

Vincent Munoz:

I think what we need to do is explain how our principles of free speech, free inquiry will help serve the cause of justice.

Betty Friendan:

The First Amendment, the constitutional freedom of speech and freedom of conscience that is the bulwark of our democracy.

Bettina Aptheker:

There was a passion in what was being said, affirming what people considered a sacred constitutional right, freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Michelle Deutchman:

From the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement, this is SpeechMatters, a podcast about expression, engagement, and democratic learning in higher education. I'm Michelle Deutchman, the Center's executive director and your host. For our annual back-to-school episode, we have the privilege of hearing from Dr. Michael V. Drake, the 21st president of the University of California. President Drake oversees UC's world-renowned university system of 10 campuses, five medical centers, three nationally affiliated labs, more than 280,000 students, and 230,000 faculty and staff. I'm excited to discuss a range of topics with President Drake, but first class notes, a look at what's making headlines.

The American Bar Association, the accreditation agency for American law schools, is considering requiring new free speech policies at law schools. This comes in the week of several free speech skirmishes at Yale and Stanford Law that made national headlines, including when Stanford students disrupted the speech of federal judge Kyle Duncan in March. We discussed this incident in episode four with Slate's senior editor, Dahlia Lithwick. If you missed it, take a listen. The new ABA rule would mandate "written policies that encourage and support the free expression of ideas". The proposal leaves room for law schools to determine what those policies would be on their own, but says they must have some provision forbidding disruptive activities.

Despite numerous reports showing that faith in the benefits of higher education is on the decline nationally, a new report shows that the benefits of obtaining a higher education degree go beyond a bump in salary. Key findings from education for What?, a recent report from the Lumina Foundation and GALLUP, shows that higher education is also associated with "better health status, better wellbeing, increased likelihood to do work that fits with natural talents and interests, and higher voter participation, volunteerism, and charitable giving". Researchers hope that by highlighting the numerous benefits of higher education, society can work towards changing the negative perception about higher education's value and attract more young students to colleges and universities.

The Center has a headline of its own this month. At the end of August, we dropped our latest round of fellows research on free expression, academic freedom, and advocacy. Our 2022-2023 class of fellows included students, professors, and senior administrators who explored issues related to speech, social media, and self-censorship and higher education. I encourage you to take some time to look through their findings. Many of the projects include practical resources that listeners can apply to their day-to-day work on campus. To see all of their projects, click the link in the podcast notes or visit freespeechcenter.universityofcalifornia.edu.

Now back to today's esteemed guest, Dr. Michael V. Drake, president of the greatest public university system in the world. I want to highlight that among the plethora of things he is responsible for,

President Drake is also the chair of the Center. I want to start off our conversation by thanking you for your support of the Center and the work that we do.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, thank you. The work is really important. Pleased to be here.

Michelle Deutchman:

Thanks. We agree on that. Before we jump into a discussion of speech and engagement at the UC and across the nation, I'm hoping that you could maybe reflect on an experience that you had when you were a student, whether that was as an undergrad or a grad or at medical school, where you encountered a speech challenge or needed to use your voice.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, thank you. It's a fascinating question. Thinking back now, that's now many, many years ago, two things occur to me. The first is that I was in college and medical school late-'60s, 1970s, kind of in the post-civil rights movement when the institutions that I was attending had only recently only at that moment really opened their doors to people of color, to African Americans. To be honest, every day felt like I was using speech to create a new future. Every day was a new day. It felt like we were moving forward into a void. I felt that everything that I did and said was viewed and evaluated by the enterprise as really sort of an aggressive form of speech that people like me belong here and we can do this work. I would've thought that in some way every day. Not to focus too much on that, but that's how I would've felt in those days.

I actually was remembering a specific actual circumstance where I was in medical school and another medical student and I, Mike, he was a good friend of mine, we had the same name, we were examining patients and having to present our patients and their findings to our attending physician. We were... There was actually a third student, so two of us plus a third student, all presenting our patients. The third student presented his patient to the attending professor and the patient was lethargic. Our colleague was describing why this was the case, and I won't quote it exactly, but the patient was Latino and the professor made these racist comments about Latinos, like, "Whoa." The conversation kind of went on and my friend Mike and I, I remember kind of looked at each other. None of us in the room were Latino, but we looked at each other and Mike was pretty outspoken and a lot of self-confidence.

He said, "Just really pretty surprised." The professor said, "Surprised at what?" Then Mike said, "That you'd make such a racist statement. I mean, that's really pretty surprising." The guy was a very powerful surgeon and he exploded. He went ballistic, screaming and shaking and pointing his finger. I remember the line he said to me, he pointed to me and he said... He kind of calmed a bit and I said, "Well, we were just saying that if the patient were here, he would've been offended by what you just said." I remember him pointing his finger at me and he said, "Offended? Offended? I'll tell you who's offended." He starts yelling and screaming at us. The two of us kind of were there standing up for what we believed was the importance of treating patients with respect and not being racist and we're getting this huge blowback.

We then went together to meet with the director of the course and kind of lodged an appropriate complaint, and it all kind of worked its way out. I mean, there's another part to the story later on, but it just was one of those times when it seemed like you kind of had to stand up for what was right. I'll say, if I may, in our sharing this with our professor, we were both calm and saying, "Well, we were just surprised by this and my goodness." And he's red in the face screaming and everything else. I think me and both my friend Mike helped both of us to have ourselves there to kind of give each other calm

support as we were carrying out this message of righteousness. The third student, who was not a person of color, who was there... Mike was also African American, I should say that. The two of us were African American. The guy who presented the patient was not. He didn't say a word the whole time. He just sat there not letting this wash over him, but it was an interesting circumstance where it seemed like you had to stand up for what was right. I haven't told that story in decades, but it was interesting.

Michelle Deutchman:

Thank you for telling the story for so many reasons. I think it's so important, especially for the listeners, to know that someone like you in your position still had to struggle with those kinds of things. I'm sure so many listeners know what the right thing to do was, but you and Mike did it, and that took a lot of courage, especially given the fact that this was a powerful surgeon and you had each other as allies. I do have to ask, was there any ramifications later on for what you wanted to do? Kind of were you able to sort of stay out of this professor's way? I want to know the end of the story before we go to the next question, if you don't mind.

President Michael V. Drake:

Yes. Let me say, I appreciate what you said. These things are frightening and you're vulnerable and worried and at risk. All those things were true. I'm going to tell you the truth about what happened and try not to be too weird about it. He was in fact very... Among surgeons, he was a powerful surgeon. He's a well-known, powerful person, and we were worried about what was going to happen, were we going to pass the class or what was going to happen. My... I'm going to sound nerdy. I'm going to sound nerdy. The next week, it was my time to present a patient. Each of us did it one week.

I, nerdy, I worked extra hard and went back to the library to the original literature and everything else and I did a really great job of the presentation the next week. I remember that I got a writeup from this guy at the end of the course, and I got a great grade. I got the highest grade. That was great. He said something like, this is many years ago, but it was something like, "This really was terrific. He's done a great job. He'll be a fine physician someday if he keeps performing at this level, which I doubt he will be able to do." It was like, "Yeah, great if you can keep this up, but I bet you can't." I remember his name to this day, and I've tried to keep a good standard since then, but it was [inaudible].

Michelle Deutchman:

I'm sure it was. I thought maybe you were going to go to a place where maybe he changed, but it sounds more like it's kind of like what my mom says, a leopard doesn't change their spots, but interesting. Just so you know, in terms of nerdiness I don't know if you have figured this out, this podcast is populated by nerdy guests and listened to by nerdy listeners so this is perfect. Actually, your story I think is a really nice segue to the next question I want to ask you about, which is obviously something you're familiar with, which is just the Center is constantly thinking about and trying to respond to the perceived tension between expression and robust speech and other institutional values like diversity and equity, inclusion. I'm curious, as someone who has spent your entire career, decades on college campuses, have you seen the focus on DEI sort of change and the tenor of the conversation change about whether they contrast or conflict with each other versus rather they complement each other? I guess I'm trying to say how has that conversation evolved over time from your vantage point?

President Michael V. Drake:

Let me say one more thing about my prior experience then go to that conversation evolution. Let me say that when we ran into this particular opponent who was very... He turned out to be a person who

believed the kind of things we heard him say, so that was really who he was. He was not a thoughtful, generous person. My friend, Mike Ward, and I both continued to work hard and did great in medical school and we did fine. He sort of faded in his importance and his influence as the surgeon there, so the world kind of moved past him and we were able to move in a part of the world that was going forward. It turned out to be... We were proud of having done what was right and we were pleased that we could do what was right and stand up for what was right and continue to progress forward, and he became irrelevant to us. That's what I remember about that.

I'd say about the conversation on diversity and inclusion from every day from... I mean, that story was 50 years ago. All of those days and that moment, there was that friction between diversity and inclusion on the one hand and the things that the enterprise viewed as being outstanding on the other. My impression always, the work that I saw, always told me that the two were modifiers of each other, with more inclusion and more diversity you had more excellence. In fact, they were necessary for... Certainly diversity and inclusion were necessary for excellence at the highest level, but you had to continue to push that forward. You had to continue to push that forward because the people like this surgeon and the others who were in positions of power, particularly back in the day, either didn't believe that or didn't know it or didn't want it to be true. There's always been that tension. Then lately, even, I mean, to this very day, the tension that we're seeing on things like even teaching the history of race in this country, that those things are politicized just lets us know the work has to continue. We have to continue to I think push through that, and that's always going to be part of our... That's an opportunity for us that remains.

Michelle Deutchman:

Yeah, there is so much work to do. I think part of it is just maintaining energy and hope, at least from my perspective, as you move forward because you read the news sometimes and it feels like you could go down sort of a hopeless path, but we need to move forward. Speaking of moving forward, I've asked you to kind of look a little bit at the past and now I kind of want to ask you to look in the other direction, which is to look ahead. I mean, with the presidential election moving into I was going to say higher gear, but maybe it's higher, higher gear, and pundits and candidates increasing their use of higher education as a political wedge issue, I'm wondering how you see UC continuing to advance its free speech legacy and advocate for academic freedom and institutional autonomy as we move forward.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, I think these things are extraordinarily important to higher education broadly. The University of California very proudly has a tradition of First Amendment scholarship as well as the legacy of really being a place where we practice free speech and listening to people and being inclusive in our ability to hear ideas from different perspectives. I think that's critical to us and who we are. I think it's critical as we move forward. I think that academic freedom is one of the most important things that we have to protect, and that's the ability for knowledge, secrets, to be able to use everything at their disposal to be able to gain knowledge and truth and try and clarify that and then share that broadly. I think it's really, really important.

I think it's critical to us, and we see in this time when there is so much rhetoric shifting back and forth and people either are playing fast and loose with the truth or in circumstances that we see stunningly actively promoting things that we know and they know are not true. It's stunning to me. I still believe we have to continue to focus on what's true, focus on sharing our perspectives, focus on being engaged in the dialogue and doing our very best to let that fiat lux, let that light of truth, be something that can guide our way forward.

Michelle Deutchman:

Absolutely. I love that. We're going to just dig a little bit deeper. California is lucky in so many ways and we have not faced the types of legislative interference that states, pardon me, like Texas and Florida and Mississippi and Tennessee, the list goes on, are struggling with. I'm wondering does UC have a responsibility to speak out or take action in the cases where it's occurring kind of outside of our blue bubble? What should our role as a university look like vis-à-vis what's happening in other places and to other higher educational institutions?

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, I guess as you were speaking I was thinking back to my story with my friend Mike from back in the day, and I think that truth is a really powerful weapon. We work actively with our faculty in a shared governance way that the university is guided forward, and being able to have that academic freedom, being able to focus on the truth, I think those things are critical for us. I think we need to speak the truth locally, regionally, nationally, wherever there are opportunities. You mentioned a variety of states and there are more where there is political influence, where there are political influences there squeezing down on what's allowed to be shared in the university and our higher education institutions. I think it's a real risk and it's something that we have to continually push back against and speak out on, and so I think it's an important part of our role.

Michelle Deutchman:

Yeah. I see a couple of different threads from your story, which is... What you were talking about is being vulnerable, taking risks, having courage, and I think those things can apply to individuals, like it did to you and Mike, but also you said institutionally and then much more globally. For what it's worth, I have two preteen kids and there's a lot of discussion about why people are allowed to lie in public office or in other places. It's hard to explain it, but I think that I like what you said, which is truth is a weapon, and so to continue to emphasize for them that that's the way that we're going to move forward.

I want to ask you a little bit more from kind of the medical practitioner and professor that you are. Medical professionals across the US have been grappling with growing restrictions and criticisms of how they communicate with their patients, and we saw this during the pandemic. You came on to our SpeechMatters conference to talk about that with the head of the Department of Health for California. We see it today with certain states limiting information that doctors can share with patients about reproductive care or gender-affirming care. In your role as a doctor, what is your take on this?

President Michael V. Drake:

In my medical career... I happened to be over at one of our hospitals earlier today, and I just was thinking about those days. I was always taught that you focused on the patient and your job was to use the knowledge that you have, the training that you have, the facilities that you had to be able to help that patient move forward in their lives, and you weren't there to judge them or any of the other things that might come from the outside. Your focus was on the patient and helping the patient to thrive. That's been a guiding principle for me from the very beginning, and so when I see that legislative or other kinds of influences would wish to limit what medical professionals can use in working with their patients to help their patients thrive, it strikes me as being entirely inappropriate.

Knowledge I believe is power, and knowledge is freedom. I think that patients... We need to respect our patients. They deserve the best of our judgment and to use our best knowledge to try to help them to move forward, and so things that would by policy limit what we can do or how we can help someone to

me I find... I'd use a big word about really bad. It's really a bad thing. We really want to try to create a place where the patient can seek our care, we can provide care to the best of our ability to help that person move forward in their lives and reach their full human potential in everything that we do.

Michelle Deutchman:

I'm imagining, obviously I can't speak from experience, that we're going back to those qualities of vulnerability and courage because I imagine whether you're a doctor or a librarian, if you're breaking the law or what is currently the law, that can be really frightening. I don't know if there's other tangible things we can say to those people except to try to take those courageous steps.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, and I'll say who's vulnerable really is the patient. I mean, the patient comes to us because they're vulnerable and they're in need. Our privilege is to be able to help that person. When there are outside forces that say, "Well, you could help this person to this extent or in these ways, but we want to limit that." That to me is unethical and just highly regrettable, and we need to do all that we can to make it that people can get the help. We have lots of people who need help and we can't get it to them. In the circumstances where we can get the help to people, we have to be allowed to be able to support them. We will continue to push as hard as we can on allowing the doctor-patient relationship to be protected, allowing truth and knowledge to be the underpinning of medical treatment. I think that's our daily duty.

Michelle Deutchman:

I'm tempted to go and divert into talking to you about the American healthcare system, but I'm not going to do that. I'm going to hold back that urge. I wanted just to follow up. You talked about your experience while you were getting your medical education. A lot of the very high profile events on speech that we hear about are at law schools or the social sciences or the humanities, but I have to imagine that these issues regularly surface in the context of medical education and practice. I'm curious what your experience with expression issues in the world of medicine has been, whether that's 10 years ago or five years ago or as recently as the visit to the hospital that you made, anything that you can share with us with things that you see coming up.

President Michael V. Drake:

Yeah. A lot of that voice... You mentioned the social sciences or law schools where there are people using speech in a public setting, big audience statements that have a lot of import. In the medical circumstance, the conversations tend to be smaller. They're very, very important, they deal with the health and safety of the people that we're dealing with, but the conversations tend to be smaller. One of the requirements of medicine to be able to be practiced at the highest level is that you create a safe platform for patients to be able to share what's true for them, that they can share their truth, share their circumstance, and you receive that information in a nonjudgmental way and use that information on the behalf of the patient. Then the system has to be able to handle that information fairly and with respect.

I would say that the time when I would see speech and opinions kind of clashing... One time when I would see that happening is really when people within the healthcare system are advocates for patients in one way or the other, and so there is a chance to say that you're going to advocate for this patient or for these patients in this particular circumstance. It's a very, very important part of the responsibility we have to be the best practitioners we can.

Michelle Deutchman:

It's interesting to use the word advocacy for patients, which of course is part of the duty. I often feel like I have to advocate on behalf of myself and so I guess it's both, but much like a lawyer who has to zealously advocate on behalf of their client, I guess that's a doctor's responsibility as well.

President Michael V. Drake:

Yeah. I would say that I appreciate that all of us from time to time have to be our own advocates, and particularly in the complex system that we have. In the ideal, the system is your advocate, you show up and the doctor and the healthcare providers are your advocates. That's their role, is to be your advocate in helping you to get what you need to create the healthiest life for yourself. Again, I was always trained to think that way, that my job was to help the patient move forward or when we have hospitals or we have clinics now, not so much individual patients, but our facilities, the concept is you can walk in and then the entire enterprise is geared toward helping you do better. That's the goal.

Michelle Deutchman:

Well, and like you said we're going to move forward and keep working and hopefully that goal will be a reality in more places. I want to shift gears a little and sort of move from kind of the expression part of the Center's mission to the civic engagement piece, which is also central to the Center's work. As I'm sure you know, in the past five years the Center has funded over 83 Valuing Open and Inclusive Conversation and Engagement projects, which we call VOICE. While voting is an essential element of democracy, we've really tried to emphasize how being civically engaged means more than just casting that ballot. I know how important these issues and programs are across UC, and I wondered if there were any that you're particularly proud of or want to highlight again, especially as we move into what feels like a constant election cycle.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, very much so. I mentioned my own schooling, and a lot of my schooling followed changes in voting patterns in the 1960s that then elected representatives and created opportunities for people like me to enter a broader array of higher education institutions and then other freedoms. That was one thing that was specific to my life, but I saw a variety of things change in the country as we moved from the Jim Crow world that I'd grown up in to one where at least by statute more freedoms were available to more people. I've always been very much... It's always been clear to me how important it was for people to be involved civically, how important it was to vote.

I'm really proud of a lot of efforts that we've done on our campuses. Our students have done a variety of voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives. It's happened over several elections, and it's a wonderful thing to see that the rates of voting on our campuses and in our campus communities are higher than in many other parts of the community. I think that's great. We just opened a new building and center in Sacramento that's called the UC Student and Policy Center. It's in Sacramento, it's about 300 yards from the State Capitol, and it's a place for fellowships and internships, that UC students will come and have fellowships and internships there to be engaged with elected officials and their staff and to talk about how important it's for us to be connected to our partners in elective office. I think that's very, very important.

I love seeing our students involved at that level, and that's great when we go to visit our government staff in Sacramento, the State Capitol, or when we're in Washington visiting people on the Hill, watching our students in their roles as staffers and other people and elected officials really helping to shape the

future of the government. So voting, really, really important, civic engagement, really important, being involved with the actual wheels and gears of government, really important. We try to do the best we can with that.

Michelle Deutchman:

I will share that I did... I'm going to date myself, but in the summer of 1995 I spent the summer through UCDC working for the Anti-Defamation League, and then when I graduated from law school I went back to work there because I had interned there when I was a college sophomore. I spent 15 years of my career there. These programs and internships and opportunities really, really do matter. I just wanted to emphasize that.

I have the privilege of visiting UC campuses and talking with students and staff and faculty about the First Amendment and expression, and especially in light of the recent Supreme Court case about 303 Creative... For everyone who needs a quick review, that was the graphic designer not wanting to design websites for same-sex weddings. I'm asked more and more frequently about the value of the First Amendment and whether its only value is just to be weaponized for partisan purposes. I'm wondering what you would say if you were asked this question, which is people want to know why should they still have hope in the First Amendment, especially when it feels like it's being used as a defense, I mean certainly in the recent indictments of the former president and in 303 Creative to potentially deny services to same-sex couples. What do you, and I realize this is a hard question and I think about this every day, but what might you say to students, staff or faculty who are wondering if it's worthwhile anymore?

President Michael V. Drake:

I think it served us well for nearly 250 years. We're rolling up on that. It's simple language as one reads through it. It has a simple, straightforward purpose, and it says that we have a marketplace of ideas and we ought to allow people to share those ideas because the body politic, of all of us, can evaluate them fairly and appropriately and make our best informed decisions if we can do that. I always felt that a really important part of what it meant to be a university was to be a place for those ideas and to really protect the sanctity of that place. We weren't a referee, we weren't to make judgment to whatever, our job was to protect the place where people could share those ideas. I think that we've seen the last several years different ways that the First Amendment has been...

I think its meaning has been perverted and it's been almost weaponized to be able to stifle speech in some cases or in the case that you've seen recently, the preposterous concept that you can lie to people and mislead them and they can then break the law, but it doesn't count because you said it and therefore it's protected. It's a nonsensical argument, and I think that it will fail. We have ups and downs, we have good and bad, we have things that work and things that don't work, and sometimes we're on the downs and we have to push through. We just have to push through. That thing that lasted and it was true for centuries will still be true in the end, and we just have to make sure not to be swayed in our devotion to seeking the truth and being a platform for people to share ideas.

Michelle Deutchman:

Right. We have to believe, and I do, that the pendulum will swing back from where it is. This is my favorite question to get to ask you because I know that playing and listening to music is one of your greatest passions, and I'm not going to pass up an opportunity to get song recs from you. Letting our listeners know, the last time we were lucky enough to get to talk to President Drake he shared three songs that he felt like represented today's civil rights movement. Today I want to ask for some songs

that you feel speak to what the Center focuses on, which is expression, engagement, and democratic learning. What we'll do is we'll then pull those songs and make a short playlist that people can listen to after they listen to our conversation. So what are you thinking?

President Michael V. Drake:

A couple I would think of. One that I think of is... There's a song by Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes called Wake Up Everybody. I'd play that three or four times. That would be several choices in this list. That's a great song to listen to in this world because it actually talks about what I think it means to be woke in an of course way. It means to pay attention, it means to keep your eyes open, it means to listen, it means to be thoughtful. It's not a bad thing. It means wake up, everybody. Pay attention. Open your eyes. So Wake Up Everybody by Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes. Teddy Pendergrass is the singer before he wanted to have a great solo career, but Wake Up Everybody as one.

I taught a course with our colleague Dean Chemerinsky for years, and we focused on songs that we thought encapsulated the civil rights period and that awakening in our society. One that we always liked from that playlist was one song called A Change Is Gonna Come by Sam Cooke. There, particularly as you listen to that, the first line is, "I was born by the river in a little tent." If you listen to the way he sings the word born, it's almost like he encapsulates the majesty and the pain of childbirth in the way the word comes out of him. "I was born." It's really... The word is kind of born, and coming to something that's musical at the end, but it has a pain and an effort to it. I always liked that, and it was a very hopeful song at the end of the day. It means you start within all this pain and effort and you press through and things can happen that are terrific. Then I hate to... I mean, this is not exactly... It's not modern, and it's not [inaudible].

Michelle Deutchman:

No one said it had to be modern. It's okay.

President Michael V. Drake:

Yes. But today, again I was... I mentioned I was in San Francisco earlier today, and I was in a store and they were playing Kind of Blue, a couple of songs from the record Kind of Blue by Miles Davis from about 1956 I think it is. I was just listening to it and saying, "My goodness gracious, all these years later, what a perfect expression of the kind of art emerging from that time and looking forward to the bright awakening of..." Used the word awakening a couple of times in this, but that was an era when jazz was kind of coming together and was sort of hopeful and people were creating kind of a new music that was hopeful, particularly for the African American community, to have kind of an identity and to look forward to things that could come together. I've always... It's Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, a great sextet. I heard that. That was just on in a store that I was in earlier today, and I thought, "Oh, that's Kind of Blue." It's a terrific record.

Michelle Deutchman:

Well, so now you know what I'm going to be listening to later this afternoon, but thank you for that. I really appreciate it. I think my last question for you as we sort of run to the end of our time is really just about... I mean, I know Berkeley of course, and go Bears, and Merced have started, but still the beginning of the school year is a couple of weeks out, and just maybe how or what faculty and students and staff can be thinking about in the back of their minds about expression as they return back to campuses. I don't know if you have any words of wisdom or thoughts that you want to share.

President Michael V. Drake:

Yeah, I don't know about wisdom. I do have thoughts. I'd say that we are really privileged to have these institutions in our midst and to be able to be associated with them and engage with them. The students who come to us come with such hope and with such promise for the future, and we have the great opportunity to work with them on creating a pathway toward that future. It's a two-way street. We learn from them as we try to share things that we've learned with them, and every year we have this great renewal at this time when we're all coming back together with great energy and then creating that school year unlike any ones before because the circumstances and the knowledge and the things we're sharing are new as they're being created. We have the chance to do it all again and have a great school year.

We go forward in our cycle in the spring. We have this great celebration when people are graduated and put out into the world. We take a breath and then we start all over. We're thinking now about bringing in this new group of students. We have the largest and most diverse class of students that we've ever admitted. We're very, very excited about that. We'll work to help them to thrive and excel like never before and make sure that we continue to stay focused enough to appreciate the privilege that it is for us to be able to be involved with them in that journey.

Michelle Deutchman:

I'm so moved by that, and I really like that perspective of that every beginning of the school year is totally unique, that in some ways it is a repeat but really it's different because of who is coming together and the time. I'm going to take that with me. This has been a really delightful and insightful conversation, and I'm really appreciative of your taking time away from running the university to talk with me and talk with our listeners. I just appreciate your kicking off this unique school year, this episode, and it's just been a pleasure.

President Michael V. Drake:

Well, thanks very much. Happy to do it. You can send me a text and let me know what you think about the songs, and we will talk soon.

Michelle Deutchman:

Okay. I'm going to look forward to that.

President Michael V. Drake:

Okay. Take care.

Michelle Deutchman:

Thank you so much to President Drake for joining us this month. Please check out the episode notes for links to his song suggestions. Next month we'll be talking about the indictments of former President Donald Trump and his use of free speech as a defense in the ongoing cases against him. In the meantime, please check out our fellows research and register for the next Fellows in the Field workshop on social media and speech, which is taking place on October 24th. Talk to you next time.