

# Hilltopics



# Letter from the Editor: The Cost of Free Speech

DESTINY ROSE MURPHY

On Thursday, March 22, 2018 Steven Crowder, a comedian and self-described “right wing rabble-rouser,” performed in front of several thousand students, professors, and community members at McFarlin Auditorium. Mr. Crowder is known for his love of non-“politically correct” rhetoric, which made an appearance in the form “F\*GS” on advertisements that were distributed throughout SMU’s community, as well as merchandise tables and a large poster at the event. Mr. Crowder is notably interested in what he calls “the transgender issue,” and made news last year for pretending to have a trans son in order to film a “private support group health care meeting” in the Vermont Pride Center. He has, in his Louder with Crowder YouTube video series, referred to a transgender woman with the slur “tranny,” and called her and other trans people “mentally disturbed...[and] mentally unhealthy.” SMU’s Student Senate paid the entirety of Mr. Crowder’s \$15,000 speaking fee, and College Republicans, the group that invited Mr. Crowder to campus, raised an additional \$7,500 to

host him in McFarlin Auditorium.

On Nov. 2nd, 2016, Hilltopics published an article in remembrance of Jaime Shim, who committed suicide on SMU campus. Jaime was an incredible writer, a passionate political

theorist, and a trans student who faced discrimination even from some of his fellow President’s Scholars. Jaime’s friends remember him as living “a life of integrity” and having “the capacity to make the world a much better place.” After Jaime’s death, one of his closest friends, Michael Robertson, helped the Women and LGBT center establish the Jaime Shim LGBT Excellence Award to honor and assist students who contribute to SMU’s LGBT community. This year the LGBT Equality Forum fundraised \$6,330 total, which will be applied to the Jaime Shim Award, increased programming for Transgender Day of Visibility and Transgender Day of Remembrance, and more.

Though we colloquially refer to our speech as “free,” we leave out quite a few conditions regarding that freedom. The government, for instance, proscribes violence-inspiring speech and hate speech, and most of us limit our words even more than legal mandates require us to. We curb our tongues not just because of childhood lessons regarding what to do when one has nothing nice to say, but because we are adults with empathy. The old adage about the strength of the pen relative to the sword rings true to us because we have felt the damage that a hateful person can inflict without ever physically striking us.

Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words can inspire depression, haunt, terrify, and lead one to believe oneself to be worthless. Bones heal, and people forget the physical pain of



theorist, and a trans student who faced discrimination even from some of his fellow President’s Scholars. Jaime’s friends remember him as living “a life of integrity” and having “the capacity

their breaking. For many, a hateful slur or a fear-inducing threat can deal just as much, if not more, damage.

As of the writing of this article on March 30, no official action was taken by SMU to remove the slurs from campus, or to chastise the College Republicans for allowing Crowder's advertising material to contain the slurs. Instead, an email, which was quoted by The Daily Campus but which many students claimed to never have received, was sent out by President Turner professing, "that commitments to freedom of speech and an inclusive environment can come into conflict, raising challenging and important questions for our community."

Such a commitment to "free" speech seems to be ignorant of the costs associated with slurs like faggot and tranny. Those words do not come free. Instead, they come at the cost of the safety and self-worth of every SMU student in the LGBT, or as Mr. Crowder calls it the "LGBTQAAIP...to the power of penis swordplay," community. When SMU allows, and pays for, a platform for these slurs, it tells LGBT students that

they are not included in the statement "Every Mustang will be Valued." It tells prospective LGBT students that they will not be welcome here, and that people who throw slurs at them will be rewarded, not punished. It tells LGBT donors that their money will be put towards events that marginalize their own community, instead of towards events that bring the SMU community together. Mr. Crowder's free speech, therefore, was not free at all, but instead was SMU-subsidized hate speech that cost the university the love of its own students, the academic success of potential future students, and the money of every donor who respects the LGBT community.

In this case, those words also cost \$15,000 of Student Senate's money. Presumably the tuition of LGBT students, as well as LGBT donors and LGBT alumni contributed to that \$15,000, though they were not given the choice to withhold their funds. And while President Turner's email refers to divisive language as not "reflective of SMU values," the actions of Student Senate contradict him. One year and

four months after the suicide of a trans student, SMU has, consciously or not, put its money where its mouth is and allocated \$15,000 towards transphobic and homophobic slurs. How they came to the conclusion that such slurs deserved such a large sum of money is unknown, though Hilltopics would be happy to publish SMU's defense of those words if SMU would like to make one. In the meantime, those interested in truly valuing every Mustang are welcome to donate to the LGBT Equality Forum at <http://blog.smu.edu/mustangsgiveback/projects/come-out-for-the-lgbt-equality-forum-2018/>.



# Response to the Letter from the Editor

NATHAN DeVERA

*Nathan DeVera, sitting Student Body Vice President and Student Body President candidate, reached out to the Hilltopics editorial staff requesting an endorsement. In keeping with our publication's goals of promoting discourse on campus, we invited him to respond to this edition's Letter from the Editor. In the spirit of fairness we sent the same letter and offer to fellow Student Body President candidate Davis Wells, but received no response. Below is Nathan's response. - Destiny Rose Murphy, Editor-in-Chief*

Hello all! My name is Nathan DeVera, I am currently serving as SMU Student Body Vice President, and I am running to become Student Body President for the upcoming 2018-2019 academic school year. I am writing in response to the recent Steven Crowder event that was held on our campus. This event was filled with much controversy throughout many areas of our campus, and I would like to address some of those concerns as not only your current Student Body Vice President but also as a candidate for Student Body President.

First and foremost, I want to state that I am a strong proponent of free speech, especially on college campuses. I am a firm believer that college campuses are meant to be places of intellectual discourse and conversations. At no other point in our lives will we be surrounded with such a diverse group of people in such a concentrated area. These conversations are meant to push boundaries, and they will get people uncomfortable. That's how people grow and expand their own boundaries. However, there is a line between free speech and disrespectful speech. The latter isn't just in the eyes of the beholder, but it very clearly disobeys the SMU Values Statement that our university operates under: "... sincere, regard, and respect for all SMU students, faculty, and staff." If a speaker wanted to speak at campus to provoke thoughts, express differing opinions, and engage in discourse, I absolutely see the benefit in it. However, the moment our guest begins to disregard the values of our institution, that's when I see the need to step in.

While I cannot speak on behalf of the entire SMU Student Senate, I would like to clarify our role in this all. First and foremost, the values statement is something that the Student Senate recites every single Tuesday at 3:30 PM before we begin our 2.5 hour chamber meeting. Its principles are integral to who we are as representatives of the student body. Since our governing body allocates student fees to fund student organizations, it is crucial that our values statement and, subsequently, university's code of conduct is abided by in each decision that we make.

Moving forward, as your Student Body Vice President, I, along with other members of Senate, have met as the Student Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Inclusion concerning this recent event. A major topic of this conversation was accountability: should it fall on the Student Senate or the chartered organization that held the event? After much conversation, we realized that the blame wasn't what mattered. Our Queer Senator, Ray Cipriano, was one of the first to say that College Republicans should not be punished for holding this event. Rather, this occurrence was intended to create a conversation. This conversation is the type of discourse that I find vital to the intellectual growth of individuals on our campus.

Regardless, it is vital to understand that this growth can occur while also ensuring that all students and our university are abiding by our Values

Statement and Code of Conduct. Our Ad Hoc Committee plans to continue to meet in the near future and invite members of the College Republicans to join us in this conversation in order to work closely towards a mentality that can apply to any and all student organizations. As Student Body President, I aim to ensure that our students are expanding their viewpoints and engaging in civil discourse, something that is the foundation of any and all academic institutions. Additionally, and more pertinently, I aim to ensure that the entire body of the Student Senate is diligent in making sure that our actions and decision will indeed abide by the rules set in place by our university while also best representing the student body as a whole. This is guaranteed with a hardworking chamber, and it begins with an enthusiastic and conscientious leader that is willing and able to lead with confidence. That is the role that I would be honored to serve in as your next Student Body President.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my response. Please feel free to reach out to me if you would like to speak more about this situation, who I am, what I've done, and/or what I plan to do as Student Body President!

# Young Voices Changing the World

ALEC MASON

Confidence, compassion, and community. These were the feelings ubiquitously present as the students of America and their allies took to the streets on March 24th. Their goal: putting an end to gun violence; a lofty goal in a country with a cultural and political attachment to the right to bear arms. However, steep odds and resistance did not hinder the idealism that drove these young people to this unprecedented level of activism.

One of the inspirational leaders of this movement is a current freshman here at Southern Methodist University. Candice Fudzie was a major organizer of the satellite March for Our Lives

in downtown Dallas. I had the opportunity to interview her about the march and the progress of gun reform in the United States. Youth activism has been a part of this country's history for a long time, but this is the first time that we have seen such a surge in high school activists. When I asked her about this, Fudzie said:

"The marches around the country were all student led; this speaks to the power of young voices! Students are often told to keep quiet in tense situations, but students all around the country have let their voices be heard. There's a misconception that if you're

not old enough to vote, you can't make a difference. This is not true by any means! Young people can make a difference just by taking part in the general conversation, as seen by the march."

Much of the resistance to the march that I have personally seen stems from a sort of straw man argument that all that the activists want is a complete gun ban. Fudzie refutes this idea. She says that she merely wants to put an end to the inaction from politicians in response to the constant shootings. In a passionate response, she states:

"Regardless of where you are on the



political spectrum I would like all to know that the fight towards gun reform isn't a partisan issue. This is an issue that we can all agree on: safety. Children are being murdered in their schools. People are being murdered during their prayer services. People are being murdered while watching a movie. Black children in South Dallas are being murdered in their neighborhoods. We can't wait around for more people to die from gun violence in even more places."

Even SMU, a campus that is not exactly known for being a bastion of liberalism, has seen quite a significant surge in student activism. The Embrey Human Rights Program, Amnesty International, and quite a few students unaffiliated with these groups participated in the march. Fudzie offered this statement to the SMU student body:

"Going into the future I plan to make a continuous effort towards educating myself on those affected by gun violence and how legislation can change that. I plan on getting more involved in the policies of my representatives and possible representatives. The student organizing committee for March for Our Lives-Dallas has launched studentsmarch.org. Through this domain, students can apply for the fellowship program. This program entails being an advocate for gun reform on your campus and getting more students involved in the conversation. We can all agree that safety is an issue, but we may all have different ideas on how this issue can be resolved. I simply ask of all SMU students to engage in the conversation of gun reform, regardless of your opinions. Everyone's opinions are

valid and deserve to be heard in a safe environment."

In the spirit of Candice's call to action for students, here is my take. One thing is for sure with this movement; students have had enough with the inaction of older generations in response to gun violence. This is a generation more interconnected than any other. They see the entire world in real time. They know about the atrocities committed by those who should have never owned a gun, and they know that thoughts and prayers will never put an end to these horrific acts. These young people will not be commanded to stop their activism because of their age. They are our future, so it is high time to hear them out.

## *Beware the Ides of Marching Womxn*

JESSICA CHONG

Friends, scholars, true Americans, hear me out.

I come to dismantle Feminism, not to practice it.

A womxn's infamy might end up in textbooks, classrooms, and publications—oh my!

At that point, the good gets muddled with the aforementioned horrors and it'll be too late;

This is Feminism. The noble President—the elected Face of American Values—

Even said that such womxn are nasty.

Prioritizing human rights by taxing the King Johns of the country is the epitome of nastiness (Disney's 1973 Robin Hood received a 52% approval rating, and 52% of white women voted for Trump. It's probably nothing, though.)

And that's why we don't allow nasty womxn a voice in these matters—not

then and not now.

So, here, under the terms and conditions of Respectability and PWI Politics (which I accept),

Because higher education is a privilege and I have no choice other than to concede to the superiority of masculinity and whiteness,

Because the President is the antithesis of nasty,

Since all men with privilege are honorable—

I am here to eulogize Feminism.

Feminism was the gateway into unconditional self-love, forgiving and divine.

But an old lover, professors with pedigree and prestige, and other boys aspiring to be honorable men told me it was all just man-hating in clever disguise,

And they are all honorable as they come.

Honorable men defend something called blue lives and archaic archives,

Whose own lives and hearts do not necessitate the consideration of womxn, children, and non-white bodies ending where privilege starts.

Does Feminism ever stop to consider these honorable men?

When honorable kings, emperors, and men in religious habit have forsaken the poor, Saint Audrey, Saint Agnes, and Saint Elizabeth not only wept, but died standing up to the rich and powerful to save the poor.

Nastiness should be made of filthier stuff.

Yet, Mr. President and honorable countrymen across the board say that the same feminist ideals then are nasty today,

And the men in power are indeed honorable as they say.

Remember when buyer's remorse finally sank in,

Honorable people demanded to know what Nasty Womxn were doing,

To fix the same problems we were considered unfit to change. Do we try feminism or keep original sin?

Because womxn continue to pay the price and take the fall.

Because honorable men want to build a wall—they want to make more money and start a nuclear brawl.

Yet honorable men say that womxn are

too aggressive, too emotional, and too feminine to rule,

And who are we to challenge, question, and replace such honorable men.

I wouldn't dare put words in the mouths of honorable men, anyway,

But here I am to speak what I do know.

You loved Feminism when Truth paved the way for Freedom and Justice, when The Riveter bred generations of Can-Do Morale, when a taste of Lemonade made you realize you do love powerful womxn.

Why do you say Feminism isn't honorable when we honor her every

day?

If honorable men judge Feminism as thus,

Have men lost their reason?

I cry because endurance demands it.

Bearings. Now, that's a word.

My heart isn't yet in the coffin with those before me whose legacies leave a bad taste in your mouth but nourish mine,

And I will be damned if I hold my breath waiting for honorable men to listen or join the front line.





*my thought flaps*

JONATHAN ARNOLD

Put a finger in the sky, scrape the breeze

Rip white streams through its breast as the eagle

Whisk some clouds in your bowl until they cream

Add a pinch of the sun; only meagre

Pull a whiff of its sugar in your snout

Cup your hands to catch good milk when it rains

Don't let the lips of horizon far pout

Watch golden tongue fork when voice drifts her plain

My feet hug the dirt; my soul is aloft

My figure shapes an oak, my thought flaps a bird

I stand with the worms, I swim with star's froth

When I enter my own, galaxies whirr

Death; can only do me well when I smile

Life; can only do me wrong in denial.

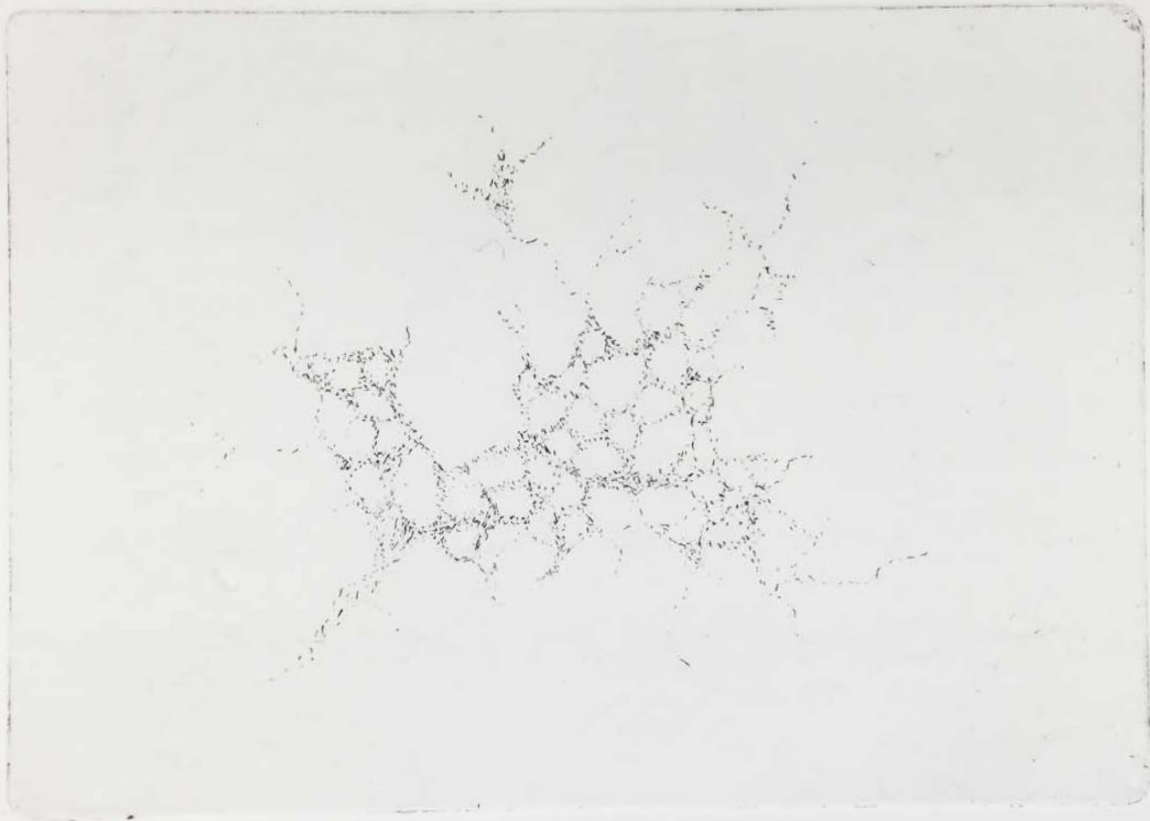


# Threads of

VIVIAN GLICK

A cardigan, a frilly blouse,  
A T-shirt bearing Mickey Mouse  
a pearly, 80's wedding dress  
Hung up through hangers a mess  
A pantsuit set in cobalt blue, (The tag says  
from 1942)  
A white XXL silk nightgown  
Printed with the team of the neighboring  
town  
A jumpsuit colored neon orange (We all  
know nothing rhymes with orange)  
A fabric rose, some panty hose  
A pair of socks with separate toes  
Questionable quotes and bits  
On tiny outfits meant for kids  
A blinding shirt (fluorescent lace)  
A set of tank tops void of taste  
A jacket printed "sexy sinner"  
A T-shirt for a T-ball winner  
Two matching, grey old-navy sweaters  
Leather that has seen days better  
A rainbow vest and eight inch heels  
Heelys but without the wheels  
A ruffled smock, a pair of crocs  
Almost, not quite matching socks  
A red gown worth one hundred more  
Than what they're asking at the thrift store

And so it hums with personhood  
In cotton threads and jacket hood  
A person lived in every shoe,  
In every fabric, every hue  
Does paint a life, experience  
And stories under negligence  
Tossed into donation piles  
Brimmed with history all the while  
It makes me wonder as I fold  
The clothes, of owners young or old  
And what happened amidst those cotton  
strands  
The life I'm holding in my hands



*Cells*  
Print  
6 in. by 9 in.  
Stejara Iulia Dinulescu

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