

Thursday, May 03, 2018

Political Science student learns about free expression on campus

Jana Al-Jarrah, a **political science** major at Oakland University, has returned from participating in the **Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) West Coast Regional Conference** that was held at UCLA.

There, she represented Oakland University and learned about the many different student and faculty rights on college campuses. The event website called the conference "a crash course in the right to free expression."

Attendees learned about the history of free speech in higher education and the contemporary struggle against speech codes. Al-Jarrah also worked with other students to develop strategies for protecting freedom of expression on their home campuses.

"At the conference, I participated in healthy discussions about the principles of free speech and the boundaries for free speech under First Amendment law," Al-Jarrah said. "I learned new ways of listening to other people's point of view and how to promote a culture of understanding and openness on my own campus."

A keynote speaker at the conference was Ken White, a partner at Brown White & Osborn LLP in Los Angeles. White is a former federal prosecutor, and his practice includes both criminal defense and First Amendment litigation. He's a frequent writer and speaker on free speech, the intersection of the First Amendment and internet culture, and criminal justice. He also helps arrange for pro bono defense of bloggers and other online writers threatened with frivolous defamation suits.

Professor David Dulio, chair of Political Science at OU said, "Jana's eagerness to learn in the classroom and through field experience opportunities like the College Debate and this FIRE conference will only better position her to address the sensitive issues we all face in today's political landscape. I am glad she had the opportunity to expand her knowledge base and bring that information back to Oakland."

Al-Jarrah was invited to the FIRE conference as a result of a contact she made at the **College Debate event at Dominican University in 2016** who knew of her interest in the First Amendment. Her trip was funded in part by the FIRE conference and the Political Science department at OU.

About FIRE:

FIRE's mission is to defend and sustain the individual rights of students and faculty members at America's colleges and universities. These rights include freedom of speech, freedom of association, due process, legal equality, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of liberty. FIRE educates students, faculty, alumni, trustees, and the public about the threats to these rights on our campuses, and provides the means to preserve them.

FIRE was founded in 1999 by University of Pennsylvania professor Alan Charles Kors and Boston civil liberties attorney Harvey Silverglate at the overwhelming response to their 1998 book ***The Shadow University: The Betrayal Of Liberty On America's Campuses***.



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