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WRT206: Professional Communication

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1. Goucher College’s general aim is to provide high quality education in a diverse environment, where everyone feels both safe and brave, while being able to interact with, and learn about, different cultures and opinions. It strives to become the best among liberal arts institutions, offering its students the best education it can.
2. This event would allow students to listen to diverse perspectives, and formulate their own opinions about what they will hear. The speech will allow students to compare, contrast, and express themselves in a constructive way, as part of Goucher’s goals.
3. My ethical responsibilities in promoting this event would be to ensure students that it is not meant to enforce any particular ideology or opinion, but it is rather meant to expand students’ horizons by introducing them to diverse points of view. Therefore, all of my promotion for the event would be focused on informing students about the educational benefits of Mr. Harris’s speech. I would, of course, also tell students that they do not have to attend the speech if they do not feel comfortable doing so. I personally feel that such an action encompasses all four pillars of ethics: It declares the person’s right not to attend the event, informs them about the costs and benefits of doing so (Benefit: Educational viewpoint expansion, Cost: May not agree with certain points/Find them offensive), and thus revealing both the positive and negative effects of Goucher’s decision to host the event. If all of this was done, it would greatly showcase the fourth pillar of ethics, which taking care of individuals, and being mindful to their feelings.
4. With regard to the message I would send, I would address students in the following way:

“Dear Goucher Students:

As some of you may already know, our institution will host a speech by Maryland Congressman Andy Harris on Monday, February 15th, 2021, as part of the “Voices in Policy Krashaur Speaking Series. The speech will be taking place in the Auditorium. Mr. Harris, who has been on the political scene for over twenty years, and is currently a US Naval Reserve commander, is a Republican congressman who has been at the center of several controversies and scandals. This fact might be found as problematic for some students here at Goucher, as they might not share Mr. Harris’s opinions and thoughts on certain topics. There are rumors of an upcoming on-campus protest being planned, to oppose the event. I must say that it is the right of students, as well as people in general, to protest any event, as long as the protest is done peacefully, and abides to appropriate regulations. However, I must say that we are all responsible for our actions, and must think about their consequences before acting. Here at Goucher, we strive to give, and get, the best education possible, in a diverse environment with different perspectives. Preventing Mr. Harris’s speech from happening would be an immense blow to both the “Voices in Policy” project, and to Goucher’s objective in general. It is not among Goucher’s goals to indoctrinate anyone into a particular belief system, school of thought, or political ideology. Rather, Goucher once again aims to educate its students about different opinions and prospects. Hindering such events would undermine our vision, and considerably hurt our effort to be the best among institutions. Therefore, we suggest that you please not take anything said by our guest personally. If your wish is to protest against this event, we can assure you that the best way of doing so is simply not attending.”

When it comes to faculty and staff, my message, although slightly different, would have the exact same concept, and would be much the same in wording:

“Dear Goucher Faculty and Staff:

As some of you may already know, our institution will host a speech by Maryland Congressman Andy Harris on Monday, February 15th, 2021, as part of the “Voices in Policy Krashaur Speaking Series. The speech will be taking place in the Auditorium. Mr. Harris, who has been on the political scene for over twenty years, and is currently a US Naval Reserve commander, is also a Republican congressman who has been at the center of several controversies and scandals. This fact might be found as problematic for some students here at Goucher, as they might not share Mr. Harris’s opinions and thoughts on certain topics. There are rumors of an upcoming on-campus protest being planned, to oppose the event. Although it is the right of both students and faculty to peacefully and legally protest any event, we must confess that such a protest could seriously hurt the institution on many levels. Here at Goucher, we strive to give, and get, the best education possible, in a diverse environment with different perspectives. It is not among Goucher’s goals to indoctrinate anyone into a particular belief system, school of thought, or political ideology. Rather, Goucher once again aims to educate its students about different opinions and prospects. Preventing Mr. Harris’s speech from happening would be an immense blow to both the “Voices in Policy” project, and to Goucher’s objective in general. For this reason, we have thought about some things that could be done with respect to this event:

1. A message containing similar information to this one has been sent to Goucher students, asking them to think through the situation well before attempting anything.
2. A “preparatory session” can be held before the speech, explaining students the nature and purpose of the upcoming event.
3. Even though participation is encouraged, the upcoming event will not be made mandatory for any student, faculty, or staff. Whoever does not wish to attend may choose not to do so.
4. Public safety officers will be placed on various campus locations to avoid any violence or disorder in regard to the event.

As for any faculty and staff who may not agree with the College’s decision to host such an event, you are free to express your concerns to President Deveraux. As we have already told our students, we ask that you please not take any such speeches personally, as events like these are only meant to introduce diverse perspectives. If it is anyone’s wish to protest this event, we can assure you that the best way of doing so is to simply not attend.