



**SECRETARY FOR ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON FREE SPEECH AND HATE SPEECH
SELF-NOMINEE FORM**

Name: Jason Bazil
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Primary College: COM
Primary Department: PSL
Current Faculty Title: Assistant Professor
Education (Degree, Year, and Institution): PhD, 2010, Purdue University
Year of Initial Appointment: 2016

If placed on the final election ballot and elected, I agree to serve: yes

Save this completed document with the following file name format: **your last name_nomination_form**.

Email completed nomination form to the Secretary for Academic Governance at acadgov@msu.edu by March 4, 2024 6 pm EST.

Instructions for Nominee: In one page or less, describe your reasons for seeking a nomination for the position on the Ad Hoc Committee on Free Speech and Hate Speech. These might include prior personal or professional experiences, special discipline-specific expertise, and/or representation of a specific community. This statement will be used to aid the faculty members of the Steering Committee in determining the *ad hoc* committee's membership.

Nominee's Statement: Here are a few notes and quotes that inform my perspective on free speech. My statement appears after.

We are a federally funded institution; therefore, Amendment I of the constitution overrules any and all laws and policies designed to quell speech on campus. As seen from the text below, not even congress has the authority to impede our freedom of speech. And no one on campus holds a higher authority.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” -Amendment I, The U.S. Constitution

Here are a few prudent quotes from key individuals involved in our nation's founding. Their value does not come from who said them but from what they say. In essence, we must remain free thinking individuals if we want to genuinely improve the status of mankind and prevent those seeking to divide and conquer from achieving their intended goals of absolute power and material wealth accumulation.

“Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without Freedom of Speech.” -Benjamin Franklin, Letter from Silence Dogood, printed in The New England Courant, July 9, 1722

“Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error.” -Thomas Jefferson

“For if Men are to be precluded from offering their Sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind, reason is of no use to us; the freedom of Speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the Slaughter.” -George Washington, Address to the officers of the army, March 15, 1783

“In those wretched countries where a man cannot call his tongue his own, he can scarce call anything his own. Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech; a thing terrible to publick traytors.” -Benjamin Franklin, Dogood Papers, written by Franklin in 1722, at the age of sixteen

Reflecting on these quotes, it should become abundantly clear that free speech is an essential feature of prosperous and empathetic nations. It is sad to see that free speech in our country is under assault. The fact that universities are a point source for censorship is particularly worrying. We must stop this pernicious movement to preserve the rights of ALL Americans and those residing within her borders.

While I do not care for hateful speech, it must be allowed in order to identify uninformed and disingenuous individuals who are attempting to usurp power from the people. Free speech is a cornerstone of any free and peace-loving society. Much of the division we are currently facing is due to censorship, the polar opposite of the concept of free speech. With free speech comes understanding and discourse. I believe most of us have the same goals in mind. The only difference is the preferred approach to achieve those goals. As a species, we pride ourselves on our intellectual and reasoning abilities. That said, it has been difficult to watch intelligent individuals advocate for censorship. These individuals are either victims of censorship themselves or hold attitudes and beliefs that are counter to a free and fair society. Everyone is free to hold their own beliefs and opinions; however, individual preferences for the way we structure our society should not trample on the rights of others. Societal change must come from genuine grass roots movements which seek to maximize human potential and wellbeing. We must find an optimal solution that bolsters the free-thinking spirit of all who live among us.

As a member of this committee, I will do my best to advocate for free speech at all levels on campus. I will respect others who disagree and seek to find common ground in the public arena to maximize transparency and show all stakeholders that we take their innate human rights very seriously.