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*In March 2019 President Trump issued an executive order requiring colleges to support free speech or risk losing their federal research funds. Since 2015, at least 17 states have passed legislation they say is intended to protect everyone's free speech rights on college campuses with eight states doing so in 2019 alone.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Some states passed legislation to overturn the “free speech zones” that limit students’ freedom to protest anywhere on campus. Other states are passing laws to prevent students from shouting down or disinviting speakers whom they deem offensive or racist or whose viewpoints they don’t share.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Free speech advocates were enraged when Middlebury College students in 2017 drowned out a planned talk by the author Charles Murray, whose writings many consider racist. The students' chants prevented Murray from speaking.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Some protesters surrounded and jumped on his car after he was ushered out of the lecture hall. Conservative lawmakers, academics and other observers pointed to that incident and several similar shout-downs of other controversial speakers at various campuses as proof that college administrators needed to beef up their free expression policies.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Others have argued that protesting racist speakers, for example, can also be a form of speech, or "counter-speech," that should be guarded. Law professor Thomas Healy writes: Speech is a powerful weapon that can cause grave harms, and the First Amendment does not entirely prohibit the government from suppressing speech to prevent those harms.*

*SOURCE: June 18, 2017; The Atlantic*

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*Healey states further: Counter-speech can take many forms. It can be an assertion of fact designed to rebut a speaker's claim. It can be an expression of opinion that the speaker's view is misguided, ignorant, offensive, or insulting. It can even be an accusation that the speaker is racist or sexist, or that the speaker's expression constitutes an act of harassment, discrimination, or aggression.*

*SOURCE: June 18, 2017; The Atlantic*

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*In other words, Healey continued, much of the social pushback that critics complain about on campus and in public life—indeed, the entire phenomenon of political correctness—can plausibly be described as counter-speech. And because counter-speech is one of the mechanisms Americans rely on as an alternative to government censorship, such pushback is not only a legitimate part of our free speech system; it is indispensable.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 The Atlantic*

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*College faculty are also making headlines in matters relating to free speech rights. In November 2019, a top Indiana University official announced the school's condemnation of a professor, Eric Rasmusen, who tweeted sexist and racist ideas but stated that the University would not fire him, citing his free speech rights.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Rasmussen “has, for many years, used his private social media accounts to disseminate his racist, sexist and homophobic views,” Robel [University Provost] wrote in a statement. “When I label his views in this way, let me note that the labels are not a close call, nor do his posts require careful parsing to reach these conclusions.”*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*At the same time, “We cannot, nor would we, fire Professor Rasmussen for his posts as a private citizen, as vile and stupid as they are, because the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution forbids us to do so,” Robel said. That’s “not a close call,” either. Still, Robel said that no student will have to take a course with Rasmussen, as it’s “reasonable” to worry that women and sexual and racial minorities would not get a “fair shake” in his classes.*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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*Rasmusen, who has tenure, has been at Indiana since 1992. The First Amendment “is strong medicine, and works both ways,” Robel said. “We are free to avoid [Rasmusen’s] classes, and demand that the university ensure that he does not, or has not, acted on those views in ways that violate either the federal and state civil rights laws or IU’s nondiscrimination policies.”*

*SOURCE: September 16, 2019 Inside Higher Education*

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