

# One Wisconsin Institute: Opposes UW Board of Regents latest move to restrict campus free speech

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**MADISON, Wis.** — With its move to include campus speech restrictions as part of the state administrative code, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents seems more interested in attempting to appease right-wing politicians than protecting the rights of students, faculty and staff. [One Wisconsin Institute submitted public comments](#) on the effort as part of the process begun by the Regents to try to formally amend state administrative code provisions related to student disciplinary procedures.

“The Board of Regents is proposing changes to the state administrative code that would restrict instead of protect free speech on campus,” said One Wisconsin Institute Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “In fact it seems like the Regents are more interested in trying to appease right-wing politicians than protect the rights of students.”

A hearing on the proposal was scheduled by the Regents in the midst of moving week for off-campus area housing in Madison and weeks before classes begin and students move into campus housing. According to media reports, no members of the Board of Regents attended the hearing.

Campus speech restrictions gained prominence in Wisconsin in 2017 when

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos personally oversaw the development of legislation to impose them on UW campuses. When Vos' effort to adopt legislation faltered, the Board of Regents adopted much of what the Speaker sought as UW System policy. President John Behling, an appointee of former Gov. Scott Walker, was not subtle in saying their action showed "... a responsiveness to what's going on in the Capitol, which helps build relationships."

Speech codes like Vos' are also part and parcel of the Milwaukee-based right-wing mega-funder Bradley Foundation effort to reshape higher education to their liking.

Most recently Vos and a handful of legislators have re-introduced legislation to restrict students and protect right-wing hate speech on University of Wisconsin campuses. The bill is largely similar to the 2017 version and includes language threatening students with suspension and expulsion for violations.

However, the latest proposal includes new language that could allow a white nationalist who believes their "expressive rights are violated by a violation of the bill's requirements to bring an action to enjoin a violation and obtain reasonable attorneys fees and damages."