

# The Washington Newsday



According to a non-profit, the University of Oklahoma's anti-racist workshop training violates free speech.

According to a nonprofit organization focusing on educational freedom, a recent workshop on anti-racism held by University of Oklahoma faculty raises concerns about the situation of free expression and potential brainwashing inside the state's flagship university's classrooms.

Three faculty members presented slides on "structural racism" and discussed how to promote anti-racist environments in the classroom in a lecture titled "Anti-Racist Rhetoric & Pedagogies." They also discussed how to "undermine white institutional defensiveness."

"Isn't one of our anxieties that we'll get in trouble because of this? We can't tell pupils that they can't say anything in class, for example. But we can do it! "And let me tell you how," she explained, "the law is on educators' side." The right to free expression does not apply in the classroom."

"The Supreme Court has actually upheld that hate speech, disparaging speech, and any other -isms are prohibited in the classroom because they do not promote a healthy learning environment. As a result, as professors, we can tell our pupils, "No, you have no right to say that." Stop talking right now," she continued, likely referring to the Court's 1988 decision in **Hazelwood School District** v. Kuhlmeier, which held that schools can regulate speech, as long as the actions taken by administrators "are reasonably related to a legitimate pedagogical interest."



# New Jersey passes law protecting student press freedom

The Student Press Law Center (SPLC) commends the New Jersey legislature for passing A169 / S108, legislation to restore and protect the press freedom of New Jersey's student journalists. SPLC calls on Governor Murphy to sign the legislation, at which time New Jersey will become the 15th state to adopt such legislation.

The legislation, which was first introduced in New Jersey in 2015, prohibits the censorship of student journalists except in narrow circumstances. It will also protect student media advisers from retaliation when they refuse to illegally censor their students. Students and advisers from across New Jersey testified that the legislation was necessary in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)* decision, which allowed for the restriction of student media when "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns," but has been broadly interpreted by school administrators to allow for the censorship of student journalists for virtually any reason. In New Jersey, this has included the censorship of stories exposing the misconduct of a school district superintendent, and the removal of a media adviser who refused to censor articles about smoking and the departure of a district athletic director.

SPLC Executive Director Hadar Harris said: "Just yesterday, the U.S. Supreme Court stated in *Mahanoy School District v. B.L.*, 'America's public schools are the nurseries of democracy. Our representative democracy only works if we protect 'the marketplace of ideas.' Yet for too long, New Jersey's school administrators have undermined that marketplace by censoring student journalists who write about issues that matter to students but make adults nervous, and penalizing those student media advisers who stand in support of these truths. Today's vote by the New Jersey Assembly to approve this legislation reaffirms the critical role student journalists play in their communities and their contribution to creating a student body of civic-minded critical thinkers who will become our next generation of leaders. We thank Assemblymen Caputo and Wirths and Senators Gill and Turner for sponsoring this legislation, and all the students and advisers who have worked so hard for so long to see this legislation passed."

New Jersey joins Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington in adopting such legislation.