



Political Speech on Campus: Shifting the Emphasis from “if” to “how”

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Abstract

Universities in many liberal democracies, such as the US, the UK, or Germany, grapple with a pivotal question: how much room should be given to controversial utterances? On the one side, there are those who advocate for limiting permissible speech on campus to create a safe environment for a diverse student body and counter the mainstreaming of extremist views, particularly by right-wing populists. On the other side, concerns arise about stifling the free exchange of ideas and creating an atmosphere of fear and censorship. The debate is further complicated by participants’ occasional uncertainties about the legal norms relevant in the given context, such as when freedom of speech is an issue and when it is not. This paper addresses the question of whether universities should allow actors with primarily political (as opposed to scholarly) agendas to speak on campus. Focusing on German universities, we begin by discussing some of the potentially relevant legal norms. We then propose shifting emphasis from *whether* we should make room for public political discussions on campus to *how* such events must be organized so that they deliver the goods that their advocates emphasize while avoiding the dangers of which critics warn. Drawing on conflict management literature concerned with process design, we make several practical suggestions on how to organize an event that brings political discourse to the university campus without causing harm.

Keywords Cancel culture · Campus politics · Freedom of speech · Process design · University leadership · Conflict management

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Introduction and Relevance of the Problem

Universities in many liberal democracies, such as the US, the UK, or Germany, are divided on how much room should be given to controversial utterances.¹ As Robert Post, a law professor from Yale, puts it: "On the one hand, we aspire to teach our students to engage with a wide range of different opinions on controversial and threatening subjects; yet, on the other hand, we strive to create constructive and effective educational environments." (Post 2022: 667). Those advocating for narrowing the space of permissible speech on campus want to create an environment for the increasingly diverse student body where everyone can feel safe. They also perceive a need to counter what they – rightly, as we believe – see as strategic attempts by right-wing populists to mainstream some of their extremist positions. On the opposing side, many are concerned that the free exchange of opinions will be replaced by a particular ideology. Where speakers must always fear being “canceled,”² where claims are not met by arguments but by moral outrage and attempts to forbid particular utterances, people are no longer free to articulate their ideas. This is, as this faction believes, no less problematic on campus than it is in the political sphere.

Such debates about “politics on campus” include various questions, such as whether students should be protected from certain kinds of talk in so-called “safe spaces,” whether particular content (e.g., in texts or lectures) needs to come with “trigger warnings,” or whether classroom discussion should be restricted through explicit “speech codes.”

While some of our arguments will resonate with other politics-on-campus themes, we concentrate here on the sub-question of whether universities should allow actors with primarily political (as opposed to scholarly) agendas to speak on campus. We want to suggest a new way of looking at this particular question, which is often debated in an either-or manner. Our thesis is that we can make both theoretical and practical progress if we shift the emphasis from *if* to *how*. Instead of asking *if* universities should allow actors with primarily political (as opposed to scholarly) agendas to speak on campus, we suggest focusing on *how* such events must be prepared and organized to benefit a university’s goals.

We develop our argument by focusing on German universities. The debates on politics on campus in Germany owe much to discussions in other countries, notably the US (cf. Ash 2022: 9). While ideas travel quickly, they nonetheless take a particular form once they are transplanted into a new context shaped by their particular traditions and laws. By concentrating on the German case, we hope to contribute a specific building block to a larger comparative project concerned with politics on campus in liberal democracies.

The second aim of our paper is more practical in nature. We want to provide those who are in charge of organizing political events on campus – university leadership,

¹ We wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

² Ash (2022: 34) summarizes the findings of a working group at Berlin-Brandenburg Academy that studied whether “discourse control” at German universities may threaten academic freedom there. Although the cases Ash and the other scholars had looked at provide reasons for concern, Ash concludes that they usually do not warrant the labeling as “cancel culture.”

professors, administrators and students alike – with concrete ideas about how such events can bring the intended benefits and not result in destructive conflict.

This article starts by briefly introducing three rather different manifestations of politics on campus (2). Those case vignettes subsequently will be used to illustrate how different cases touch upon different legal norms and bring about distinct practical requirements on the part of the organizers. Next, we discuss arguments for and against allowing events with an obvious political connotation on campus in light of the broader question of the function of universities within society (3). As will become clear, there are plausible arguments on both sides, accounting for the apparent impasse in the debate. We claim that this impasse can be overcome by turning from the question of “if” to the question of “how” (4). Instead of asking if a speaker should be allowed to talk on campus, we should ask how, if at all, this could be arranged so as to meet the concerns of the no-political-talks-on-campus faction.

There might still be occasions when this turn to the procedural level will not produce any satisfying results and where one needs to return to the “if” question and answer it with a clear “no.” Our claim, however, is that in many cases a thoughtful process design can let us have it both ways: a broad space for controversial political debate on campus and a protection against trojan horses designed to capture public discourse from within the universities.

Case Vignettes

Gregor Gysi

In October 2013, the Sozialistischer Demokratischer Studierendenverband (SDS) invited the Opposition Leader in the Bundestag, Gregor Gysi from Die Linke (The Left) Party, to deliver a speech at Freie Universität Berlin. When SDS applied at Freie Universität for a suitable lecture hall, the university administration declined. The spokesperson of the president’s committee declared that the university would not offer a platform for single parties or their representatives for political positioning on general issues without direct reference to university or science topics. This decision would not be directed against Die Linke or Gregor Gysi in particular (Tageszeitung 2013). Gysi delivered his speech anyway: Instead of speaking in a lecture hall, he spoke in the foyer of the Freie Universität student canteen.

Gysi’s case stands for numerous others, such as the refusal of the invitation of FDP-chairman Christian Lindner at the University of Hamburg in 2019 (Spiegel 2019; Warnecke 2019). It suggests that invited politicians often use the prohibition to make their cases in the media by problematizing the refusal as an encroachment on their right to free speech. One question those cases raise, therefore, is whether the right to free speech guarantees a right on the part of political actors to speak on campus. Should that not be the case, on what grounds can university or faculty leadership forbid political actors to speak on campus? Furthermore, is it, as the spokesperson of the president’s committee from Freie Universität implied, really always possible to draw a sharp line between (probably unwanted) political positioning on the one hand and (possibly desirable) inputs on political topics on the other hand?

Bernd Lucke

In 2013, the economics professor Bernd Lucke became known to a broader audience as the key founder of the then-new German party "Alternative für Deutschland," or AfD for short. Originally envisaged as a Euro-skeptical party protesting Chancellor Angela Merkel's handling of the euro crisis, the party employed rhetoric whose xenophobic undertones soon attracted right-wing voters as well as members. When the party moved further toward the right during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015, Lucke left the AfD. After serving a term in the European Parliament (2014–2019), Lucke was not reelected and returned to his teaching post at Hamburg University.

In reaction to Lucke's return, Hamburg University's AStA (General Student Committee) organized protests, addressing Lucke's key role in enabling the development of a party that was now clearly right-wing, perhaps even right-wing extremist (cf. Thieme 2019). But the protestors also homed in on Lucke's positions as an economist, which could be classified as neoliberal (Niedermayer 2014: 178). The case became a public controversy after students and apparently also non-student members of the left-autonomous spectrum prevented Lucke from delivering his macroeconomics lecture by shouting and exercising minor physical violence. After two unsuccessful attempts to teach, Lucke was able to continue when the event was secured by police protection (Fiedler and Burchard 2019; Tagesspiegel 2019).

Lucke's case, again, raises questions that need to be kept apart. For instance, is there a case to be made that Lucke somehow lost his right to continue teaching as a university professor due to his political actions and utterances? Did Lucke violate his civil-servant duty of neutrality? Did the fact that Lucke used his teaching position to propagate neo-liberal positions give students the right to stop him from lecturing? And did students' sabotaging of Lucke's teaching constitute, as he claimed, a violation of his right to free speech?

University of Siegen³

In the 2018/19 winter semester, Dieter Schönecker, a philosophy professor at the medium-sized German University of Siegen, caused a scandal by announcing his intent to invite "decidedly conservative or right-wing thinkers" to a seminar dealing with freedom of speech.⁴ He stuck to his plan despite the fact that the "people from the left spectrum" (Information Philosophie 2019b, own translation) who had been invited as well had declined to participate. After protests by the AStA (General Student Committee), university leadership distanced itself from the event, and the faculty canceled the lecture fees initially granted. At the same time, university leadership made it possible for the two speakers from the right spectrum (Thilo Sarrazin and Marc Jongen) to hold their lectures. These were now given as public lectures instead

³ The following synopsis of the Siegen case is based on Information Philosophie 2019 and Schüttpelz 2019.

⁴ The seminar announcement has been reprinted in an article written by a colleague of Schenker's, Erhard Schüttpelz (Schüttpelz 2019: n.p.). The quote is taken from that announcement text; the translation is our own.

of during the seminar, and they were protected by police. In the aftermath, much criticism was directed towards how the seminar had been designed and announced (i.e., Schüttpelz 2019).

Questions brought into focus by this third example that are relevant to our general research aim include: Is it appropriate to invite guests to obligatory university seminars if those guests are not primarily known for scholarly positions but rather for political positions? How do the legal assets "freedom of speech" and "academic freedom"⁵ interact and interrelate? What are the ethical and legal implications of the commonsense assumption that students and other members of the university should not feel they have been subjected to discrimination?

The three case vignettes differ in essential aspects. They can thus be used to illustrate significant differences between potentially relevant norms, such as freedom of speech and academic freedom, which regularly get confused in debates about politics on campus. Before turning to some of the legal norms that potentially play a role in politics on campus cases in section 4, in the next section we turn to the fundamental question of the function of universities within liberal democracies. We will show how each side in the pro-vs.-contra-allowing-political-events-on-campus-debate refers to a relevant sub-set of critical functions of a university while ignoring another.

Reasons for and Against Allowing Political Events on Campus

There would be no point in discussing *how* we best organize political events on campus if there were no good reasons for allowing such events in at least *some* cases. One way to address the question of whether universities should, at least under certain conditions, invite or allow (perhaps polarizing) guest speakers to address (controversial) political topics on campus is to link it to the societal functions of universities; only if it does serve some of the critical functions of a university to host political speakers, should universities do so; otherwise, not. As will become apparent, both the pro and the contra factions can base their arguments on a relevant subset of a university's core functions, which for us is proof that both sides have their valid points. Proponents and opponents have convincing arguments, and an unqualified yes to political talks

⁵ Mitchell G. Ash points out that while in Germany and Austria, academic freedom is a separate right, it is, legally speaking, a subcategory of freedom of speech in many countries, such as the US (Ash 2022: 8). This legal difference is, however, only partially mirrored in public and scholarly debates. As we will discuss below, people in Germany often talk of freedom of speech when they are concerned with academic freedom. Moreover, in the US, where academic freedom is not a separate legal right and where it, therefore, would seem plausible to invoke freedom of speech when concerned with academic issues, we nonetheless see people use "academic freedom" when it comes to freedom of speech in campus contexts. While some may use "academic freedom" simply to mean freedom of speech in academia, others have used those different terms to argue that freedom of speech does not apply to campus. Post (2022: 672), looking at debates around "cancel culture" and "safe spaces," for instance, does not think "that it is helpful or even accurate to frame the tension we face in terms of freedom of speech" (Post 2022: 668), even stating that "there is no freedom of speech for students or faculty in a university." In the same vein, Finkin (2020: 274–275) argues that "academic freedom is not free speech. The two have different sources, perform different functions, and are subject to different standards. They may overlap at some point but diverge at others."

on campus is therefore equally unsatisfying as an unqualified no. (Which is why we suggest moving from “if” to “how”.)

Back in 1928, Alfred North Whitehead noted in his famous *Address to the American Association of the Collegiate Schools of Business* the "absence of a widespread understanding of the primary functions which universities should perform in the service of a nation" (Whitehead 1928: 1). If this statement still rings true today, it is probably because there is more than one plausible answer to the question about the purpose of universities, hence no “widespread understanding” is to be expected. However, some functions of the university seem less debatable than others, and for our purposes, it suffices to recall some of the more constant and widely agreed-upon ones.

Lyer et al. (2023: 14) identify four, at times overlapping notions of universities’ purpose: “(i) the search for truth and expansion of human knowledge, (ii) the fostering of democratic societies and education of critical minds, (iii) engines of societal problem-solving, and (iv) responders to the demands of the national economy and labour market.” While Lyer et al. embrace the first three notions, they see the fourth notion critically, noting that “the increasing market-focus, managerialism, and ‘quality’ control exercised by the state over universities have repeatedly been criticized as undermining the purpose of universities as seekers of truth.” (Lyer et al. 2023: 16). As we are here interested in the core set of widely agreed upon functions of the university, we will only focus on the first three functions indicated above.

There is wide agreement that one of the core functions of a university is “the advancement of the sum of human knowledge” (Finkin 2020: 277). Some of that knowledge can be put to practical use immediately; some needs to be understood as enhancing humans’ ability to understand themselves and the world around them and thus adapt to future challenges (cf. Boulton and Lucas 2011: 2507). A second core function of universities is education. Here, the unique feature of universities is that students are not simply taught a fixed set of skills and facts. Instead, they are – or should be – taught how to approach problems, question traditional ways of doing things, and fruitfully engage with unfamiliar perspectives (cf. Beaud 2020: 621; Finkin 2020: 277). On the one hand, this requires an encouraging, stimulating, safe learning environment where students can sustain and further develop their imaginative capacities. On the other hand, students need to be exposed to new experiences and a plurality of views (cf. Post 2022: 667). University education, thus understood, not only prepares people for a variety of occupations but also helps form democratic citizens able to resolve legitimate differences through debate.

The third function of universities, identified by Lyer et al. (2023: 14), is “societal problem-solving.” This implies that universities (the institutions and their members), while enjoying great freedom with regard to what they are studying, are also expected to engage with the various pressing problems of society. In the German context, this function is often related to the so-called third pillar of universities besides teaching and research, coined as transfer and particularly aiming at transfer of knowledge and transfer of skills. Not surprisingly, universities often have been – and given their unique potential, perhaps should be – locations where controversial topics are debated – “If not here, where?” (Garton Ash 2016: 155). Thus, Boulton and Lucas (2011: 2514) argue that “academics’ reputations for independence and their credibil-

ity make them ideal interlocutors in such debates whilst their universities provide an ideal, neutral space for engagement.”

Looking at these core functions of universities, it becomes clear that there are a number of good reasons for allowing political debates on campus:⁶ One educational goal of universities is – or should be – to educate critical citizens. Therefore, students need to learn how to engage with different political positions and form political judgments by engaging with diverse political arguments (cf. Steinbeck 2020: 45). Banning politics from campus cuts out a tremendous educational opportunity.

Another line of argument takes the particular societal place of universities into account: As debate stands at the center of scholarship and learning, universities are intellectually well-prepared to host controversial debates. Here, a crucial distinction is made, though: While universities are always well advised to discuss controversial positions, this is different from inviting speakers known for holding controversial views. Because in the latter case, it is not clear if a given speaker will be ready to engage in open-ended discussion constructively. While there are, as we point out below, obvious dangers here, we still believe that inviting controversial speakers can have unique benefits. One reason is that students will be more engaged if they hear controversial arguments directly from someone who actually holds those views. Moreover, keeping speakers with controversial messages and presumably unfair argumentation strategies out of campus does not ensure that students will not be exposed to those elsewhere. Exposing students to speakers who not only hold controversial views but may also argue for their views in challenging ways may thus be a great opportunity to train rhetorical skills in a comparably safe environment. These skills can come in handy when similar argumentation arises off campus.

In addition to providing students with a training opportunity for engaging with challenging argumentation strategies, active engagement with extreme positions – made more real by the occasional invitation of representatives of the views in question – enables universities to develop arguments tailored to such views, which can then be fed back into the broader societal discourse (Steinbeck 2020: 46). Moreover, in their materiality, universities are well-equipped for such airings as they possess suitable facilities, can often provide a neutral location, and perhaps even skilled moderators from its core staff. In sum, there are a couple of good reasons for universities to host discussions, including speakers holding extreme political positions.

A further, more strategic argument focuses on the desire for universities to have a stronger impact on society. If one wants politicians to take academics and their findings seriously and base their practices on scientific results, then universities are well-advised “to enter into a dialogue with them [i.e., politicians] – and even in universities’ own premises” (Steinbeck 2020: 45, own translation).

⁶ We are aware that political speech in the broadest sense is an inevitable part of campus life. Students (and professors) debate politics on campus. They do so between and during seminars, for instance, when a debate wanders from a text’s content to its political implications. And, as Ben-Porath (2017: 23) puts it, “speech, including controversial speech, is central to teaching and learning, and as such it is central to many aspects of campus life.” We are not concerned with the question of whether *that* kind of political discussion should be possible. Instead, we focus on cases where university employees made a conscious decision to organize or allow more explicitly political events to take place on campus.

However, there are also dangers and potential downsides to using universities as sites for hot political debates. Some of the contra-arguments aim at similar categories as the pro-arguments and take issue with, for example, the core tasks of universities, whose members should be striving for truth and knowledge; accordingly, it is not the university's task to provide a platform for daily, short-lived political debates (cf. Kocka 2020: 125; Lenzen 2019: 3; Shils 1992: 310). Besides, by inviting highly controversial political speakers, universities risk giving them a stage, an outcome that needs to be seen critically for at least two reasons: For starters, speakers may use the stage to spread dangerous ideologies. Secondly, their appearance on such a stage may result in the university unwillingly granting unworthy recipients recognition, thus helping them to polish their public image. This transfer of reputation is often judged as one of the primary goals of politically controversial speakers. Past events have regularly shown that actors invited to speak on politically controversial topics on campus often have no interest in an evidence-based exchange of arguments but instead aim at pushing the boundaries of eligible public speech (cf. Ben-Porath 2017: 7). At this point, the values of political events and scientific criteria collide since precisely this standard needs to be upheld for universities to fulfill their tasks. A final line of argument focuses on the learning environment as such. Universities must offer their students and staff a safe and constructive learning environment (cf. Post 2022: 674; Ben-Porath 2017: 2); among the institution's obligations is to protect its community from exposure to discriminatory utterances by officially invited speakers.⁷

Legal Guidelines to be Considered When Deciding Whether a Particular Political Event Should be Allowed to Take Place on Campus

In our view, any serious discussion of the space that should or should not be given to political speeches or debates on campus needs to start with a clarification of the relevant legal guidelines. This is necessary to avoid arguments based on unrealistic presumptions. It is also needed as the ongoing debate regularly refers to rights such as freedom of speech or academic freedom without always paying enough attention to the laws and jurisdiction applicable in the respective context.

Looking at the German system, we claim that the following legal norms need to be considered and that it is important to understand the differences between them in order to know when a particular norm applies.

Freedom of Speech

Article 5, Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany

(1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing, and pictures and to inform himself without hindrance

⁷ "Safe spaces" are sometimes – rightly or not – seen as attempts to create areas "where students will not face ideas contrary to their own" (Beaud 2020: 617). If this is what is meant by "safe spaces," we are not advocating for those here.

from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.⁸

The emphasis on the freedom of speech is a central argument of advocates of political debates on campus. There are two common misconceptions worth pointing out here. To begin with, people often see their right to freedom of speech endangered when they are merely receiving a harsh reaction. A second confusion concerns the implications of the right to free speech. Sometimes people see free speech at risk when, in fact, a decision not to invite a speaker on campus had been based on another norm – such as scholarly merits and integrity – relevant to the context.

Intriguingly, professors who uttered controversial statements (e.g., on their private Facebook account) and triggered angry reactions considered their freedom of speech to be in danger. But of course, those angry reactions, assuming that they fall in the wide category of protected value judgments (BVerfGE 61, 1 (7); BVerfGE 85, 1 (15)), were no less secured by the right to freedom of speech than were the professors’ triggering statements. As Klaus Gärditz puts it, “freedom of expression is, like any other freedom, a right at your own risk, not an entitlement to applause” (Gärditz 2018: 6, own translation).

With a focus on political actors, Dieter Lenzen, then president of the University of Hamburg, stated that the controversy about whether universities should allow political actors to speak on campus is not about freedom of speech. “Political, ideological or religious opinions and orientations have no entitlement to be articulated in the academic system” (Lenzen 2019: 2, own translation; cf. Jaster and Keil 2021: 145). One can debate whether speeches of that kind should have no place on campus, as Lenzen suggests, or if exposure to political opinions has educative potential. But the question, indeed, is not about freedom of speech but about whether universities, whose function is to produce knowledge and educate students, will profit from exposing their members to non-scholarly discourse.

As we elaborate further in the next section, the scholarly community, and for that matter universities as institutional bodies, have a genuine interest in granting scholars maximal freedom concerning the choice of topic, applied method, and proposed thesis. At the same time, scholars are expected to strive for insight. This means they are expected to present their insights in an accessible form, respond to criticism, etc.

Schönecker’s assertion that the university management’s decision to distance itself from his seminar would affect his freedom of speech or that of the speakers he invited is misguided. The management argued that the speakers had been invited because of their political affinities (“decidedly right-wing thinkers”) rather than their expertise; and of course, “being explicitly right-wing ... is no scholarly qualification” (Information Philosophie 2019: 105, own translation). Thus, free speech was not the relevant norm here. Rather the university did not see how the contributions of the invited speakers would serve the university’s key goal: the disinterested search for knowledge (which is supposed to guide modern universities’ two main pillars, research and teaching.)

⁸ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0034. Accessed 17 January 2024.

Freedom of Research and Teaching

Article 5, Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany

(3) Arts and sciences, research and teaching shall be free. The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution.⁹

One of the reasons liberal democracies value freedom of speech is because it helps generate better political solutions. That is so because only through considering a good variety of stances can one hope to identify blind spots in any particular perspective (cf. Mill 1991: 51). Such a competition of opinions enables the emergence of more reasonable views, which in turn have the potential to lead to more effective policies. This rationale clearly parallels the one justifying freedom of teaching and research (or “academic freedom”¹⁰ for short).¹¹ While freedom of speech makes for better political decisions, scholarly debate (made possible by academic freedom) enhances the quality of scholarly insights. Notwithstanding those parallels, there are essential differences between the two sets of legal norms – freedom of speech and freedom of research and teaching – that cover public (political) speech and utterances in scholarly contexts, respectively.¹²

In some respects, academic freedom is more limited than freedom of speech: not everything covered by freedom of speech is covered by academic freedom.¹³ In other respects, academic freedom appears privileged, as research findings are understood to be exempt from legal boundaries because they must be treated with scholarly rather than legal means. Finkin states that academic freedom can be regarded as deeper than freedom of political speech “because, unlike the speech of a government worker sanctionable on fear of disruption or disharmony, the exercise of academic freedom cannot be subject to any such constraint” (Finkin 2020: 277). In principle, research findings can thus be controversial, right or wrong, but not legal or illegal (Gärditz 2018: 4).

⁹ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0034. Accessed 17 January 2024.

¹⁰ In contrast to Shils (1988: 218), who takes “academic freedom” to “refer to the rights of academics to espouse a political position in public outside the course of academic duties,” we understand academic freedom (here used as an equivalent to freedom of teaching and research) as referring to what faculty staff is allowed to do within the realm of academia.

¹¹ This is not surprising given that liberalism has been “strongly associated with the project of mastering nature through science and technology” (Fukuyama 2022: 86).

¹² Here we are concerned with the German context. It is noteworthy, however, that there are great varieties regarding the autonomy that universities and their staff enjoy in different countries. Lyer et al. (2023: 16) point to the “national variation of university governance models.” Thus, in countries such as Turkey or Russia, where a “state-centered” model prevails, universities and their staff enjoy far less autonomy than states like Austria and Germany, following a “self-governance model.”

¹³ Note that the degree of academic freedom enjoyed by university staff differs greatly, even when limiting comparisons to liberal democracies. Thus Karren et al., for instance, note that “compared with the other EU states, the de jure protection for academic freedom in the UK is very limited” (Karren et al. 2022: 566). Since the publication of Karren et al.’s comprehensive study the UK parliament has passed the so-called Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, which Jo Grady, the general secretary of the Union and College Union (UCU), has called “a serious threat to freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus.” (Tidman 2021: n.p.)

While in Germany, as in most other liberal democracies, freedom of speech covers most political utterances (except for a few instances concerning a nation’s unique historical experiences – thus, denying the Holocaust is, for instance, allowed in the US while it is, for obvious historical reasons, forbidden in Germany), academic freedom is conditional: Only where an utterance can be seen as an earnest scholarly effort is it covered by academic freedom. As the German Federal Constitutional Court stated, “the only prerequisite is that it is science; this includes everything that, according to content and form, is to be regarded as a serious attempt to determine truth (BVerfGE 35, 79 (113); BVerfGE 47, 327 (367), own translation) and has been obtained in a way that meets scientific standards (BVerfGE 90, 1 (53)). The ongoing challenge that the self-regulating scholarly communities face is to identify the line between, on the one hand, daring theses, contestable findings, debatable methodology (all covered by academic freedom), and, on the other hand, pseudo-science violating the accepted minimum standards of rationality widely accepted in a given time in a particular field of research (Gärditz 2018: 5). Another line is crossed where allegedly scholarly claims are (more or less successfully) hidden political opinions. Such instances are indicated where arguments take a dogmatic form or where people contribute to topics clearly outside of their field of expertise (Gärditz 2018: 5).

In a way, then, freedom of speech is concerned with *what* can be said publicly, while academic freedom is concerned with *how* something can be said. Academic freedom should, in principle, set no limits on the claims a scholar can make. As we do not always know whether a thesis that looks crude and disturbing at first may turn out to be true, academic freedom must be as far-reaching as possible in terms of the content it permits. As in other liberal democracies, Germany’s conception of academic freedom also covers contributions to which political elites may strongly object or that significant portions of the population may regard as offensive. While in Germany, Article 5, paragraph 3, sentence 2 of the Basic Law states that “the freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution” this does not exclude, as Gutmann points out, “one-sided polarizing criticism of the state and its institutions as long as it can be objectively justified and is not exhausted in perlocutionary effects” (Gutmann 2021: 5, own translation). Moreover, as Hufen states, “academic freedom knows no reservations about political correctness, for example, concerning gender, race, sexual preferences, religion, the rule of peace, etc.” (Hufen 2019: 5, own translation).

However, claims made in the academic realm must meet certain procedural standards in order to be accepted as scholarly contributions. Those standards are defined, debated, and re-defined within the respective scholarly fields and regularly include structural requirements, such as that statements must in principle be open to critique; and standards of conduct, such as a recognizable willingness to defend one’s standpoint and methods by argument.

In the University of Siegen case the differentiation between freedom of speech and freedom of research and teaching allows us to shift our focus from the positions held by the people invited to speak within the seminar (and thus from the question of freedom of speech) to the question of their scholarly integrity and reliability. As Schüttpelz rightly notes: “Thilo Sarrazin is, independent of how we may judge his political claims, scientifically speaking a charlatan” (Schüttpelz 2019: n.p.).

Distinguishing the two legal norms is also vital for a differentiated understanding of the case of former AfD-member of the European Parliament Bernd Lucke. As a tenured professor at Hamburg University, Lucke had both the right and the duty to return to the university once his term as an elected member of the European Parliament was over. But the disturbances that prevented Lucke from lecturing were not, as Lucke claimed, a violation of his right to free speech. Rather, they violated his academic freedom. In other words, the problem was that he was prevented from teaching his scholarly positions in his capacity as a member of the academy. Students' dissatisfaction with his *scholarly* positions, framed as neoliberal – which were stated as an additional reason for students' protests – surely provided no ground for stopping Lucke from teaching, as his academic freedom explicitly secures those. At the same time, it can be stated that a general on-campus protest was secured by students' freedom of speech (cf. Akbarian 2019).

Legal Officials' Duties Concerning a Professorship

§ 33 Law on the Status Rights of Civil Servants in the Länder – BeamStG

- (1) Civil servants shall serve the whole people, not a single party. They shall perform their duties impartially and fairly and shall conduct their office for the common good. Civil servants must, in all their conduct, declare their support for the free democratic basic order within the meaning of the Basic Law and stand up for its preservation.
- (2) In their political activities, civil servants shall exercise the moderation and restraint required by their position vis-à-vis the general public and by the duties of their office.¹⁴

Following the jurisdiction of the German Federal Constitutional Court, “the duty of political loyalty demands more than just a formally correct, otherwise disinterested, cool, inwardly distanced attitude toward the state and the constitution; it demands in particular that the civil servant distances himself unequivocally from groups and endeavors that attack, fight and defame this state, its constitutional organs and the applicable constitutional order. The civil servant is expected to recognize and acknowledge this state and its constitution as a high positive value worth defending.” (BVerfGE 39, 334/Ls. 2, own translation). So, even if a person acting in her role as a professor at a German university can be viewed as somewhat less bound by fiduciary duties than are regular civil servants (cf. Haake 2021: 257–258), she needs to conform to particular standards such as the neutrality requirement that restricts teaching political (as opposed to scholarly) positions (Gärditz 2022: n.p.; Keller 2019).

The same person does not need to conform to such standards when acting in a private capacity. But even in the private sphere, a person who accepted a professorship must submit to somewhat stricter rules than those applied to citizens not serving as civil servants. For instance, this is the case where off-duty behavior has the potential to harm the reputation of the office in meaningful ways. In the case of a professor with

¹⁴ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/beamstg/_33.html. Accessed 17 January 2024 (own translation).

teaching obligations, this would, for instance, apply where private comments indicate that the person exercises her duty in partial ways (e.g., systematically discriminating against particular groups of students such as women or minorities). Hence, professors and those lecturers who are also civil servants always move in a web of partially overlapping and potentially conflicting legal scopes relating to freedom of speech, freedom of arts and sciences and their duties as representatives of the state.

When focusing on the case of Bernd Lucke, it is important to note that Lucke did not use his lecture to propagate his political ideas. If he had done so, there would have been a violation of civil service law and the university could probably have initiated impeachment proceedings.

Freedom from Discrimination

Another angle takes students’ rights into account, as some states have decreed particular laws on freedom from discrimination as exemplified by the State of Hamburg.

§ 3 Hamburg Higher Education Act (HmbHG)

(4) The institutions of higher education shall ensure that their members can study or engage in professional or academic activities without discrimination. Within the scope of their possibilities, they shall work towards reducing existing disadvantages. The institutions of higher education shall develop concepts for dealing constructively with diversity (diversity management).¹⁵

So, it can be argued that students may feel discriminated against by extremist positions uttered on campus. Vogel stresses that teachers and professors, hence persons with distinct positions of authority, are particularly responsible for cultivating public and institutional debate culture. “They should, indeed must, ensure that working – learning, teaching, researching – is possible in an environment that is free from fear of stigmatization. Because fears block learning and reflection processes” (Vogel 2019: 35, own translation; cf. Akbarian 2020).

One could argue that different levels of protection against discrimination may exist at universities. That, for example, public lectures aiming at a wider audience underly a lower protection against discrimination status than regular seminars. The latter need to focus on transmitting knowledge, i.e. they require speakers with distinguished expertise rather than distinguished opinion. Moreover, students should be free to choose courses on the basis of content, and not be forced to consider the political orientation of the seminars offered. Not surprisingly, then, the fact that Schönecker’s “experiment” at the University of Siegen was conducted within a regular seminar (attended by students whose motives included earning credit points) was identified as part of the problem (Schüttpelz 2019: n.p.).

¹⁵ http://www.lexsoft.de/cgi-bin/lexsoft/justizportal_nrw.cgi?xid=170413,4. Accessed 17 January 2024 (own translation).

Domiciliary Rights

One last relevant legal norm reaches back to universities' basic domiciliary right to deny persons entry or the right to speak publicly. In the case of Gregor Gysi's planned appearance at a lecture hall of Freie Universität Berlin, for example, the university makes a clear distinction: General speeches by politicians on party politics are forbidden, as they mark a misuse of the university as an institution. But the university does not go so far as to prevent Gysi's appearance in the foyer of the student canteen by calling the police or similar actions. FU would have had the right to do so, given that the event was held on its premises.

The outlined landscape of state and federal laws shows that a net of crash barriers needs to be considered. However, there is considerable room for creative proceedings by universities when turning from "if" to "how."

Turning from "if" to "how"

In the second section of this paper, we argued that universities do have a genuine interest in allowing political speakers on campus while at the same time universities are obliged to defend themselves, their staff, and in particular their students against actors misusing the university as a stage for propaganda. Building on this premise, the question in many cases is not whether political actors should principally be allowed to speak on campus but rather under what conditions.

There are probably cases in which universities have good reasons to prevent certain actors from speaking on campus at all. However, we like to claim that, in many cases, proper precautions can ensure that the potentially conflicting goals – political debate on campus and preventing campuses from being turned into stages for demagogues – can be met simultaneously. Concretely, this leads us to the question: How must a political event on campus be organized so as to serve a university's goals rather than cause harm?

Such "how" questions are the subject of a small, practice-oriented subbranch of conflict resolution literature devoted to so-called process design (cf. DPA 2011; Isaoho and Tuuli 2013; Kraus et al. 2019; Kraus 2011; Kraybill 2004; Paffenholz and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue 2014; Paffenholz 2004; Lanz and Siegfried 2012). The process design literature emphasizes "that there is a difference between process and content, between how and what" (Kraybill 2004: 220). The authors of those texts observe a tendency (of conflict parties and third parties alike) to concentrate on content issues while ignoring process questions. Obviously, this is unfortunate because the way processes are designed and managed is highly important. Think, for instance, of an election that your candidate has lost. How would you feel if this were the result of an election process that you can recognize as fair? And how would you, on the other hand, respond if the election process had been unfair or nontransparent? Although the result is the same in both cases, the means to the end makes a significant difference. As Kraybill (2004: 221) observes, "intuitively, people sense that process makes profound statements about human worth, about who counts." Kraybill stresses that "a great deal of group conflict is simply the consequence of bad process, for

people commonly reject even the best ideas and proposals if they result from processes that they find objectionable" (Kraybill 2004: 221). In addition, process design has significant effects on outcomes more generally: Depending on who participates in negotiations, the results will differ; topics that have not been put (or pushed) on the agenda are less likely to be discussed; and a bad facilitator not only makes for a frustrating process but will also ensure suboptimal results.

We hold that this tendency to pay too little attention to process questions is not confined to conflict management but far more widespread. If we reexamine the cases referred to earlier, where politics on campus of one form or the other has led to controversy and protest, we can see that quite often, process questions caused outrage. Thus, Dieter Schönecker from the University of Siegen, who invited speakers from the political far-right, was criticized for conducting what he thought of as a free speech experiment in the form of an obligatory seminar, thus leaving students with little choice as to whether to participate. Moreover, Schönecker was criticized for his seminar announcement text. It claimed that the seminar was devoted to discussing whether it was ok to invite speakers with extreme political positions into a seminar and then announced that several such persons already had been invited.¹⁶ Suppose Schönecker's intention really had been to enable a lively discussion about the inevitably political question he had raised, as to what positions should be given a stage. Then it must be seen as unfortunate that he was apparently unable to pursue his goal in a suitable form.

The good news is that there is useful practical advice in the literature on process design that can be adapted to the challenges faced by universities. While a decision to consider advice from the process design literature will render the planning of events more complex and hence also more time consuming, the time would be well invested, as "haste is a major enemy of good process, and usually leads to a great waste of time and energy in the end" (Kraybill 2004: 224). To recognize the validity of this point, we only have to think of frustrating work meetings for which no one bothered to prepare an agenda, search for suitable facilities, consider who needs to participate and who does not, and define a clear start and end time.

When designing a process (planning an event), one must consider a couple of typical questions. Although not each question will be relevant in every case, most questions need to be considered at least briefly in most cases. We regard it as helpful to have a comprehensive list of relevant questions that can then be used as a checklist for concrete cases. Quite intentionally, this list is practice-oriented and hands-on.

What are the Goals, what are Possible Risks?

As a first step it is helpful to clarify in advance what a best-case scenario would look like and to define what one does not want to happen. We then can ask: Which

¹⁶ In the seminar announcement text, Schönecker explained that the seminar would be concerned primarily with the "question of how great the freedom of speech should be at events held at universities." And also, "can you invite people like Thilo Sarrazin or Marc Jongen (Member of the Bundestag, AfD)?" A few sentences further down, it says: "A major part of the seminar is a series of lectures in which decidedly right-wing thinkers are invited (including Sarrazin and Jongen)." Critics, therefore, pointed out that one of the questions the seminar claimed to be addressing already had been answered affirmatively.

measures can be taken to avoid identified dangers? What can be done to make the best-case scenario more likely? For the sake of argument, let us suppose that Schönecker's intention had been to initiate a lively debate by inviting speakers from a broad political spectrum. Then a risk analysis could, for instance, have helped him to anticipate the refusal of left-leaning thinkers to appear in the same seminar as right-wing speakers. This could have led Schönecker to include a passage in the invitation he sent to the various speakers (as well as in the seminar announcement), stating that the event will only occur if he manages to secure the participation of speakers from across the political spectrum.

Who Should be Involved, and in What Way?

There are three types of actors who need to be considered in particular: those who can contribute to the event and help make it a success; those who are affected and might therefore be given a voice in the planning process and/or in the actual event; and those who might object to the event and have the capacity to harm/spoil it. For each of these actors, one needs to consider whether it is necessary and – given available resources, such as time – feasible to involve them in the planning process itself and/or in the actual event. In case of expected fierce debate, it might be advisable to set up a *process committee* composed of members of all relevant stakeholder groups.

The preparation team should consist at least of: the person in charge of the content of the event, equipped with the necessary knowledge, reputation, and competencies; a member of university or faculty leadership or a person directly and transparently mandated by leadership, when explosive discussions are expected; a moderator who will lead the discussions and consult on the format. In case of a discussion, we should ask ourselves whether there is a need to balance power asymmetries (caused, for instance, through differences in age, gender, capabilities, or the number of people in each camp). We can balance power through skillful moderation or by inviting additional people to back the weaker side. Robert Post reports an event on the Yale University campus where “a very controversial speaker” was invited to speak, one “whose presence in the past year had elicited bitter and highly publicized protests.” This time, the organizers “provided for careful moderation that respectfully but forcibly expressed the concerns of offended students,” thus contributing to the event being “peaceful, constructive, and protest-free,” according to Post (Post 2022: 678).

Who Should Host and Finance the Event?

A conscious decision and communication concept here can avoid a controversial event being associated with particular parts of the university, notably its leadership. Where the event takes the form of a discussion between people standing for competing positions that have their equivalent in different factions of the university, a *co-invitation* to the event by these factions might be advisable. If financial support is needed, the university members organizing the event should select sponsors on the grounds of their impartiality or should carefully balance sponsorships. Particular scrutiny is required when funding by party-associated foundations is involved.

To Whom Should the Event be Open?

Should the event be open only to faculty and students or also to the wider public? Should the press be allowed or excluded? Who sends the invitation, and via what channels? Particularly where the press is invited, it is advisable to have a media strategy to, for example, provide journalists with press releases reflecting one’s own account of the events. The goal should be to avoid a situation where one has to react to reports one finds misleading; one should be proactive and place one’s framing of the event early on.

How can one Deal with Intransigent Actors?

How should one deal with people who are unwilling to join the event constructively but are willing and able to spoil it? The first step is to see whether such actors exist in a given case and in what ways they might pose a threat to the event’s success. Universities should reach out to the identified groups and make an honest effort to integrate them into the (planning of the) upcoming event. There should be real opportunities to express opposition and critique, such as campus protests. Such offers should also be made public to make it harder for spoilers to argue for less acceptable forms of protest. In the Yale example, the law school discussed the event with affected groups; it listened to their fears and sought accommodations. In sum, “the school created alternative outlets for educationally constructive protests.” (Post 2022: 678).

How can one Build up a Level of Confidence Among Guest Speakers?

When speakers with opposing views are invited, it might be a good idea to build a certain level of familiarity and trust to ensure a tough but also fruitful debate. This can be achieved, for example, by leading a preparatory meeting with all speakers together rather than separately.

Which Format is Appropriate?

As Jaster and Keil bluntly state: “In short: Whoever hosts a conflict-prone event at the university should give enough thought and effort to designing the academic discourse space” (Jaster and Keil 2021: 158, own translation). This academic discourse space is significantly shaped by the formats that are being used. Do we schedule speeches or a moderated debate? For example, to avoid the political positioning on general issues without direct reference to university or science topics, which FU leadership claimed it did not want, leadership could have suggested organizing a panel discussion, including both politicians and academic experts.

Should questions from the audience be encouraged or discouraged? What kinds of speakers do we bring together? Rather than not inviting a speaker with a controversial view, pairing him or her with an eloquent expert known to hold the opposite view might be possible. Additionally, an event can be balanced by a parallel event with a different (political) focus. Thus, instead of refusing the SDS’s request to grant Gregor Gysi from Die Linke a lecture hall for a political talk, FU leadership could

have tried to organize a series of talks where every party in parliament would have had the chance to address a topic of their concern.

A potentially controversial event could also be designed as a sequence of smaller events that will allow the stakeholders and organizers within the university to react to experiences, correct mistakes, etc. Particularly when fierce controversial discussions are expected, it is crucial to allow sufficient time for audience contributions.

Should Ground Rules be Used?

There would be no point in allowing political events on campus if one were determined to keep complete control over the political positions uttered in such events. However, "there is no contradiction in guiding the ways in which people talk to each other while refusing to guide what they talk about" (Brookfield and Preskill 2012: 53). Ground rules here refer to those that participants in a political event on campus are asked to follow, such as refraining from personal insults. The first question organizers of an event have to ask is whether there should be any ground rules in the given case. If so, one needs to consider whether those rules are provided by the university, by the individuals chairing the event, or by the speakers themselves via a workshop before the event.¹⁷

The point regarding such codes of conduct for speeches and debates is not so much that they need to be enforceable: rather, in many cases it will suffice to publicly and plausibly point out (or make apparent) that speaker X is violating the rules for fair dialog and proper argument. This, of course, requires an authority – such as a skilled, and if need be external, moderator – who monitors compliance. In other cases, a member of the faculty might assist by ensuring compliance (cf. Jaster and Keil 2021: 158). Yale, to come back to the example, “established terms of engagement in which students felt safe rather than exposed to public threats and reprisals” and it used, as we saw, professional moderation to ensure that those terms were respected (Post 2022: 678).

What Kind of Setting Suits the Event?

An event’s size and character will determine its functional and technical requirements (such as: Is it preferable to have speakers stand on a stage detached from the audience, or does it better serve the intended character of the event to have speakers and audience sit on the same level? Do we need several microphones to involve the audience?). At the same time, one also needs to consider the symbolic effect of a location. Thus, practical considerations may lead a university to grant its most extensive (and at the same time most prestigious) lecture hall to a controversial event, thus unintentionally giving the impression of granting the event and its speaker recognition.

¹⁷ Note that we do not argue for rigid “speech codes” here, but rather for pragmatic, general rules that can, if needed, be tailored to a given event. What we have in mind here is similar to what mediators do before starting an interpersonal or group mediation, they invite parties to discuss and/or develop – and then agree upon – rules of (verbal) conduct.

Which Degree of Formality is Appropriate?

Is it suitable in the given circumstances to only have a loose framework, which leaves room for the events to unfold? Or is a tight protocol advisable? The latter might be desirable where highly controversial discussions can be expected, e.g., where famous and very outspoken personalities known for extreme and opposing positions and fierce debates are invited, and where there is a risk that the event’s hosts could be overwhelmed by an unfolding escalation. In such a case the organizer needs to consider who will chair the meeting. Given the particular circumstances, for instance, should a student, the head of the faculty, or a professional neutral moderator preside over the event? Organizers should, moreover, consider the features and arrangement of the facility. Does it, for instance, invite or somewhat hinder interaction? (And is this, in light of the organizers’ overarching goals, good or bad?) Finally, those planning the event should take some time to consider whether they would like to encourage the audience to participate. If so, they may consider having participants complete a quick survey using their smartphones, or explicitly invite them to interrupt whenever they have a question. If, on the other hand, organizers prefer to discourage participation, they may, for instance, have university officials deliver various addresses before the actual event starts, thus framing the event as official and formal rather than participatory.

How Should one Take Account of Roles and Mandates?

If university or faculty leadership sends delegates, these should be clearly and transparently mandated. Also, when university members participate/moderate publicly they should state their roles. When introducing guest speakers, the hosting party/moderator should clarify the role in which the speakers are invited. Is the AfD-Member of European Parliament Marc Jongen, for instance, invited as a philosopher, as a party representative, or as the subject of fierce public criticism? Also, the moderator needs to have a clear mandate to cut somebody short or lead the discussion onto another track.

Should Universities have Explicit Invitation Guidelines?

So far, all suggestions are short-term in that they will be especially interesting for those actors organizing an event that features one or more guest speakers known for their political positions. We want to conclude with a suggestion that primarily addresses university and faculty leadership (and everyone willing to lobby) and would take comparatively longer to implement: We hold that universities should develop clear-cut invitation policies.

Too often, decisions made for or against the invitation of political speakers seem arbitrary. Thus, the University of Hamburg rejected the initiative of its liberal college group to invite the leader of the German Liberal Party, FDP, but approved the invitation of the chairman of the Junge Sozialdemokraten (the junior organization of the German Social Democrats, SPD), Kevin Kühnert (Steinbeck 2020: 45).

Universities need to work out clear invitation policies, not least to give people in charge the necessary guideline for deciding individual cases. Those policies should be encompassed in a broader vision of what the university seeks to be and to accomplish. This requires answering questions such as: How much contact with the debates of the day is stimulating? How much protection or at least distance from short-lived heated discussions is needed?

The invitation guideline could also include a passus on proportionality. Where, for instance, the presence of a speaker would require hugely expensive security measures, this can be taken as a legitimate reason to refrain from or cancel an invitation. Also, an unequivocal rejection of hate speech and discrimination against minorities should be included and invited speakers should be informed about and accept this codex well in advance. This will then make it easier for universities to point out inappropriate behavior during an event and – in extreme cases – even cancel an ongoing event with reference to the committed breach of rules.

Lastly, the invitation guideline should be publicly available. This way, there can be clear limits on who may be invited, while this boundary remains open to critique, which might result in a reconsideration of certain rules in the guideline and foster universities' status as learning organizations.

Conclusion

For some years now, we have observed a polarization in the increasingly lively debates on politics on campus. "Some groups seek ... to prevent the expression of views they believe to lie beyond the bounds of reasonable discussion; other groups seek to instigate fights over the limits of free speech by inviting speakers who push these boundaries." (Ben-Porath 2017: 7). What Ben-Porath observed for US universities is now equally valid for universities in Germany and other liberal democracies.

In this paper, we propose a new way of addressing whether universities should allow actors with primarily political (as opposed to scholarly) agendas to speak on campus. Our argument is that we need to eschew two common misconceptions. The first is that we should look at cases like those introduced in this paper almost exclusively through the free-speech lens. The second is that we can phrase the issue only as an either-or question.

Regarding the first misconception, we argued that while controversies about whether universities should make room for political speeches on campus are often dealt with from the perspective of free speech, other norms are more relevant in the given context. Of the various legal norms, academic freedom is by far the most important one and must be urgently taken into consideration. German and Austrian law include academic freedom as a separate right, while it is subsumed under freedom of speech in many other countries, such as the US. One would expect significant differences in debates about politics on campus. Instead, it is common to speak of academic freedom even in countries where it is not a separate constitutional right, and we find prominent voices making the case that freedom of speech should not be the reference point when discussing campus issues. According to Robert Post, "Freedom of speech concerns individual rights that are defined by the political project of

democratic self-governance. Academic freedom, by contrast, concerns the communal rights of the academic community that are defined by the achievement of university objectives, which are characteristically conceptualized in terms of teaching and research." (Post 2022: 673). That the scholarly discourse on political speech on campus in the US and other countries resembles the German debate so closely, despite major differences in legislation, is surprising and should be investigated further.

Having a better grasp of the legal norms enables more fruitful debates about whether we want to invite political speech onto our campuses and, if so, in what form. This understanding of legal norms also serves those tasked with organizing such events, as they seek the boundaries and crash barriers within to develop their process design.

This leads to the second misconception we address in our paper, namely that we only have an either-or choice regarding political speech on campus. Skeptics are correct in arguing that to allow people with political agendas to speak on campus may cause societal harm. Demagogic positions may become more socially acceptable, and their protagonists appear more legitimate when universities offer them a stage. Moreover, an increasingly diverse student body should be protected from unequivocally discriminatory utterances wherever possible. On the other hand, advocates of political speech on campus rightly point out that banning political contributions from university campus per se would squander great potential. Liberal societies have given the university as an institution and its members the luxury of open and free discussions without being restricted by many of the practical considerations that impact other areas of society.

As both sides have plausible arguments, we should look for ways to encompass all valid concerns. Thus, looking at the practical question of whether to host political speakers on campus, we suggest reframing the issue. Instead of asking whether there should be political speeches and events on campus, we should more often ask how political contributions must be organized so that they do not cause harm but do good, e.g., by fostering "an education in judgment" (Rodowick 2021). As shown above, in many instances a thoughtful process design allows us to profit from the benefits of inviting political speakers to address students while accommodating the crucial concerns of the no-political-talks on campus fraction. It turns out that in quite a few cases, we can indeed have the cake and eat it too – if only we know how.

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