

Panel Reacts to Civility on Weber State University Campus

September 23, 2017 by [Stefany Marquez](#)

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An open-panel discussion called The Limits of Civility gathered local politicians and community members and presented at the Pleasant Valley Library Branch on Sept. 21. Of the various topics that were discussed, panelists discussed in particular what role or roles colleges and universities play within our community to deal with unpopular speech. Oscar Mata, Executive Director of the Weber County Democratic Party, said freedom of speech is a right that is sacred, and we must preserve it even if we do not agree what is being said. Mata also brought up a discussion about the white supremacist posters found on Weber State University Ogden Campus on the Sunday before the most recent semester's beginning. The posters were taken down right away.

According to the panel, which was chosen to represent a discussion of modern politics, their idea of civility was not one that can be found in a dictionary. They stated it is about mutual respect and coming together to debate issues for the good of all.

The panel agreed civility starts in the home.

Jan Zogmaister, president and CEO of National Battery Sales in West Haven, stated, "There have been riddles of civility since the beginning of time. Do unto others as you have done unto you. It goes way back; all of the civilizations have had some rules of civility."

She later went on to explain she believes it is important to teach civility in the home.

"As we teach kindness, manners, trust, it is taught through our example to our own children and to those who may spend time in your home," Zogmaister said.

It is important for speech to start in the home, but it also starts with other people individually. Barry Gomberg, executive director of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity at Weber State University, added to Zogmaister's statement and said, "I would argue that educational institutions, as well as families and churches and other organizations, encourage and teach civility and discourage a lack of civility. It is when we attempt to use the government to enforce those standards that we run the risk of limiting the marketplace with ideas."

At the end of the night, Mata gave his final thoughts on civility after the panel discussion.

He said "I think the golden rule is something that needs to be applied, treat others the way that you want to be treated. I think you can have discussions, like what you saw on the panel with different views. As long as the discussions are not going personal and they are constructive, I think any issue can be discussed with civility."

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