Wanting attention and engagement to be constant, a student suggested having a dedicated space where people could turn up and talk. Related comments included: "The format this genuinely happens in is people meeting, getting to know, befriending people unlike themselves," and "Let it happen organically." Another popular suggestion was to practice what are known as "fishbowl discussions" in which groups of community members can gather, speak, be heard, and listen to others in an environment that deconstructs the power dynamics characteristic of traditional formats.

Others emphasized the need to listen, to "consider what others have drawn upon." "The world's problems" referenced in the College's Mission Statement were of immediate relevance to some students, who stressed the need to prepare students for "the real world," life "out of the purple bubble," and "in the world at large."

Many respondents specifically cautioned against asking minoritized students to teach the majority about themselves, and some believed that public discussion in campus-organized events was undesirable or wouldn't work,

emphasizing that dialogue should be voluntary: “Marginalized people should not be tokenized and forced to unpack years of trauma so that their peers can ‘learn’ but those who are willing to share their experiences should be given a space in which those who are different from them are willing to listen with patience and compassion, not just competing on whose idea is more correct.”

Many felt that possible solutions should be rooted in Williams’ educational mission. One alum suggested reframing the discussion “around one of our core values: academic freedom.” A faculty member said “hate speech is not intellectual inquiry.” A student proposed that “Presenting [racist/sexist and homophobic] ideas is fine as long as there is space for challenging them through constructive and thoughtful debate.” Both alumni and staff suggested that if intellectual rigor were used as a criterion, we could more easily select the educationally worthwhile and avoid the bigoted. Staff pointed out that access to a speaker’s writings, in advance, would allow community members to become familiar with the speaker’s ideas and, if they wanted, give them time to research opposing views. The Oakley Center already provides readings before events, and it was suggested that this should be expanded to all campus events. Two alums separately suggested that Williams try a year with no outside speakers, taking advantage of the intellectual capital already present on campus and ensuring direct dialogue.

Broadly shared was the view that if an event were organized traditionally, with an onstage speaker lecturing to a seated audience, then it should be followed by an opportunity for dialogue. The audience should be able, minimally, to pose questions “asked in a way that allows the speaker to share their background and how they think they came to have the views they do on the matter”; and ideally, especially in difficult circumstances, such an event would include “a trained moderator whose job was to guide conversation rather than to forward a viewpoint.” Many students advocated fully participatory events based in respect, the purpose of which should be understanding rather than victory.

V. Current Policies on External Speakers and Freedom of Expression

In the absence of an institutional statement on the foundational values of intellectual and academic freedom, the College has aimed to follow the guidelines of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Five AAUP documents speak to our charge:

- 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (revised 1970)

- [Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students \(1967\)](#)
- [On Freedom of Expression and Campus Speech Codes \(1994\)](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Outside Speakers \(2007\)](#)
- [Campus Free-Speech Legislation: History, Progress, and Problems \(2018\)](#)

These documents address a variety of issues regarding freedom of expression (a general term for public and private speech and other forms of expression by individuals) and academic freedom (a specific concept regarding freedom of inquiry and related activities of students, teachers, and researchers in educational institutions).

It is important to recognize that a significant number of events on campus fall under the guidelines of academic freedom and freedom of expression. For most of these events, the planning is largely decentralized and funded not only through unit budgets, but also with endowed funds earmarked for specific purposes. Other events, such as commencement and convocation are planned by a representative group of community members. Here we will primarily focus on student-initiated events, which must follow a set of rules established by the Office of Student Life (OSL).²⁵

The 1967 document from the AAUP is the most relevant to the Committee's purpose. This lays out the following perspective:

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.²⁶

The document also presented two important guidelines. The first stipulates that students should have the freedom to bring guest speakers based on their interests and educational goals:

Students should be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their own choosing. Those routine procedures required by an institution before a guest speaker is invited to appear on campus should be designed only to ensure that there is orderly scheduling of facilities

²⁵ [Williams College Student Handbook: Events Planning: Outside Speakers and Performers](#)

²⁶ AAUP, [Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students \(1967\)](#)

and adequate preparation for the event, and that the occasion is conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community. The institutional control of campus facilities should not be used as a device of censorship. It should be made clear to the academic and larger community that sponsorship of guest speakers does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of the views expressed, either by the sponsoring group or by the institution.²⁷

The second cautions that “students should exercise their freedom with responsibility,” and may be required to have advisers. Still, “Campus advisers may advise organizations in the exercise of responsibility, but they should not have the authority to control the policy of such organization.”²⁸ This combination of freedom and responsibility also requires some degree of accountability: “Student organizations may be required to submit a statement of purpose, criteria for membership, rules of procedure, and a current list of officers.”²⁹

The current rules at Williams, instituted after the Derbyshire cancellation, are in general agreement with AAUP guidelines. The College currently requires that student groups be registered student organizations (RSO) approved by the College Council (CC) and that they submit their event with advance notice and follow certain rules to encourage responsibility to the campus community.

Finally, it is important to note that the current OSL policy includes a broad “Right of Refusal”: “The College retains the right of refusal for any outside speaker/performer and/or their campus sponsor for any reason.” In this, Williams’ approach diverges from AAUP guidelines, which state: “Only in the most extraordinary circumstances can strong evidence of imminent danger justify rescinding an invitation to an outside speaker.”³⁰ Similarly, the AAUP guidelines clearly imply that the role of the CC in recognizing student groups “should not be used as a device of censorship.” On this latter point, we refer to the recent Presidential Letter on “College Council vote on Williams Initiative for Israel.”³¹

Other Relevant Policies

The College has a number of other policies that relate to freedom of expression. The *Faculty Handbook* spells out definitions and procedures for

²⁷ *Ibid*, part 2.b.

²⁸ *Ibid*, part 1.c.

²⁹ *Ibid*, part 1.d.

³⁰ AAUP, [Academic Freedom and Outside Speakers \(2007\)](#).

³¹ President Maud Mandel, [“College Council vote on Williams Initiative for Israel,”](#) May 3, 2019.

discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct (Part I of Section II-S),³² as well as a commitment “to both freedom of expression and full academic freedom of inquiry, teaching, and research” (Part II.F of Section II-S).³³

Both the faculty and staff handbooks also contain a statement regarding sustaining a “Healthy Learning and Work Environment”:

We are dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive community, in which members of all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive. The College, in compliance with state and federal law, does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, or military service. It’s vital that we avoid intimidating or threatening actions that might result in a hostile environment. As a community of learning, we value freedom of expression and at the same time know that it does not protect abusive or harassing behavior.³⁴

The *Student Handbook* describes many policies regarding activities that involve expression on campus, including the use of College buildings and facilities, a ban against fraternities, rules for fire safety, the display of posters, the use of chalk on campus property, hazing, and sexual misconduct.³⁵

There is also a Student Code of Conduct that sets forth expectations of behavior and conduct: “Students are expected to respect the rights of others, their persons and their possessions, and refrain from any unreasonable disruption to the College or the community around it.”³⁶ Regarding freedom of expression, the *Code of Conduct* states:

[Williams] is committed to being a community in which all ranges of opinion and belief can be expressed and debated, and within which all patterns of behavior permitted by the public law and College regulations can take place. The community is varied, including people of diverse races, religions, national or ethnic backgrounds, gender expressions and gender identities, and sexual orientations,

³² [Williams College Faculty Handbook](#) 2018-2019, pp. 69-70.

³³ *Ibid*, p 73.

³⁴ [Williams College Staff Handbook: Code of Conduct](#).

³⁵ Relevant excerpts from the Student Handbook are reproduced in Appendix G.

³⁶ [Williams College Student Handbook: Code of Conduct: Student Conduct Philosophy](#).

and its members may from time to time disagree with one another's ideas and behavior. The College seeks to assure the rights of all to express themselves in words and actions, so long as they can do so without infringing upon the rights of others or violating standards of good conduct or public law.³⁷

When disagreements between members of the community arise, the *Code of Conduct* states:

Accepting membership in this community entails an obligation to behave with courtesy to others whose beliefs and behavior differ from one's own; all members and guests of this community must be free of disturbance or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment.³⁸

While there is a recognized right to protest, severe disruption is considered a violation of the Code of Conduct:

The College is obligated to maintain orderly and equitable conduct of its affairs, free of intimidation and harassment. While peaceful and orderly protest and dissent are the right of all members of the College community, any action which obstructs or interferes with the fulfillment of this basic obligation cannot be permitted. Violent acts and the incitement of violence are not permitted. College personnel may require students to leave public events at the College for improper behavior. Students are expected to comply with the request of public officials acting in performance of their duties; to identify oneself to a College or public official when requested to do so; and to provide truthful information to a College or public official.³⁹

These policies seem to strike a balance between ensuring the freedom of students to engage in a broad form of expression and ensuring that such

³⁷ [Williams College Student Handbook: Code of Conduct: Individual Rights.](#)

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, [Code of Conduct: Social Misconduct: Disturbances/Disruptive Behavior.](#)

expression does not cross the line into forms of behavior that undermine the educational environment of the College. More specifically, it is important to note that “disruption” of an event also refers to protest that prevents the speaker(s) from being heard and the audience from listening and/or interacting with the speaker/performer/artist. With the exception of the divergences noted above, the policies of the College are consistent with the AAUP guidelines.⁴⁰

VI. Philosophical Context: Inclusive Freedom

No set of policies can be credible without an underlying set of philosophical principles that enjoy broad acceptance by the community. In the absence of an institutional statement on freedom of expression, we have attempted to identify such principles. One possibility would be those found in the Chicago Statement. However, the debate over the Chicago principles at Williams has placed in opposition the freedom of inquiry of individuals and institutional efforts to build an inclusive community. While it is tempting to conclude that free inquiry and inclusion are irreconcilable, our committee has critically examined and rejected that assumption. We are guided by a variety of perspectives in which these values are seen not as mutually exclusive but as mutually reinforcing.

Sigal R. Ben-Porath of the University of Pennsylvania, author of *Free Speech on Campus*, has developed the concept of *inclusive freedom*, “an approach to free speech on campus that takes into account the necessity of protecting free speech in order to protect democracy and the pursuit of knowledge while recognizing the equal necessity of making sure that all are included in the ensuing conversation.”⁴¹ Similar themes can be found in the identically titled *Free Speech on Campus* by Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman: “Colleges and universities must create inclusive learning environments for all students *and* protect freedom of speech.”⁴² Finally, a recent report by PEN America, an organization devoted to protecting freedom of expression in the written word, has reaffirmed that “the imperative for universities to become more open, inclusive, and equal for students of all races, genders, nationalities, and backgrounds can and must be pursued without compromising robust protections for free speech and academic freedom.”⁴³

⁴⁰ AAUP, [Academic Freedom and Outside Speakers \(2007\)](#)

⁴¹ Ben-Porath, p. 12.

⁴² Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus* (Yale University Press, 2018), p. xx.

⁴³ PEN America (2019), p. 7.

Many suggestions can be found in these works, and we highlight only a few in this report. One such, of signal importance, is that the institution need not maintain a standpoint of neutrality toward all speech. Whenever fundamental values, such as the dignity of marginalized members of the community, are affronted by an outside speaker, there is a responsibility for the leaders of the institution to respond.⁴⁴ At the same time, these thinkers suggest, the spirit of that response should be guided by the words of Supreme Court Justice Brandeis in *Whitney v. California* (1927): “If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.” In this context, suppression of speech does not create an inclusive community, but indiscriminately abiding all speech can certainly do harm to the community. As Frederick M. Lawrence ’77, Secretary-CEO of Phi Beta Kappa, aptly puts it: “The question of whether speech may be restricted and even proscribed, while critically important, was never meant to bear the full weight of the broader question that confronts our campuses and our country—how best to respond to hateful speech. We must not mistake the immediate issue of whether speech is protected with the ultimate issue of how a community should respond to protected expression that is deeply hurtful to some of its members.”⁴⁵

In considering the effects and limits of inclusive freedom, it is important to distinguish among different types of harmful speech. The classes of speech that fall outside of legal protection, including true threats, incitement to violence, harassment, and defamation, constitute legally proscribed speech, are forbidden on campus as a matter of course, and do not concern us here. Speech that is not legally proscribed but that severely disrupts the normal activities of the College may also be prohibited or subject to restrictions in time, place, or manner.

Among the kinds of legally protected speech at issue in our charge, there are two broad classes of potentially harmful speech.⁴⁶ The first constitutes speech that offends—sometimes deeply so—but is part of the everyday debates, discussions, and deliberations that occur on a college campus. This speech threatens *intellectual safety*: “the attachment to one’s unquestioned beliefs.” Such safety simply cannot be maintained on college campuses, as the questioning of beliefs is at the very heart of a college’s educational mission. The second type of protected, but harmful, speech is that which threatens *dignitary safety*: “the sense of being an equal member of the community and of being

⁴⁴ PEN America (2019), p. 19.

⁴⁵ Frederick M. Lawrence, “[Practicing Vigorous Civility](#),” American Council on Education (October 31, 2018).

⁴⁶ Ben-Porath, p. 62.

invited to contribute to a discussion as a valued participant.” The College has a duty to maintain this type of safety, particularly in the face of what is commonly called *hate speech*: “speech that is intended to menace, intimidate, or discriminate against an individual based upon a personal characteristic or membership in a group.”⁴⁷ Such speech, inimical in all respects to a college’s educational mission, is worthy of contempt and may warrant an institutional response. Such a response could include: “counter-messaging, condemnations, direct support to targeted individuals and groups, dialogue, and education.”⁴⁸

The call to meet “hate speech” with “more speech” runs through the recommendations of Ben-Porath, Chemerinsky and Gillman, and PEN America. This is not to say that “hate speech” is taken lightly. As Chemerinsky and Gillman observe,

“More speech” cannot undo the hurt caused by hateful speech. But a willingness of members of the campus community to speak out on behalf of the university’s core values, and to condemn speech that is inimical to them, is an important component of how campuses should deal with offensive expression. Rather than be tempted toward censorship, campus leaders should focus on strategies premised on more speech.”⁴⁹

Here we note again the words of Frederick M. Lawrence ’77:

We bind ourselves to an impoverished choice set if we believe that we can either punish speech or validate it. There is a middle position, expressed in Brandeis’ dictum of “more speech,” that allows us to respond without punishing. In the face of hate speech, the call for more speech is not merely an option; it is a professional or even moral obligation.⁵⁰

Just as the institution as a whole need not remain neutral toward all types of speech, it is important to note that the College prioritizes certain types of speech over others. While we recognize that many types of expression will occur on campus, the educational model of Williams is not that of a university, in which a

⁴⁷ PEN America (2019), p. 92.

⁴⁸ PEN America (2019), p. 92. See also AAUP, [On Freedom of Expression and Campus Speech Codes \(1994\)](#).

⁴⁹ Chemerinsky and Gillman, p. 149.

⁵⁰ Frederick M. Lawrence, “[The Contours of Free Expression on Campus: Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Civility](#),” [Liberal Education](#) (Spring 2017).

lone lecturer speaks out into a large lecture hall. As embodied in our signature tutorial program, the Williams model is that of an intimate dialogue between a dedicated teacher and their student: “*The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.*”⁵¹ In the recommendations that follow, we encourage the creation of more campus-facing events that model constructive dialogue and conversation across viewpoints, rather than lecturing.

VII. Recommendations for Speaker/Performer/Artist Invitations

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusion and Inquiry make the following recommendations.

1. Adhere to policies and principles on campus speakers articulated by AAUP and PEN America.

We recommend that the College maintain a decentralized approach to speaker invitations, promote dialogue between stakeholders before challenging speaker events, consider disinvitation as an option only in the rarest circumstances, and prioritize the rights of protesters.

2. Publish and affirm a statement on expression and inclusion.

We recommend that the College adopt and centrally display a statement about the centrality of freedom of expression to its educational mission as an inclusive residential liberal arts institution. This should be guided by the AAUP documents, PEN America’s “Principles on Campus Free Speech”⁵² and, perhaps, statements adopted by peer institutions. If the College adopts one posture with regard to all speech—offensive, hate, dignitary—then that should be clear; if not, the reasons that policy distinguishes them should also be clear.

3. Plan ahead for occasions that may necessitate institutional response.

We recommend that College leaders be prepared to respond to any potentially controversial event that calls into question the values of the institution. The response should be framed by the educational mission of the College, should acknowledge harm, and should clarify boundaries regarding acceptable forms of expression.

⁵¹ R. Cragin Lewis, p. 82.

⁵² PEN America, “[Principles on Campus Free Speech](#)” (2019).

4. Support vigorous campus dialogue.

We recommend that the College support programs to facilitate conversation that builds empathy and understanding across difference and motivates intellectual engagement with contentious subjects on campus. This might include a voluntary ad hoc group of faculty, staff, and students trained to assist members of the community in organizing counter-events as well as anticipating the need for post-event workshops, teach-ins, mediated campus conversations, or restorative justice efforts. Alerting these volunteers through a group email list and other means as appropriate might lessen the burden often placed upon those most harmed or upset by an event. We envision these as education-based approaches to mediation and conflict resolution aimed at seeking understanding and expression of feelings rather than reaching agreement or compromise.

5. Hold workshops on best practices for event planning.

We recommend that the College consider holding a voluntary speaker and event planning workshop each fall for any students, faculty, and staff or unit representatives who might benefit from attending. This might be run by current or former chairs of the Lecture Committee, the Director of Commencement and Academic Events, the Gaudino and Schumann fellows, and members or advisors of Phi Beta Kappa and OSL. One of the goals of these workshops would be to promote communication and coordination between various groups as they plan events.

Insofar as the Committee's recommendations concerning speaker and event guidelines are designed not to prevent invitations, but rather to promote more thoughtfulness and transparency in the invitation process, it is still possible that speaker or performer events—including exhibits as well as other incidents or events—will take place that some members of the community find offensive or harmful. Given this possibility, we also recommend the College:

6. Revise OSL guidelines.

We recommend that the current set of questions on the OSL website be revised and made mandatory for all RSO event planning. This, we believe, will strike an appropriate balance, upholding students' autonomy while also underscoring the responsibility and accountability of student groups to ensure

that events are “conducted in a manner appropriate to an academic community”—in this instance, a diverse Williams community.

Furthermore, we encourage all members of the Williams campus community—students, faculty, and staff—to share in this responsibility. In particular, we encourage faculty and staff to use our revised guidelines to reflect upon the impact their events may have on the campus community, and to model ways to facilitate productive conversation among dissenting parties. We further encourage faculty and staff advisers to consult with students about their events and support them in creating the best events possible. In some cases, this might include suggesting that they use an alternate format for an event, include a discussion facilitator, invite a second speaker or a faculty member for a dialogue or conversation, organize a panel representing a variety of viewpoints, or provide opportunities for feedback or a follow-up event for continued dialogue. To facilitate these goals, we recommend that a short online form such as the following be developed to replace the current form used by the Office of Student Life for student events.

—Policy—

Name of speaker:

Sponsoring group(s):

Faculty/Staff group advisor(s):

Title of event, anticipated date, requested space:

Format (lecture, panel, conversation, moderated conversation, workshop, performance, seminar, exhibit, discussion):

Intended audience (your group, campus community, public, class):

Anticipated attendance and need for security:

Who will clean up after you:

Intended goal and its educational component:

Intended way to handle disagreement:

Engaging in the reflection process below is part of a Williams education. We recommend that when conducting event planning, you think about the following:

- The most successful events involve many co-sponsors. We strongly encourage you to contact other groups for co-sponsorship and coordination of events. These may include academic units, the Lecture Committee, the Director of Commencement and Academic Events in the

Dean of Faculty's Office, the Gaudino Scholar, the John Hyde Teaching Fellow, the W. Ford Schumann Faculty Fellow, or Phi Beta Kappa.

- We further encourage you to consider formats that prioritize discussion and opportunities for engagement from all members of the community, especially those who may wish to express dissent.
- All contracts with external individuals or groups must be coordinated with the Director of Commencement and Academic Events (Carrie Greene); fees of \$600 or more typically require such a contract.
- All advertising of the event must include a list of sponsors, contact information for sponsor(s), and a statement at the bottom that Williams does not necessarily endorse the opinions, viewpoints, and content expressed in the event.

By using this form, you are agreeing to the OSL Policies found here. Please note that, in the interests of transparency, the information provided in this form is available to everyone on campus and can be found by clicking on a link in the events calendar.

—End of policy—

This policy change will make the information about an upcoming event, as well as the aims and individuals or groups responsible for the event, available to anyone on campus.

7. Facilitate protest.

Protest is central to free expression. The College's Mission Statement notes that "We also urge students to see their college as a laboratory in citizenship." Although various statements about the College's policy on free expression can be found in our recent self-accreditation report, and the existing student, faculty, and staff codes of conduct do lay out principles designed to regulate behavior within the campus community, it is not always clear how these policies and codes apply to campus activism.

Thus, we recommend that the College develop guidelines about how freedom of expression policies apply to campus activism and protest. These should be posted on the websites of the administrative units overseeing students, staff, and faculty. Such guidelines should clearly communicate the code of conduct. Response to infractions could include appealing to restorative justice principles.

8. Foreground its educational mission on publicity and contracts.

We recommend that a statement such as the following appear at the top of any communication (internal as well as external) regarding the invitation of outside speakers/performers/artists or other presenters:

Williams College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive in a context that robustly supports both inclusion and open inquiry. When planning events (speakers, artists, performers, exhibits, and others) we ask that you think carefully about the goals, format, and framing of your event and its relationship to the Williams community and its educational mission and values.

The aim of this revision is to remind those inviting speakers/performers/artists as well as speakers themselves about Williams' aspirational ideals and values. These guidelines are not designed to prevent invitations, but rather to promote more thoughtfulness and transparency in the invitation process.

9. Ensure safety.

To protect the well-being of everyone on campus as we actively engage in conversation across differences, we recommend that College leaders be prepared to work with Campus Safety and Security to ensure that there are clear procedures in place in case an event, speaker, or protest threatens the safety and security of the invitees, audience, or any other member or part of the campus community. These procedures should be clearly communicated with event planners and potential protestors.

VIII. Conclusion

Williams College is an institution of higher education that seeks “to provide the finest possible liberal arts education.” Williams is also a community of students, faculty, and staff that “is dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive community, in which members of all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive.” When our committee was formed in January, our focus was on how our speaker policies serve the College’s fundamental commitments to inquiry and inclusion.

Subsequent events on campus⁵³ have shed light on a number of different, but interrelated, problems and challenges for the Williams College community.

These events include the departure of two professors of color and the expression of student support for their well-being; the continued reflection on how professors do and do not feel included in the Williams community; the presentation of student demands (from CARE Now) for resources and policies to promote their sense of inclusion; requests by students for support from the College Council for resources and recognition by minority communities; and the expressions of anger, dismay, and disappointment at CC policies and decision-making procedures. In all of these events there are multiple voices striving to be heard by the community. In addition, there are voices from outside the community conveying messages of support, concern, outrage, and hostility. While legitimate questions of freedom of expression have arisen throughout, it is undeniable that there is a great deal of speech being freely expressed on matters of concern for the community.

What is also undeniable is that commitments to freedom of expression and inclusion cannot be fulfilled by the simple adoption or endorsement of a set of policies or principles by a committee. What is required is the commitment by each member of the community to embrace a common *ethos* toward the respectful and thoughtful treatment of others. This commitment must be strong enough to flourish in the context of normal, everyday discourse, but also to weather those moments of extreme disagreement. It is to be expected that, in a diverse community, these moments will emerge from time to time, and while there has been an upsurge of such moments in the past few months, there remains a persistent challenge, namely: How do we nurture and sustain a sense of community at Williams?

From a pedagogical perspective, we have a model that is both uniquely our own and universal in application: "*The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.*" This call for intimate dialogue is the truly essential component of a Williams education, and our essential tool to protect and repair the community when it is threatened or harmed. Indeed, it is part of our Mission Statement:

Faculty [staff] and students together, learning with and from each other in a community whose intimacy of scale fosters close personal and intellectual relationships; where concern for the needs

⁵³ Many of these events have been written about in [The Williams Record](#) and in communications from [President Mandel](#).

and ideas of other people is not only an educational, but an ethical, imperative; where the values of engagement and decency fundamentally shape the educational process: These are the ideals to which Williams faculty and students aspire.

To this we would add that we must also support and be responsive to the needs of the staff who ensure Williams remains a welcoming and smoothly functioning residential college community. The College has many overlapping roles: It serves as a place of teaching, learning, dialogue, and debate; as a home to a diverse student body; and as a workplace in which people from all backgrounds can contribute their ideas and carry out their responsibilities free from discrimination and harassment. Maintaining the spirit of this community requires the continuous, deliberate effort of each of its members, and many of the events in the past several months indicate how a loss of a sense community for some can affect all.

We must also recognize that speaker invitations (and disinvitations) are not the primary threat to inquiry and inclusion. Today's intellectual discourse has been tainted by the rise of intolerant forms of expression and its proliferation on social media. While this can occur deliberately, it can also arise from (and further encourage) bad habits characterized by impatience, intimidation, and other deleterious forms of speech and thought. Here too, we can look to the Mission Statement, which cautions

against the growing culture of simplification, where intricate issues are boiled down into fiercely held "positions," where counter-arguments are seen as irritating distractions from clarity, where "points" have more power and visibility than the thinking that produced them.

We recommend that working against this culture be a focus of continued conversation and study, in particular to explore how the College can support students, faculty, and staff in the presence of internet discourse that can be used to harass, threaten, or demean individuals or otherwise disrupt the functioning of the College and its educational goals.

Our recommendations are intended to support the educational mission of the College, to promote dialogue, and to distribute the responsibility for maintaining a healthy learning environment in a fair and equitable manner. Our goals are to encourage the selection and programming of events in a way that respects a "diverse and inclusive community," while maintaining the free exchange of ideas necessary for "the finest possible liberal arts education." The

means by which this can be done is through the continued cultivation of respectful dialogue among students, faculty, and staff. We hope that the work of this committee will provide a useful guide to the Williams College community as we move forward.

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Appendix A: Spectrum Activity

Activity: Spectrum (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzcNTgDIg8&t=11s>)

Goal: To see the variety of opinions that different members of the committee hold so that we can begin more difficult conversation and do so respectfully

Instructions: We'll walk to a room with seven lines of tape on the middle of the floor corresponding to the spectrum of opinions below. Each of the following questions will be asked and—starting from the neutral line—we will walk to the line that most reflects our opinion. Standing by our opinion, we have the opportunity to state how we interpreted the question and further express why it is we are standing where we are. Not everyone has to talk for each question. After speaking for however long we want, we will return to the middle for the next question.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Somewhat Agree / Neutral / Somewhat Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

1. On campus, I feel comfortable openly expressing my opinion on free speech.
2. I have a good understanding of why community members feel harmed by certain speakers.
3. Disinviting speakers harms the educational mission of the College.
4. Allowing for full freedom of expression has the potential to create a hostile environment.
5. When Williams hosts an outside speaker or performer, that provides an institutional endorsement of the visitors' position.
6. A "no platform" policy at Williams is a good solution.
7. Community members should be allowed to disrupt speaker events.
8. I have in mind a best course of action for our committee.

Appendix B: Questions for Alumni

- When Williams hosts an outside speaker or performer, does that provide an institutional endorsement of the visitor's position?
- Does disinviting speakers harm the educational mission of the college?
- What guidelines might Williams consider for speaker/performer/artist invitations and events that demonstrate the college's full commitment to both free inquiry and inclusion?
- From an alumni perspective, what is important for committee members to know about these topics as we consider recommendations?
- From your perspective, what will alumni want to hear from our committee about our work and these topics?

Appendix C: Online Survey Sent to Student Body



Survey on Speakers, Inquiry & Inclusion

Hello! Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback will help the Committee revise current speaker policy, develop better practices for speaker engagement, and identify barriers to inquiry and inclusion on our campus. This survey is 15 questions long and should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Note that this survey is completely voluntary. You may answer as few or as many questions as you wish. Your responses will be completely confidential, so please be candid. Survey results will not be reported in any form that would identify an individual.

If you have questions about this survey, or encounter difficulties in taking it, please email cmw1@williams.edu.

Controversy over speakers in the past few years has called into question current speaker guidelines. The Committee is investigating the best solutions to this problem. Which of the following practices do you consider the best solution?

*These practices are not mutually exclusive.

- Disallowing/Disinviting speakers
- Coordinating counter-events and peacefully protesting to affirm solidarity
- Creating a format where the speaker's opinion is challenged (two-sided debate, student questioning, etc.)

Williams students take part everyday in multiple communities: athletic teams; affinity and advocacy groups; committee and college governance meetings; theatre, music, voice, and dance; faith and interfaith groups; community volunteer work and research; etc.

As a member of one or more of these communities, how comfortable are you expressing your opinion without fear of judgement?

Extremely comfortable	Comfortable	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Extremely uncomfortable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can express my personal and political opinions freely on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People who disagree on campus talk to each other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discourse among students who disagree is respectful and reasoned	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other students use my race or identity to invalidate what I have to say

Very often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The Committee is seeking ways to engage students with other students in conversation on the diversity of opinions and identities students bring to our campus. Do you have any suggestions for formats by which this can be made a reality?

The Committee is investigating the different ways in which students are and are not harmed by outside speakers invited to campus. Your answers to the following will help the Committee better understand these harms.

In inviting a speaker to campus, Williams is thereby implicitly agreeing with that speaker's beliefs.

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
-

Which do you believe is the source of the greatest harm?

- The external ramifications of Williams' endorsing potentially racist/sexist (etc.) ideas
- The presence of potentially racist/sexist (etc.) words and ideas on campus
- Williams' decision to spend money on an unpopular speaker instead of a popular one
- None of these is inherently harmful
- Other

I am disrespected or hurt when certain outside speakers are brought to campus.

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
-

In the context of outside speakers, please share your experiences or opinion concerning student harm:

Would you like to see Williams disinvite speakers?

- Yes Uncertain No
-

Consider the following policies **for** disinviting speakers. Which (among the policies below) is **most** appealing to you?

- A committee of students/faculty/staff makes decision
- A committee makes decision upon reviewing objections from students who oppose the speaker
- Davis Center staff makes decision
- College Council makes decision
- Other

Consider the following reasons **against** disinviting speakers. Which (among the reasons below) is **most** convincing to you?

- Williams does not have the authority to restrict free speech—a constitutional right
- Williams has the authority to restrict free speech, but Williams also has an educational commitment to expose students to different opinions, even if some opinions may offend or harm.
- Whether or not Williams has authority, censoring speakers is unwise because—in practice—the application of criteria by which speakers are disallowed becomes arbitrary.
- Other

.

Is there a problem with freedom of expression at Williams?

- Yes
- No strong opinion
- No

In three words or less, what is that problem?

Please provide any final feedback you have for this Committee:

Demographic Information

Class Year

- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- In-between

Race or Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Are you transgender?

Yes

No

Unsure

What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-binary

I identify as:

What is your sexual orientation?

- Straight
- Gay/lesbian
- Bisexual
- Unsure
- I identify as:

How would you describe your political views?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Liberal | Liberal | Moderate | Conservative | Very Conservative |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Appendix D: Common Questions for Outreach

EXPRESSION

Diverse groups at Williams regularly invite outside speakers, debaters, filmmakers, performers, and others. We are interested in understanding your experiences with these events.

What are the benefits to our community of bringing outside speakers and performers to campus?

How should/does Williams's mission to educate guide whom we invite or how we organize speaker events?

What factors would you want to take into account if the College were to draft guidelines for inviting outside speakers and performers?

INQUIRY

When you feel free to voice skepticism, admiration or disagreement in an outside-speaker / artist / performer event setting, what contributes to that?

Members of the Williams community are involved every day in multiple groups, including class and department meetings; athletic teams, PE and wellness classes; faith and interfaith groups; TA sessions; committee and college governance meetings; affinity and advocacy groups; theatrical, music, voice, and dance practice; gallery talks; and community volunteer work and research. We are interested in your experiences in these settings.

When you feel free to voice skepticism, admiration or disagreement in one of these campus settings, what contributes to that?

INCLUSION

Do you see tensions between free inquiry and the safety of all members of the community?

When Williams hosts an outside speaker, artist or performer, does that provide an institutional endorsement or a validation of the visitor's position?

What can the College do to be more inclusive?

Appendix E: Timeline of the Williams College Faculty Petition regarding the Chicago Statement

The following petition was drafted by several faculty members, in collaboration with and inspired by discussions among many, and finalized on October 14, 2018. It was then sent to several more faculty members for review, who gave feedback and signed their names. At the same time, a meeting for a faculty discussion was planned for November 15, 2018.

After the petition had garnered sufficient faculty support, it was sent to all voting members of the faculty on October 29, 2018 by Luana Maroja, Associate Professor of Biology, Steven Gerrard, Professor of Philosophy, and David Gürçay-Morris, Associate Professor of Theatre. Over one hundred members of the faculty had signed by November 5, 2018, representing a range of disciplines and identities. Several faculty voiced concerns by email and in person, and it was planned to have several faculty discussions to allow productive dialogue on the petition and the issues of concern. Plans for student outreach were also initiated at this time.

Apparently, information about the petition and the first planned discussion was shared with students shortly thereafter. The petition was discussed at a meeting with students and President Mandel on November 11. College Council discussed the petition on November 13. A letter to the editor by Cheryl Shanks, Professor of Political Science, was published in the Williams Record on November 14. A student letter was presented to the faculty at the November 15th 4pm meeting, which was read out loud by Professor Gerrard before he presented some brief remarks. Instead of the planned discussion amongst faculty, interested students were welcomed into the meeting. They shared their thoughts about the petition and the issues raised therein. The discussion between faculty and students continued until 6:30pm.

At some point on the evening of November 14 the petition was accessed by an anonymous account, and portions of the text were removed; after discovering this on the evening of November 15, the petition was made inactive.

At no time had the petition been formally delivered to any administrative body of the college, and no formal motion has been prepared for any upcoming faculty meeting. All of the activities were, and remain, in the discussion stage.

Discussions on the core issues of academic freedom and freedom of expression are essential to Williams College, and will continue.

Petition to the Faculty of Williams College

Greetings.

In view of the continuing local and national discussions regarding freedom of expression on campus, several of us think that it is an opportune time to reflect on and clarify our policies and ideas on this issue. While there is an understandable desire to protect our students from speech they find offensive, doing so risks shutting down legitimate dialogue and failing to prepare our students to deal effectively with a diversity of opinions, including views they might vehemently disagree with.

We believe that Williams College, as an institution of higher learning, must maintain a strong commitment to academic freedom. We further believe that Williams should protect and promote the free expression of ideas. We should be encouraged to use reasoned argument and civil discourse to criticize and contest views we dispute, not to suppress these views and risk falling down the slippery slope of choosing what can and what cannot be discussed.

The [Chicago Statement](#) articulates the duties of institutions of higher learning towards freedom of expression. A version of this statement has now been adopted by many other colleges and universities, including Amherst, Princeton, Smith, and, most recently, [Colgate](#). We believe that *Williams College should affirm its commitment to the principles of freedom of expression and academic freedom as essential to fulfilling its mission and goals by adopting the Chicago Statement.*

If you agree with our concern and this statement, we ask you to please add your name to this petition. If we have a critical mass we will bring this to the president and our fellow faculty members for further consideration.

Appendix F: In Response to the “Chicago Statement” Petition

November 15, 2018

To the Williams community,

Recently, a petition has circulated throughout the faculty urging the College to adopt a statement released by the University of Chicago in 2015, which claims to defend the right to “free speech and free expression” on college campuses.¹ The authors of the Williams petition assert that “while there is an understandable desire to protect our students from speech they find offensive, doing so risks putting down legitimate dialogue and failing to prepare our students to deal effectively with a diversity of opinions, including views they might vehemently disagree with.” We, the undersigned, take grave issue with the premises of this petition and the potential harm it may inflict upon our community.

We are at once angered by the context in which this petition has emerged and highly critical of its content. This process is not only engaged against Williams College’s Mission and Principles, but also against those of the petition itself. Not allowing students into the discussion and circulation of the petition limits the potential for conflicting viewpoints and is thus completely antithetical to a free speech premise. According to the college’s Mission Statement, “Faculty members invite students to become partners in the process of intellectual discovery.” We see none of this. With increasingly visible violence towards those most marginalized by our society, why is this discussion happening now? “Free Speech,” as a term, has been co-opted by right-wing and liberal parties as a discursive cover for racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and classism. The creation of this petition at Williams cannot be separated from those dehumanizing associations. Nor can it be separated from a national pattern where certain amendments are upheld and protected at all costs and others are completely denigrated, ignored, and targeted. Take the privileging of the 2nd amendment over the 14th amendment, for example. Mirroring this harmful prioritization, Williams’ sudden and urgent need to protect “free speech” over all other issues for students and community members is evidence of white fragility, ideological anxiety, and discursive violence. This petition and the Chicago Statement are purely semantics and posturing. Why can’t we actually have a campus-wide discussion on this issue, one that is not dominated by conservative and white faculty? Can this instead be an opportunity

¹ “Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression” by U Chicago, January 2015

to take a critical eye to how free speech is constructed and weaponized at institutions like Williams?

We would like to draw attention to specific elements of the petition. The use of “controversy” in the piece is oversimplified and reductive. The petition prioritizes the protection of ideas over the protection of people and fails to recognize that behind every idea is a person with a particular subjectivity. Our beliefs, and the consequences of our actions, are choices we make. Any claim to the “protection of ideas” that is not founded in the insurance of people’s safety poses a real threat – one which targets most pointedly marginalized people. An ideology of free speech absolutism that prioritizes ideas over people, giving “deeply offensive” language a platform at this institution, will inevitably imperil marginalized students.

Liberal ideology asserts that morality is logical— that dehumanizing ideas can be fixed with logic and therefore need to be debated. However, oppression is the result of centuries of real emotional and material interests, and dehumanization cannot be discussed away. In truth, a liberal framework for “rational debate” rests upon a cognitive hierarchy that says intelligence equals morality and discussion equals good actions. The reality is that the academy has a dark history of enacting racism. Topics like eugenics, once debated as “civil rational discussion,” have now been acknowledged as indefensibly racist frameworks. Finally, those who dictate what gets to be debated are generally overrepresented folks from backgrounds of privilege. Therefore, this petition has grave potential to further silence the voices of people of color, queer people, disabled people, poor people, and others outside the center of power .

And while the University of Chicago statement says that students “may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject,” the issue is that these are *not* views we reject; they are views that reject us, and our very right to speak/breathe. The UChicago Statement, in failing to see this, has rejected our right to counter-protest, to “interfere.” Thus, our rights protected by the 1st amendment are eradicated by a petition that claims to support “free speech.” This document does not promote free speech: it punishes it. In a time when members of Congress on both sides of the aisle are asking for activists to be tried under the Patriot Act² , and counter-terrorism legislation has continued to increase world governments’ abilities to violently deny the right to peaceful protest, the College cannot support and

² Letter to Sessions, November 2017

thereby strengthen such absolute, reckless, and dangerous policies.

We are also skeptical of the “free speech” debate more broadly. The faculty petition is based on the false premise that the free dissemination of viewpoints means that all speech has an equal chance of being heard. Simply letting all speech be spoken does not, in practice, accomplish the petition’s stated goal of ensuring that different and diverse viewpoints, particularly those of marginalized people, are heard. Ultimately, power determines whose speech is given space and taken seriously. By putting resources and publicity behind certain speakers, we affirm their thoughts and ideas, bolstering their reputation with the weight of our institution’s academic legitimacy. When it comes to the actual choice of who comes to speak or how we otherwise engage in discourse at Williams, we must curate those speakers carefully, because ultimately all speaking engagements on campus are curated. Giving one person space/time to speak on campus means that another person is not given that space/time. We have to become attuned to the absences that accompany people’s presence on campus.

Who does this campus prioritize, and who does this statement truly aim to protect? John Derbyshire is a self-proclaimed “racist” and “homophobe” who was invited to speak at Williams by Uncomfortable Learning in 2016.³ He wrote an article proclaiming, among many other atrocious, untrue things, that “the mean intelligence of Blacks is much lower than for whites” and adamant advice like “[do] not attend events likely to draw a lot of blacks.” Adam Falk disinvited him to campus, but a free speech absolutism policy, like the one in this petition, would have limited the President and allowed Derbyshire to spew homophobia and anti-Black racism on campus. To quote Aiyana Porter at last week’s Black Student Union town hall, “John Derbyshire literally said that Black people are not humans. I’m not going to consider that in my classroom....Who are we okay with making uncomfortable? Why are we so driven to making those particular people uncomfortable? If we are so insistent on making them uncomfortable, then we at least need some institutional support to get through all of the discomfort that you are thrusting upon us.”⁴ Williams College continually fails to support its most marginalized students, staff, and faculty members, despite claiming to have a deep commitment to “diversity.” Cheryl Shanks’ letter to the editor states that “To sign on to this statement is not to reject safe spaces. The College should allow for, and even provide, safe spaces. In fact, it does.”⁵ As noted by dozens of students at the BSU town hall and the phenomenal letter released this week by Professors Love and Green, this is

³ “John Derbyshire fired for article urging children to avoid African Americans” in the Guardian, April 2012

⁴ “BSU Town Hall” by Williams College BlackStudentUnion on Youtube, November 2018.

⁵ “Letter to the Editor: Why the College should not ban speakers” in the Record, November 2018

simply untrue: many students with marginalized identities feel as if the College does not provide adequate support for them.⁶ Students of color feel tokenized in entries, CSS has a history of racist actions, queer faculty of color are subjected to racism and homophobia/transphobia, minority students lack autonomous space, etc. If we are to engage in this discussion, let us take a critical lens to the ways that “free speech” has been leveraged to silence dissent, not strengthen it.

Signed,

⁶ “Why We Cannot wait for Tenure to Insist upon our Dignity, Respect, Power, and Value” in the Feminist Wire, November 2018

Appendix G: List of Relevant Williams College Documents & Policies

Williams College Mission Statement

In the gentle light of the Berkshire hills, Williams pursues a bold ambition: To provide the finest possible liberal arts education. If the goal is immodest, it is also bracing: Elevating the sights and standards of every member of the community, encouraging them to keep faith with the challenge inscribed on the College's gates: "climb high, climb far."

Williams is fortunate to have extraordinary resources, but its strength derives above all else from the quality of its people.

Williams students rank with the best in the country; the rigor and competitiveness of the College's admission standards place Williams in the company of only a handful of other institutions. Over the past thirty years especially, Williams has both strengthened its academic profile and actively recruited a student body that is markedly more diverse in many dimensions, including race, national origin, and the educational and socio-economic background of its families.

The strength of the student body today is the product of the College's resolve to search as widely as possible for students of high academic ability and great personal promise. Diversity is not an end in itself, but a principle flowing from the conviction that encountering differences is at the heart of the educational enterprise—differences, certainly, of ideas and beliefs, but also differences of perspectives rooted in the varied histories students bring with them.

As both an educational and social imperative, we are committed to welcoming talented students irrespective of their financial resources, and it is therefore a central institutional priority—unwaveringly supported by all parts of the College community—to maintain our policies of need-blind admission for domestic students and of fully meeting a student's demonstrated need. And, recognizing that of those to whom much has been given much may properly be required, we ask all our students to understand that an education at Williams should not be regarded as a privilege destined to create further privilege, but rather as a privilege that creates the opportunity and responsibility to serve society at large.

We seek to capitalize on our character as a residential college by placing great emphasis on the learning that takes place not only inside the classroom, but outside as well, where students can strengthen mind, body, and spirit by participating in athletic teams, artistic performances, political debates, religious and volunteer groups, and nearly one-hundred-and-seventy extra-curricular organizations. We also urge students to see their college as a laboratory in citizenship. To an unusual degree, Williams gives students primary responsibility for creating and governing their own community, whether as Junior Advisors (chosen by fellow students to live with and mentor first-year students), or as guardians of academic integrity through the student-led Honor Code.

Recruiting top talent from a wide variety of institutions, Williams asks its faculty to accept a distinctive—and unusually demanding—combination of challenges: to be exemplary teachers, productive scholars or artists, and active partners in running the institution. Well supported by the College through research funding and a generous sabbatical program, Williams faculty are leaders in their fields—recognized nationally, and often internationally, for the high quality and significance of their scholarly and creative work. They also embrace the chance to shape their college, serving in a civic spirit on an array of committees, and as senior officers of an institution that has long prized shared governance and collaborative decision-making.

But it is the teaching gene that especially defines Williams professors. They devote sustained attention every year to assessing the quality and freshness of the curriculum, and to crafting pedagogical approaches that help nurture in their students a passionate pleasure in the life of the mind. Faculty members invite students to become partners in the process of intellectual discovery. That partnership becomes visible in every classroom, where students are expected to contribute rather than consume; in the challenging setting of Williams tutorials, where students take the lead in explaining what is interesting and consequential about that week's assignment; and in the College's ambitious programs to engage students directly in faculty research.

But the classroom and curriculum are only the entry points. Professors at Williams want to know not only *what* their students think, but *how* they think and *who* they are. They want to know students in all their dimensions—to learn their histories and hopes, to advise them on matters personal as well as academic, to see them as complex individuals who deserve attention and respect.

Faculty and students together, learning with and from each other in a community whose intimacy of scale fosters close personal and intellectual relationships; where concern for the needs and ideas of other people is not only an educational, but an ethical,

imperative; where the values of engagement and decency fundamentally shape the educational process: These are the ideals to which Williams faculty and students aspire.

They have strong partners. Williams is blessed with an enormously talented administrative and support staff; they keenly understand the College's mission and devote their energies to advancing it. Williams alumni are fiercely and intelligently loyal, contributing generously of their time, experience, and resources. Far from insisting that the College remain as it was in their time, alumni encourage Williams to reinvent itself for each new generation. Williams trustees (all of whom are currently alumni) provide discerning strategic direction and careful stewardship of the College's assets. While the board is fully engaged, it keeps its focus on large policy issues and long-term decisions.

We are fortunate, too, in our location. Surrounded by communities that enthusiastically support and participate in its educational project, Williams is at home in a town rich with cultural resources. The College strives to be a responsible citizen and employer, and contributes both expertise and resources to numerous local initiatives. The natural beauty of the Berkshires makes us especially conscious of the urgent need to address—through our teaching and research, and through the daily operations of the College—the environmental problems that threaten an increasingly fragile planet.

That is who we are, and this is what we aim to do: To develop in students both the wisdom and skills they will need to become responsible contributors to whatever communities they join, and the richly textured inner lives that will make them rigorously self-reflective, ethically alert, and imaginatively alive. Public and private purposes, as it were, harmoniously nurturing each other. Toward these ends, certain principles and values shape our sense of mission:

- Our purpose is not to offer specialized or professional training, but to develop in our students strong writing, speaking, and quantitative abilities, as well as analytical and interpretive talents, tested in relation to a wide range of issues and disciplines. We embrace the liberal arts claim that a broadly educated person will be more capable of adapting to the particular needs of the professions and of public life than a person narrowly trained in singular subjects.
- Our curricular requirements aim to negotiate the crucial balance between breadth and depth. We combine an appropriately liberal distribution of each student's course choices across the curriculum with some measure of control over the methods and subject matter of at least one field. While fully

recognizing the important value of disciplinary approaches and the departmental structures that support them, we have welcomed and participated in the academy's growing emphasis on interdisciplinary learning as a way of understanding the interconnectedness of ideas, and as a bulwark against the fragmentation of knowledge.

- Through the increasingly global reach of our curriculum, as well as the diversity of our campus community, we seek to develop in students the capacity to see beyond the limits of their own experience. So many of the world's problems—from racism, to sectarian and nationalistic violence, to everyday forms of disrespect—stem from a failure to imagine our way into the lives of other people, a failure to understand the beliefs and contingencies that shape their lives, a failure to hear the stories that other people are trying to tell us. A liberal education alone cannot solve the world's problems, but it can help to open minds and deepen human empathy.
- Our curriculum is as varied, up-to-date, and forward-thinking as the contemporary world requires, but we also want to strengthen our students' curiosity about, and respect for, the past: for the story of how people before us have responded to challenges different from—but analogous to—our own, for the story of where human beings have been, what we have achieved, and how we have failed. We want to resist the tendency to see our historical moment as so much more complex and dangerous than those experienced by earlier generations that we fail to think of the past as something that calls to us with an urgent, or admonitory, or even sympathetic voice.
- We want, too, to lean against the growing culture of simplification, where intricate issues are boiled down into fiercely held “positions,” where counter-arguments are seen as irritating distractions from clarity, where “points” have more power and visibility than the thinking that produced them. We want instead to inspire in our students the confidence to be undaunted by complexity, and to embrace it in ways that will prove valuable to them and to society at large.
- We aim to encourage students to develop a personal stance toward learning and knowledge, and to make judgments that put their beliefs and values on the line. We want them to have the courage of their convictions, but at the same time, to seek out criticism of their own ideas, and to appreciate the virtues of personal and intellectual humility.

These values and ambitions will serve as beacons into a future when the college will continue to encounter, and continue to welcome, changes in our demographics, our curriculum, our approaches to what and how we learn. To remain a vibrant institution that both reflects and leads the society of which it is a part, Williams must always adapt and grow, and be prepared—as we tell our students they too must be prepared—to respond in an agile, nuanced way to needs and challenges we cannot yet anticipate.

In summarizing this college's mission, we can turn to the eloquent words spoken by Williams President John Sawyer '39 in his induction address in 1961:

The most versatile, the most durable, in an ultimate sense the most practical knowledge and intellectual resources which [students] can now be offered are those impractical arts and sciences around which a liberal education has long centered: the capacity to see and feel, to grasp, respond, and act over a widening arc of experience; the disposition and ability to think, to question, to use knowledge to order an ever-extending range of reality; the elasticity to grow, to perceive more widely and more deeply, and perhaps to create; the understanding to decide where to stand and the will and tenacity to do so; the wit and wisdom, the humanity and humor to try to see oneself, one's society, and one's world with open eyes, to live a life usefully, to help things in which one believes on their way. This is not the whole of a liberal arts education, but as I understand it, this range of goals is close to its core.

So it was more than a half-century ago, and so it remains today.

The statement above is the product of discussions during the 2016-17 academic year in the Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee, whose twenty-eight members include faculty, students, and administrators, and in the Williams College Board of Trustees. The Board approved this statement in June 2017.

2017 Accreditation Self-Study Standard Nine:

Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Williams treats our commitments to integrity and transparency as deeply entwined. This is exemplified in two particular aspects of our practice:

First, we conduct our governance and decision-making processes openly. This means communicating not only the outcomes of deliberations, but also (when possible and appropriate) information about the data and reasoning that informed our decisions. Like many schools, we are paying increasing attention to the questions of when and

how to publish institutional data and analyses, and when it is appropriate to be candid about prospective strengths and challenges.

Second, as explained in Standard 3, we also strive to make college governance and administration inclusive, where this can be done without eroding privacy or legal privilege, or negatively affecting our responsibilities to our mission. Students and staff, as well as faculty, play important roles in governance.

Such practices are rooted in the idea that, for better or worse, our society increasingly seems to define integrity in terms of transparency: that is, most people no longer accept an institution's word that we act with integrity, but instead want to see the inner workings in order to judge for themselves.

Description

To quote the ecologist Aldo Leopold, "Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal." At Williams, we define institutional integrity as consistent adherence to the college's mission and core principles in both public and private settings. We ensure this integrity through a mutually reinforcing structure of formal policies and cultural practices, which depend on information sharing and effective "small c" communications (as distinct from Communications in the marketing sense)

Williams is formally authorized to operate in Massachusetts pursuant to the Statutory Charter of 1793. Additionally, the College Laws provide direction to the Board of Trustees and president. We comply with state requirements by annually filing reports and a Certificate of Change of Directors or Officers of Non-Profit Corporations with the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The college also operates two academic programs outside Williamstown (see Standard 4 for more details):

- The Williams-Mystic Program operates in Connecticut through a partnership with Mystic Seaport. Williams complies with Connecticut regulatory requirements by registering with the Connecticut secretary of state, the Connecticut Department of Revenue, and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection.
- The Williams-Exeter Programme is a study-abroad, academic credit-granting program at the University of Oxford's Exeter College. It is operated through a U.K. subsidiary nonprofit corporation, the Williams College Oxford Programme, registered under the U.K. Companies Act as a company limited by guarantee. The program is also registered with the U.K. Charitable Commission. Williams also operates a second, subsidiary company, the Williams College (U.K.) Foundation Limited, to facilitate fundraising in the U.K. That entity is also

formed and registered under the Companies Act and registered with the Charities Commission.

In the domain of campus policy, Williams' code of conduct, developed since our 2007 self-study, is a comprehensive expression of our expectations regarding ethical behavior, conflict of interest, transparency, and institutional loyalty (workroom). Williams also subscribes to and supports all privacy rights, including FERPA, HIPAA, and Title IX, and maintains rigorous privacy standards in Information Technology, Human Resources, and elsewhere across the operation.

Our student honor code, code of conduct, and student handbook are regularly reviewed by a variety of governance committees and constituent groups, including the Honor and Discipline Committee, the dean of the college, the dean of the faculty, the vice president for institutional diversity and equity, the Faculty Steering Committee, the Human Resources Office, and the Staff Council. We frequently update the code to keep pace with evolving expectations, such as changes in regulations guiding sexual misconduct prevention and response.

Reaching beyond specific policies, Williams aims to sustain an overall culture of truthfulness, clarity, and fairness. This expectation is communicated from the very top of the organization. The president's website includes President Falk's major campus communications and writings on relevant topics, such as inclusivity, transparency, and community standards of respect. The site is further discussed in the section below on transparency.

As noted in Standards 3 and 7, Williams also has staff and faculty handbooks that explain the college's governance, professional conduct standards, programs, and benefits. The handbooks include policies on computer network use, copyright, research involving human and animal subjects, and safety. The code and handbooks also set out processes for identifying problems and taking appropriate action when our standards are not met. These materials are updated regularly by committees that include significant representation from the relevant constituencies.

Williams' Board of Trustees and administration are subject to additional provisions laid out in our governing documents. The "College Governance" section of the president's website includes full copies of the college's charter and the College Laws, a copy of our current conflict of interest form, and all materials from our most recent (2007 comprehensive, 2012 interim) accreditation processes. The site also includes a section on the Board of Trustees where readers can learn about its work.

An inventory of all revisions to the College Laws since 1998 is provided in the workroom.

Our formal administrative structure, described in Standard 3, is augmented by numerous working and advisory groups, including the President's Advisory Group, the

Communications Advisory Group, and others, which give stakeholders ways to learn about college operations, understand major decisions and strategies, and share their views.

The ability to share those views is closely related to the issue of intellectual freedom. That freedom is defined broadly at Williams to include the unfettered exchange of diverse points of view, the dissemination of original scholarship, and respect for faculty, students, staff, alumni, and others who wish to share their opinions on how the college is governed. This “basket of rights” must sometimes be actively managed. For example, while input is typically welcomed, few administrative decisions are submitted to a referendum. And sometimes free speech interests brush up against competing prerogatives of campus security—the notion that “my freedom to swing my fist stops where the other fellow’s nose starts.” The appraisal section below includes discussion of how Williams is responding to this latter question, which is lately occupying a significant share of public attention. That said, in approaching the question, Williams starts from a presumption of absolute intellectual and academic freedom as one of our foundational values.

At the heart of our work is the effort to educate students and expose them to a full range of viewpoints on important issues. Every year, Williams welcomes prominent policy-makers, scholars, and public figures to campus at the invitation of departments and programs, student organizations, and individual faculty, students, and staff. Such efforts are further discussed below.

In some instances, intellectual freedom also intersects with questions about intellectual property. As we mentioned in Standard 7, since our last self-study, we have developed a more detailed IP policy embodying these principles; it is included in the faculty handbook. Similar concerns also fuel our efforts to hire outstanding scholars, artists, and teachers from the broadest, most inclusive pools, and to support their growth through diverse programs and faculty development initiatives.

Williams has had an explicit nondiscrimination policy in place since 1972. The most current version is included in our course catalog, in college handbooks for students, staff, and faculty, in multiple places on the college’s website, and in our Guidelines for Contractors (workroom). We apply our policies and practices to all college-sponsored activities. As at most schools, we maintain separate policies that apply to outside operations renting college facilities.

In 2006, in part to respond to community concerns as well as the practical difficulties of recruiting and supporting a diverse faculty and staff in rural Massachusetts, the college created the Office of Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity. In addition to providing extensive student, faculty, and staff support, the office develops and implements practices for recruiting a diverse faculty and staff. Representatives from this office participate on many faculty and staff search committees.

Detailed grievance procedures are available to any member of the college community who believes that he or she has been discriminated against. These protocols are described in the student, faculty, and staff handbooks, and are supported by a detailed online guide for individuals wishing to file a complaint. The guide describes two clearly defined procedures: the General Grievance Procedure for Complaints of Unfair Employment Practices and the separate Discrimination Grievance Procedure for Sexual Harassment and Discrimination. The college anticipates that a revised nondiscrimination policy, along with modified procedures for investigating and resolving complaints of discrimination, will be adopted in Fall 2017.

Designated members of the community are appointed to serve as college discrimination and sexual harassment advisers. They include health care staff and counselors, assistant and associate deans, human resources officers, chaplains, and staff in the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, including the vice president, who also serves as our affirmative action officer. A number of them have extensive backgrounds in discrimination or sexual harassment counseling.

Williams, like almost every school in the country, is working to uphold these commitments in the midst of great uncertainty in federal enforcement. As described in the Code of Conduct section above, in February 2017, President Falk sent a message to the campus community affirming that, whatever the regulatory environment, the college will keep working assiduously to prevent and respond to sexual violence on campus. For example, in April 2017, Dean of the College Marlene Sandstrom continued our annual practice of reporting to the campus about the outcomes of sexual misconduct processes from the prior academic year. This information is also now being shared with alumni and parents via social media and EphNotes, our monthly college e-newsletter.

Such careful (and often public) assessments of our effectiveness are necessary to ensure that the college operates with integrity. Williams conducts numerous such analyses on everything from college finances to staff morale to the academic program. To take one small example, the most recent edition of our staff climate survey (2017) showed a significant increase in the percentage of staff who reported that they understood what was expected of them in their roles—a sign that recent enhancements to the performance review process are now taking root.

Assessment is a form of introspection, but public trust relies on our ability to communicate the results of these analyses. As described above and in Standard 3, institutional transparency is central to Williams' definition of integrity. We continually search for new ways to share information with our community and to educate them about the administration of the college. The college's website is the foundation for this effort, with print publications and social media all pointing back to the website as the repository of news and information about Williams.

This work must also be accessible to its broadest audience. The college's chief communications officer, who oversees work on our website, has recently made web accessibility a high priority. An initial site audit yielded good scores overall. But it showed that some elements of campus communications—notably, the Daily Message emails—are not fully accessible to users who rely on screen readers or other assistive technologies. That problem is now being addressed—a change that will improve the messages' utility for all readers.

Recent efforts to share more information with more audiences—for example, by sharing in Spring 2017 a detailed analysis of trends in staff vs. faculty FTE growth from 2003 to 2016—have been welcomed both for their content and as a sign of increased trust by our constituents. This response prompted the Provost's and Communications offices to explore the idea of a series of educational videos that would teach the campus and alumni about how Williams works. We hope to pilot this program in 2018.

The Williams website itself contains comprehensive information on educational programs, quality, and offerings; cost and affordability; student life and athletics; institutional history and characteristics; and many other topics. It is designed to be useful to prospective students and families looking to make a college choice, and also to faculty and staff candidates who are evaluating Williams as a potential place of employment. It includes an easy-to-use A-Z index and a search engine that is extensively “seeded,” or optimized, to deliver relevant results. The website includes data on student life; HR and benefits programs; college finances and budget, including Form 990 and audited financial statements; data on retention and outcomes; and accreditation, among many other topics.

Our admission and financial aid websites are among the most frequently visited. They provide detailed information about affordability, the comprehensive fee and net price, and available aid. Our financial aid website also lists both the percentage of students who borrow and average debt on graduation—indices on which Williams is a national leader. A new round of improvements to the financial aid website is now underway.

On the national stage, the college and President Falk have been deeply involved in efforts to promote college affordability. Williams is a founding member of COFHE and the American Talent Initiative, an effort by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Aspen Institute, and ITHAKA S+R to recruit students from underrepresented groups to the nation's best colleges and universities. President Falk has also written prominently on the topic, including a well-received piece in the Washington Post proposing that colleges let go of their rhetorical attachment to “need blindness” in favor of declaring themselves to be explicitly “need seeking” (workroom).

In another key area of the website, Williams recently completed a comprehensive make-over of its online course catalog. An archive of earlier catalogs is also included.

The catalog lists all classes offered and those available during a given year, and connects to a page on the dean of faculty's site that shows lists of faculty scheduled for leaves in the next three years.

Overall, the website anchors a complex collection of print materials about the college. In partnership with departments and staff from across the campus, the Office of Communications coordinates external communications, ensuring their quality, consistency, and accuracy. This includes admission marketing and financial aid information, development and alumni communications, press releases and public relations work, college social media accounts, executive messaging, emergency preparedness and crisis communications, and sports information, as well as our policies and processes for admission, financial aid, misconduct, and retention and graduation rates.

The goal of this work is not only to provide a consistent sense of Williams that is true to the college's mission and spirit, but also to make that message appealing, informative, and accessible to audiences with varied interests and knowledge of higher education. A selection of our most prominent publications related to admission and financial aid, alumni, and development is provided in the workroom.

Appraisal

Williams works hard to live faithfully by our principles of institutional integrity and to project that integrity in our public conduct and communications. Yet that work is inherently imperfect and ongoing. Like every school in the country, we are working to keep pace with rapid shifts in public attitudes toward higher education, and expectations about institutional disclosure and transparency. Intense political, media, and public attention to higher education—on campus discourse, affordability, outcomes, sexual assault, and other issues—has produced demands for more insight into institutional decision-making. Similar expectations are also shaping relations with alumni, who increasingly expect a voice in governance, and with parents and families, who are thoroughly analyzing institutional costs, outcomes, and culture before choosing a school. Many of the efforts described earlier in this standard reflect our understanding of these expectations.

This is rapidly becoming the new normal on campus, and we will need to work hard and carefully to position the college in the higher-education marketplace. Here are several examples of how we are working through such challenges.

Campus discourse: In 2015-16, the college weathered negative publicity resulting from the cancelations of appearances by two speakers, one (an outspoken antifeminist) canceled by the student organizers, and the other (an avowed white supremacist) by the college. Following that experience, we have reflected on the challenges posed by potential hate speech on the campus, in the context of a deep commitment to

productive, substantive debate on controversial issues. Since then, as we had before, Williams has hosted appearances by speakers of all stripes, including a Williams Forum debate on campaign finance reform between Ilya Shapiro of the Cato Institute and Daniel Weiner of the Brennan Center for Justice, a lecture by conservative scholar Charles Murray, and an analysis of the 2016 presidential election, co-led by former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and former U.S. Senator Scott Brown. All of these events were well attended, with challenging but respectful engagement by students. We also put protocols in place by which we guarantee registered student groups the chance to bring speakers of their choice, as long as they accept responsibility for the work of planning these events and agree to disclose any outside funding.

In the current political environment, we expect ongoing challenges in navigating these issues, and our goal will be to encourage the campus to engage in ways that embody our highest values. We will also work to depict such commitments more fully in our communications with alumni, prospective students and families, and the media, as we did with President Falk's Summer 2017 Williams Magazine column, "Space for Disagreement" (work- room).

Conflicts of interest: With the growing interconnectedness of the world economy and the broadening financial involvements of trustees and officers of the college, we project a need to review with increased frequency our policies and practices regarding real and perceived conflicts of interest. These efforts start from a solid foundation: Every year, administrative staff whose positions, responsibilities, or relationships could give rise to conflicts of interest are required to review our conflict of interest policy and file a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Designated members of the faculty whose job responsibilities or relationships create potential conflicts of interest are asked to submit a comparable disclosure form to the dean of the faculty. As noted above, all trustees are required to submit disclosures to the board's Executive, Audit, and Governance Committees.

Title IX: As noted above and in Standard 5, Williams is continually investing in efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault. National attention to the rights of the accused, along with signals from Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos about a possible change in direction for the Office of Civil Rights, have introduced new uncertainty into the regulatory environment. Recognizing this fact, President Falk sent out a campus message in February 2017 (also shared with alumni) that affirmed the college's principled commitment to this work based on concern for the well-being of our community, even if the law no longer compels it (workroom). Williams recently received several grants from the U.S. Department of Justice to explore research-based methods for sexual assault prevention, as just one aspect of what will have to be a holistic approach to education, prevention, and response.

Internal communications: Given our increasingly dense, complex, and fast-moving information environment, globally and on campus, we foresee a need to attend even more systematically to the transparency and inclusiveness of our campus communications. Our Communications Advisory Group is considering a campus communications audit to understand the range of ways in which people receive (or want to receive) information about the college, and would develop recommendations from the results. We are also renovating our Daily Message email system, exploring options for improving the campus events calendar, and looking at options for systematically publishing detailed data and information about college operations.

Outcomes: In Fall 2016, our new director of Career Services launched our first-ever First Destinations survey. While we lagged many of our peers in fielding such a study (see Standard 8), we achieved a remarkable 70 percent return on the first round, complemented by a 91 percent return on our COFHE Senior Survey. The Career Center is now partnering with the Communications and Admission offices on strategies for better informing prospective students and their families about the outcomes they can expect from a Williams education—information we can also make available to alumni, policymakers, and the general public.

Projection

Looking forward to the next decade, we project the following:

- The college will continue to develop processes and communications that reinforce our dual commitments to free speech and inclusion.
- We will continue to review and update our processes for monitoring and limiting conflicts of interest.
- As the college evolves, the relationship between central administration and campus units will too, and so will people’s communications expectations and habits. The college will want to find new ways to enhance internal awareness and engagement, possibly including electronic “push” communications, “pull” methods such as the campus calendar, and regular review of in-person faculty and staff forums.
- We will want to focus attention on the accessibility of our website and digital learning platforms, and we hope to develop a section of the website where we can gather information for our community about accessibility and disability-related resources, policies, and accommodations.
- With President Falk stepping down at the end of 2017, Williams has launched a presidential search that keeps our community well informed about the process and timeline, and offers all of the college’s constituencies the opportunity to provide input.

Faculty Handbook

<https://faculty.williams.edu/files/2018/06/Williams-Faculty-Handbook-2018-19.pdf>

Section II-S: Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy (page 69)

Williams College is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for all members of its community. In compliance with state and federal law and as a matter of its own principles, the college prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. These factors may not hinder employment or study, nor be permitted to have an adverse influence upon decisions regarding students, employees, applicants for admission, applicants for employment, or members of the community. In addition, the college prohibits harassment, that is, behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment for any member of the community. The college also prohibits sexual misconduct by any member of the college community. Members of the Williams College community are expected to uphold these principles as a matter of mutual respect and fairness.

Discrimination breaches the trust that should exist among members of an educational community. Discriminatory behavior or patterns can disturb the climate in the classroom, residence, or workplace, and alter the course of an education or career, presenting obstacles to the free and full development of an individual. It can, moreover, cause serious and lasting harm to an individual and to the college community. Williams College is committed, therefore, to taking whatever action may be needed to prevent and, if necessary, correct acts of discrimination and to prevent, correct, and if necessary, discipline behavior that constitutes discrimination or discriminatory harassment.

Members of the college community who believe they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct are encouraged to bring these concerns forward. Concerns may be brought directly to the Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity or the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Equity/Title IX Coordinator. Reports may also be made to appropriate deputies (for students, the Dean of the College; for staff, the Director of Human Resources; for Faculty, the Dean of the Faculty) or relevant American with Disabilities Act (ADA) officer, who will then work with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity to resolve

the concern. Campus Safety and Security, local police, state and/or federal agencies may also be contacted, either immediately or at any point during a college investigation. Normally, college investigations and hearings can occur simultaneously with external ones.

When a report is made the college will treat the identities of the parties and the substance of the claims as confidential, except as is reasonably necessary to carry out the investigative process and to ensure the safety of the community. Williams College policy explicitly prohibits retaliation, academic or otherwise, against employees or students for bringing complaints of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct forward.

Possible sanctions if a student or employee of the college is found to have violated the college's NonDiscrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy include the full range of disciplinary sanctions available at the college, up to and including suspension from the college for one or more semesters and expulsion, in the case of a student, or dismissal in the case of a College employee.

I. Definitions

A. Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as the denial of rights, benefits, equitable treatment, or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of their race, sex, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination can take the form of isolated or repeated behaviors directed against an individual or a group (see "Discriminatory Harassment," "Sexual Harassment," and "Sexual Misconduct") or of patterns of inequitable treatment in a workplace or learning environment.

B. Harassment/Bullying

Harassment is unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that:

- has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work or educational performance;
- creates or has the intention of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working and/or learning environment; or
- unreasonably interferes with or limits one's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity.

Harassment may involve isolated or continuing acts of intimidation, coercion, bullying, and/or verbal, non-verbal, or physical abuse. Examples of the forms it can take include targeted remarks or jokes, threats, ostracism, public humiliation, and physical actions, including unwanted touching and physical assault.

The targets of harassment can be anyone: students or members of the faculty or staff, superiors, subordinates, or peers.

C. Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment is harassment targeted at and demeaning to one's race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, or military service.

II. Rights and Responsibilities

F Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression (page 73)

Williams College is committed to both freedom of expression and full academic freedom of inquiry, teaching and research. Academic freedom and freedom of expression will be strongly considered in investigating complaints of discrimination and harassment, but will not excuse behavior that constitutes a violation of the law or college policy.

Appendix D:

Healthy Learning and Work Environments (page 181)

We are dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive community, in which members of all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive. The College, in compliance with state and federal law, does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, or military service. It's vital that we avoid intimidating or threatening actions that might result in a hostile environment. As a community of learning, we value freedom of expression and at the same time know that it does not protect abusive or harassing behavior.

Staff Handbook

<https://handbooks.williams.edu/staff/workplace-conduct-policies/workplace-conduct/code-of-conduct/>

Healthy Learning and Work Environments

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Student Handbook

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/>

Policies: Events Planning

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/#events-planning>

At any given time on campus, there are many programs, speakers, and other events that are available to members of the Williams community (and some to the broader community). OSL works closely with students who are planning events, and manages the campus-wide room reservations system (EMS).

General Information

Event Planning 101

Here are some questions to help guide you through the process of brainstorming for your event. This list is by no means exhaustive, so please think outside of the box and be creative.

Basics

- Who is sponsoring the event?
- Who is the contact person for the event?
- Who will pay for any costs associated with the event?
- Who is the target audience? How many people do you expect?

- Who will be invited? Are there special guests?
- Who will benefit from this event?
- What type of event is it?
- What is the title of the event?
- Day?
- Date?
- Time?
- Is this a reoccurring event or a multiple day event?
- Have you allowed time for set up and clean up?
- What are the official start and end times of the event?
- Does the event conflict with other events?
- Does the event take place on a major holiday?
- Will your target audience be available (class schedule, travel time, etc.)?
- Where will this event take place? Single or multiple locations?
- Will you need a dressing room?
- Will this event affect other spaces near your location?
- Will noise or traffic flow be an issue?
- Will the physical layout of the venue affect the event? Will you have enough space?
- Will the technological capabilities of the venue be an issue?
- Will parking space be needed?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- Do you have the support of others?
- Is your target audience interested?
- Have you developed a brief mission statement to keep event planning on track?
-

Additional Questions

Room Set Ups:

- How do you want the room to look?
- Does the event require a different set up that the room normally provides?
- How many tables and chairs will be needed?
- Can you supply a diagram?
- Will Facilities be asked to set up and restore the room?
- Will this create overtime charges?
- Will food be served at the event? Will you need extra trash bins?

Tech:

- Will the event require microphones, sound or lights?
- Do you want the event recorded?
- Will the event include a PowerPoint presentation?
- Will the presentation be on disk, CD, flash drive or networked?
- Will the event require a data projector, DVD, TV, laptop, wireless connectivity?
- Do you need other supplies? Who will be providing them?
- Can you afford technical support, if the event requires it?

Guests:

- Are you inviting any outside guests or speakers?
- If so, have you determined if their needs can be met?
- Will you need to publicize your event to the larger community?
- Should the College be aware of prominent guests that will be attending?

Outside Speakers & Performers

Williams College hosts a wide variety of outside speakers/performers on campus throughout the year. The following policies regulate the use of campus facilities and related resources in support of outside speakers/performers.

Sponsors

To host an outside speaker or performer's appearance and reserve a space for your event on campus, you must be one of the following:

- A student representing an officially registered, College Council-recognized student organization (OSL RSO). [Click here](#) for information regarding OSL RSO's.
- A student representing an organization that is part of the Minority Coalition (MinCo) or is advised by the Davis Center (DC RSO). [Click here](#) for information regarding DC RSO's.
- A faculty member.
- A staff member representing an administrative office or academic department.

If an RSO, faculty member, staff member, administrative office, or academic department agrees to sponsor an individual student or non-registered group, the sponsoring entity takes on full responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Reserving Space

The department/office/student organization requesting the event must submit a

reservation request for campus space using Room Scheduler (EMS).

General Support Resources

Student members of an OSL RSO must meet with the Assistant Director for Student Organizations & Involvement in the Office of Student Life at least one month in advance of the speaker/performer's requested appearance to disclose and discuss contracts, funding sources, location, logistics, publicity, and other details.

Student members of a DC RSO must meet with their Davis Center staff point person at least one month in advance of the speaker/performer's requested appearance to disclose and discuss contracts, funding sources, location, logistics, publicity, and other details (see the Davis Center's website for more information).

Academic departments needing advice are encouraged to speak with the Director of Commencement & Academic Events in the Dean of Faculty's Office at least one month in advance of the speaker/performer's anticipated lecture/ program to disclose & discuss logistics, contracts, publicity, funding sources, and other details.

Administrative offices needing advice are encouraged to speak with the Associate Director in the Office of Student Life at least one month in advance of the speaker/performer's anticipated lecture/program to discuss contracts, location, logistics, publicity, funding sources, and other details.

Additional Support

Some events may be determined by the College to require support from campus and/or other resources to be on-site for some or all of the program (including but not limited to Campus Safety, Counseling Center staff, Williamstown Police Department, Village Ambulance Services). In these cases, the sponsoring department/office/RSO is responsible for any and all payments for these services.

Contracts

Contracts for any outside performer/speaker being paid for coming to campus may be signed ONLY by an agent of the institution. An "agent of the institution" is a faculty or staff member of the College who has been approved by their correlating Senior Staff member to sign contracts.

Students are NOT authorized by the College to sign any contracts to bring an outside speaker/performer and/or their program to campus.

The College will not be responsible for providing funding, logistical support, space, publicity, or any other resources necessary to bring an outside speaker and/or their program to campus for which a contract has been signed by anyone other than an agent of the institution as defined above. If a student – whether part of a registered student organization or not – signs a contract on behalf of the College, the outside speaker/performer will not be allowed to present their program on any campus property.

All contracts are reviewed by a minimum of two Williams staff members to ensure all details are covered. Larger, more complex contracts will be subject to legal review as well.

All contracts must include the Williams College Performance Rider.

All contracted payments are subject to a 5.3% Massachusetts Performance Tax.

All third-party contracts, agreements, and arrangements must be disclosed fully to the College.

Funding

A confirmed budget allocation must exist to cover all associated costs before a performer/speaker can be booked. Funding for speakers and/or their programs typically comes from the departments/offices/student organizations themselves.

The provision of funding from alumni, foundations, or other non-college sources for a performer/speaker and/or their program must be disclosed to the college. All agreements and arrangements related to such funding must be fully disclosed to the college at least two weeks in advance of an event. Contact the Office of Student Life for more information on seeking such approval.

Certificate of Liability Insurance

Any contracted performer/speaker being paid more than \$5,000 must provide a certificate of liability insurance (COI) with The President and Trustees of Williams College, 880 Main Street, Williamstown, MA 01267 listed as additionally insured, at least one week prior to the campus engagement.

If the performer/speaker is unable to provide their own insurance, the department/office/registered student organization bringing the performer/speaker must purchase the insurance using Tulip (which has a standing insurance policy with the College). This purchase must be done through a department or office of Williams College.

Overnight Stays

Performers/speakers are not permitted to stay overnight on campus and must be housed off campus, with accommodations paid for by either the sponsoring department/office/student organization or at the performer's/speaker's own expense.

Right of Refusal

The College retains the right of refusal for any outside speaker/performer and/or their campus sponsor for any reason.

Policies: Fire Safety: <https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/#fire-safety>

Williams is concerned about the safety of every individual on campus and therefore has very strict fire safety regulations. Students who do not observe these regulations jeopardize the safety of others on this campus and therefore, will be subject to disciplinary action and/or fines.

State Law requires that hallways and stairways be completely clear at all times. This means that you can not store anything in these areas (examples: shoes, clothes racks, boxes, furniture, and bicycles). The Williamstown Building Inspector and the Williamstown Fire Chief enforce these regulations. Items left in the hallways and stairwells will be removed and held in the Office of Safety & Environmental Compliance located in the Facilities Building (60 Latham Street). Repeat violators will be fined \$25.00 for each subsequent violation.

Policies: Poster Policy:

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/advertising-and-distribution-policy/>

Display areas and bulletin boards are provided in Williams College buildings to provide information to students, faculty, and staff. Across campus, posting is permitted in designated approved areas. Materials may not be posted on windows, entrance doors,

walls, or in classrooms. All materials for posting or for distribution through student mailboxes must clearly display the sponsor of the program, service, or announcement. All posted materials must be taken down within 7 days after the event. Anyone wishing to erect, attach, or post signs, banners, posters of exceptional size (beyond 11"x17") or decorations in non–student–center buildings are responsible for obtaining prior approval from the designated manager of that building or area.

Paresky and Goodrich

General posting is available through the Office of Student Life. No more than 15 posters per event shall be allowed up at any time between the two locations. Posters shall be submitted to the Student Centers Coordinator to be put up according to the policies of the building, certified, and hung up by staff of the Office of Student Life. Any posters not certified by the Student Centers Coordinator will be removed promptly. Failure to comply may result in future reduction in postering privileges.

Removal

Postings for events that have passed, or postings that do not meet the policies set forth here or in the “Advertising and Distribution Policy” section of the Student Handbook, will be removed and discarded. The College accepts no responsibility for items that have been removed and/or discarded.

Student Organization Policies: Chalking

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/chalking/>

Exterior chalking is allowed only on uncovered horizontal solid surfaces where rain waters will naturally wash it off. For example, chalking is allowed on open sidewalks on campus; chalking is not allowed on wall surfaces (such as the Paresky Snack Bar oval or the pillars on Chapin), nor on horizontal surfaces covered by a roof or overhang (such as the front porch of Paresky). Chalkings must include the name of the person, group, or office responsible for them. Any chalking that falls outside of these parameters will be removed and the person(s) responsible, if known, will be charged for clean–up/removal.

Student Code of Conduct:

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/code-of-conduct/>

Student Conduct Philosophy:

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/#student-conduct-philosophy>

As a residential college, Williams believes that for each student the experience of living with other students has an educational importance that should parallel and enhance their studies. For students to profit from living and working together, they must respect the rights of other members of the community in which they live and work—a community which includes students, members of the faculty and staff of the College, and other residents of Williamstown. The President, Trustees, faculty, and students of Williams College have established the codes of conduct described below to foster the learning that comes from living and studying with individuals of diverse backgrounds and from learning to honor opinions and beliefs that may differ from one's own.

By enforcing the Code of Conduct, the College supports an environment conducive to intellectual, ethical, and civic development. Students are expected to respect the rights of others, their persons and their possessions, and refrain from any unreasonable disruption to the College or the community around it. The College will hold students responsible if they fail to maintain good conduct on the campus or elsewhere.

Individual Rights:

<https://dean.williams.edu/student-handbook/#individual-rights>

Williams College does not discriminate on grounds unrelated to its educational objectives; it is committed to being a community in which all ranges of opinion and belief can be expressed and debated, and within which all patterns of behavior permitted by the public law and College regulations can take place. The community is varied, including people of diverse races, religions, national or ethnic backgrounds, gender expressions and gender identities, and sexual orientations, and its members may from time to time disagree with one another's ideas and behavior. The College seeks to assure the rights of all to express themselves in words and actions, so long as they can do so without infringing upon the rights of others or violating standards of good conduct or public law.

Accepting membership in this community entails an obligation to behave with courtesy to others whose beliefs and behavior differ from one's own; all members and guests of this community must be free of disturbance or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment.

Students will be treated equitably and fairly under the Code of Conduct.

Social Misconduct: <https://dean.williams.edu/social-misconduct/>

The Student Conduct system is educational in nature. All social misconduct violations are dealt with by the Office of the Dean of the College. Violations of a less serious nature may be dealt with solely by a meeting with a Dean. These meetings are referred to as “informal,” may result in sanctions but will not result in a permanent disciplinary record for the student involved. More serious violations are dealt with in a “formal” meeting with a dean, who may impose any of a range of possible sanctions. Formal disciplinary outcomes may result in a permanent disciplinary record for the student, and may be appealed to the Discipline Committee. The “informal” and “formal” disciplinary procedures are described in more detail in the following sections.

Social misconduct violations refer to violations of the Code of Conduct that do not fall within the scope of either the Honor Code or the Sexual Misconduct policy (refer to the section below for sexual misconduct policy and procedures). The Office of the Dean of the College is responsible for enforcing the Code of Conduct and for investigating, and where appropriate sanctioning, social misconduct violations. Any member of the Williams community may report an allegation of a social misconduct violation to the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s Office reviews reports and determines how best to investigate and resolve such reports. After review of the report, the Dean’s Office will decide whether or not the violation will be dealt with through an informal or formal process within the Dean’s Office. Refer to the [sanctions rubric](#) for a guideline on what types of infractions lead to an informal meetings versus formal disciplinary action. The following list of social misconduct violations is not intended to be exhaustive. Other violations of individual rights or of the college’s guiding values, even if not specified in the following summary, may subject a student to a dean meeting or formal disciplinary proceedings.

Disturbances/Disruptive Behavior:

<https://dean.williams.edu/social-misconduct/#disturbancesdisruptive-behavior>

The College is obligated to maintain orderly and equitable conduct of its affairs, free of intimidation and harassment. While peaceful and orderly protest and dissent are the right of all members of the College community, any action which obstructs or interferes with the fulfillment of this basic obligation cannot be permitted. Violent acts and the incitement of violence are not permitted. College personnel may require students to leave public events at the College for improper behavior. Students are expected to comply with the request of public officials acting in performance of their duties; to identify oneself to a College or public official when requested to do so; and to provide truthful information to a College or public official.

Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Actions that impair or interfere with the use of facilities, teaching, study, research, college sponsored events, or community members' sleep
- Unauthorized use of buildings
- Use or threat of force against other individuals
- Violation of noise levels
- Violation of building occupancy limits

Harassment: <https://dean.williams.edu/social-misconduct/#harassment>

Any verbal, physical, or written act, directed at an individual, that might reasonably be construed to intimidate, coerce, or create a hostile environment for the individual and, in turn, prevent them from receiving the educational benefits of the college. Rude or impolite behavior or speech—whether inside or outside the classroom—is not necessarily in itself a violation.

Hazing: <https://dean.williams.edu/social-misconduct/#hazing>

Hazing is prohibited by the College and is against the law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Hazing is defined as any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, intimidates, demeans, abuses or endangers them regardless of a person's willingness to participate. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Learn more about Williams' hazing policy and relevant Massachusetts law.

Retaliation: <https://dean.williams.edu/social-misconduct/#retaliation>

Retaliation is harmful action taken against someone who has filed a complaint, provided testimony, or in some other way participated in a disciplinary investigation or process. It could also include actions taken against someone who has intervened as a bystander to stop or attempt to stop harassment, discrimination, or misconduct.

It can include intimidating, threatening, coercing, or discriminating against an individual because of their participation in a disciplinary process, or because they opposed behavior that was in violation of the Code of Conduct.

If the action directed at that individual would deter a reasonable person in the same circumstances from reporting misconduct, participating in a disciplinary process, or opposing behavior in violation of the Code of Conduct, it is deemed retaliatory.