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Submission: Liberty-minded students must voice their opinions

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The year is beginning and there is a war being waged. It is a war for relevance, war for prosperity and war for freedom. It is a war for electoral seats, but it is also a war of ideas. And UCLA is poised to be one of the greatest battlefronts.

For too long in academia, and in truth, at this university, the majority has accepted as gospel certain historical, economic and political opinions. In the name of tolerance, in the name of social justice and in the name of American ideals, entrenched and influential groups have clouded discourse and, in a way, silenced opposition. Instead of being bastions of free speech, fostering valuable research and intellectual debate, regardless of where it may lead, we have allowed this university to be dominated by one general voice and one agenda. We have fired professors for questioning climate change conclusions, we have allowed our administration to all but endorse controversial legislation, and we have allowed our student government officers to sacrifice the real problems of students for the more politically charged problems in their own agendas.

The voice that has often been censured as a result of this reality is the voice of limited government, free enterprise and liberty. Despite the smear narrative that seems to have colored the perceptions of some, this is a message enriched by great academic thinkers, including Hayek, Friedman, and Von Mises. Its ideas are supported by a robust body of philosophical and historical evidence. And it has been the greatest source of prosperity the world has ever known.

In history classes throughout the US, it is largely accepted as fact that free markets caused the Great Depression and the 2008 recession. On the grounds of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, the follies of Franklin D. Roosevelt's public works programs, "easy credit" Federal Reserve Bank policies, and government favoritism of the mortgage industry, I challenge that. It is generally taught that the Industrial Revolution was a perverse period of exploitation. On the grounds of accelerated production, unparalleled innovation and extreme reductions in child mortality, I challenge that. It is generally leveled that the minimum wage is a sound policy for helping the poorest among us. I challenge that. The administration, USAC and Governor Brown told us that Proposition 30 was the salvation for higher education. On the grounds of a mismanaged high-speed rail project, heightened student loan debt and the rapid rise in administrative positions within the UC, I challenge that.

So, here I would like to come to my point. If you are at all interested in liberty, in advancing freedom, or in championing individual action over that of the government, I implore you to come to any of a number of freedom-minded groups on campus, including Young Americans for Liberty, Bruin Republicans, and Bruin Libertarians. The liberal and statist atmosphere of academia and on college campuses in general is in part a result of Republicans, Libertarians and other like-minded individuals not speaking out or reaching out. We are outgunned and understaffed, and we need you. I secondly challenge you to state your opinion in discussions, to question what is generally accepted and to give legitimacy to great ideas.

Lastly, one more word of encouragement for those who are not outspoken about their liberty-minded beliefs. The cause of free markets and limited government, at first glance, seems like an issue draped in greed and missing the social justice flair that other causes seem to have. This could not be farther from the truth. In fact, the cause for liberty is perhaps the greatest humanitarian effort to ever be undertaken. Economic freedom has brought millions out of poverty. It has created more well-being in the last 200 years than in the past 10,000. It stands for more choices in education, the right to self-defense, less taxation, less barriers to success and less cronyism. Make no mistake, there is beauty and nobility in our cause.

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