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NEWS RELEASE

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How Free is Speech on Campus

*What does the recent UW System student survey on free speech tell us
and how do we proceed in a time of increased polarization?*

Following the release of the University of Wisconsin System student survey on free speech, [PROFS](#) and [ASPRO](#) (Academic Staff Professionals Organization) are joining together to host a public forum to discuss free speech and academic freedom on our state's public university campuses.

PROFS President Michael Bernard-Donals said the survey, while flawed, provided some useful information:

"The survey findings show that our universities are doing a remarkably good job at promoting precisely what universities are for: to encourage diversity of viewpoints, help students become comfortable in both airing difficult positions and, frankly, becoming uncomfortable with difficult information. But they also speak to the effects of political polarization in our public sphere."

Our panelists will help us sort through the importance of free speech on campus, what speech is and isn't protected by the First Amendment, how we can protect students who believe some protected speech is nonetheless potentially harmful to them and to others, and how the protection of academic freedom can be seen as a protection of free speech.

The forum will be held at **noon, Wednesday, February 22** in the Grainger Hall Executive Dining Room (Room 1266). PROFS President Michael Bernard-Donals will moderate the panel:

- [UW System President Jay Rothman](#)
- [State Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevera](#) (R-Appleton), member of the Senate Committee on Universities and Revenue
- [UW-Madison Political Science Professor Howard Schweber](#)
- [UW-Madison Political Science Professor Alex Tahk](#)

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