WARNING: CONTENTS MAY OFFEND

OVERALL EDITOR: BOUDREAUX DULSKE

As Americans, we pride ourselves on the ability to speak our minds with the security of our First Amendment rights. However, as millennials, we are always forced to be extremely conscious of the words we use to express those opinions, due to our generation's emphasis on political correctness. This consciousness has permeated the modern educational environment. The Dean of Students at the University of Chicago recently released a letter to warn incoming students of the fact that the school does "not condone the creation of intellectual 'safe spaces' where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own." The Chicago letter has since sparked massive controversy across the nation, raising the question of whether or not political correctness in the form of safe spaces and trigger warnings are appropriate for the modern college campus.

In an Op-Ed article for *The New York Times*, Judith Shulevitz writes about Brown University where a debate on rape and rape culture was recently held. Due to backlash from students regarding their fear of having to listen to ideas conflicting with their own regarding the subject, the institution allowed for a competing speech to be held regarding the history of rape on college campus. On top of that, a student was granted the opportunity to create a safe space, which was a room for students to retreat to when the debate began to make them feel uncomfortable. The room was filled with "cookies, coloring books, bubbles, Play-Doh, calming music, pillows, blankets and a video of frolicking puppies, as well as students and staff members trained to deal with trauma," as Shulevitz described. Essentially, Brown provided a way for these students to run away from an uncomfortable, yet extremely important, discussion just because they would have to hear what the other side had to say about the topic of rape.

"Safe spaces, while nice in theory, when put into practice are not conducive to learning, as they prohibit open dialogue," Senior Jake Johnston said. "The purpose of schooling is to challenge the mind and I feel that safe spaces do just the opposite. They allow the student to avoid hard issues that should be confronted, thereby enabling a student to never get out of his/her comfort zone."

This fear of limiting open dialogue within academic environments has been echoed by many in the SA community and beyond. Uncomfortable discussions are a necessity for intellectual growth. Without grappling with the tough topics at hand, one cannot find or advocate for their opinion regarding them. Though conversations stimulate our minds and allow us to struggle in an ultimately productive fashion, a lot of people in the world today steer clear of the conversations that make them uncomfortable and surround themselves only with the people who have similar opinions.

"[Safe spaces] artificially insulate students from ideas, from beliefs, from theories that they do not immediately agree or that cause some discomfort, and they're not capable of dealing with or speaking about in a rational, thoughtful way," Director of College Counseling Collin Dunnigan said.

But let's be realistic. The world beyond education isn't like St. Andrew's, and it's not all that similar to most, modern college campuses. The real world is harsh. It's brutal, and that's something that many people are not prepared for after being encapsulated in bubbles created by schools for the entirety of their academic careers.

"When we create safe spaces for learning, that's a good thing for the learning to occur in safe spaces, but at the same time it doesn't necessarily give students the real world picture for what it's going to be like after high school and after college," Dean of Students Dan Roach said.

This "self-infantilization," as it is described by Shulevitz, is something that keeps people in the dark as to what the real world is like, and this sentiment can be used to talk about the negatives of not only safe spaces but also of trigger warnings. While it's important for students to be respectful of other people's traumas, once one gets out of school, no warning will ever precede an offensive remark anymore. Out of the world of education, some of the worst, most offensive remarks will be simply thrown into the air.

"You're not going to be talking to someone, and then they'll say 'this is about to happen," Junior Gracie LaRue said. "You're just going to have to deal with it, so if it were my decision, I wouldn't use trigger warnings. If you want a safe space, then you're just going to have to be alone. There's no real safe space."

But who's to say that tough discussions don't ever end in real offense being taken by someone involved? The world has become increasingly polarized, meaning that people are no longer really moderates, and that everyone is either very far to the right or very far to the left. The passion that millennials feel regarding controversial topics of the time often, and easily, becomes misplaced, leading to a total disrespect for other people's emotions.

"Essential to the learning process is the ability to engage in free and open discussion and debate on a variety of topics, and I think that there is certainly a need for choosing our words wisely and not speaking in terms that may be callous or uncaring of the feelings of others," Roach said. "Let's say you had two sides of a political discussion. Instead of discussing the issues, they begin to engage in personal attacks or start talking about personalities and then the whole endeavor becomes counterproductive."

So, do whatever you want, but I will not be indulging myself in a false sense of reality. Please, engage in tough discussion with me. Cause me discomfort. Allow me to grow. But don't be disrespectful of what I, or anyone else for that matter, have had to endure. Present me with facts, not attacks, logic, not criticism, and calm discussion, not heated argument. Right now, and for the four years of college looming ahead of me, I will be happily engaging in conversation that makes me question what I think I know to be true, so that I can either become more steadfast in my beliefs while finding ways to support those beliefs or finding newer, greater truths that I had never heard of before.

IN A SURVEY SENT TO SA STUDENTS ABOUT SAFE SPACES...

20% OF RESPONDENTS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A SAFE SPACE WAS.

33% THOUGHT SAFE SPACES NEGATIVELY IMPACTED THE OVERALL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

34% WOULD WANT TO GO TO A COLLEGE MORE IF IT HAD A REPUTATION AS A SAFE SPACE THAN IF IT DID NOT.

40% DON'T SEE A COLLEGE'S REPUTATION AS A SAFE SPACE AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE COLLEGE DECISION

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING:

THE NEW YORK TIMES:
JUDITH SHEVULTZ

> THE NOTION THAT TICKLISH CONVERSATIONS MUST BE SCRUBBED CLEAN OF CONTROVERSY HAS A WAY OF LEAKING OUT AND SPREADING. ONCE YOU DESIGNATE SOME SPACES AS SAFE, YOU IMPLY THAT THE REST ARE UNSAFE. IT FOLLOWS THAT THEY SHOULD BE MADE SAFER.

THE DAILY BANTER:
CHEZ PAZIENZA

> YOU HAVE TO WONDER HOW THESE KIDS ARE POSSIBLY GOING TO COPE WITH THE REAL WORLD, WHICH WON'T WORRY ONE BIT ABOUT THEIR FRAGILE SENSIBILITIES, REAL OR PERCEIVED TRAUMAS, AND NEED TO BE CODDLED AT ALL TIMES.