



Spencer Fane Team Promotes Free Speech on College Campuses at OU Board of Regents Meeting

Spencer Fane attorneys [Andy Lester](#) and [Mariana Pitts](#) were invited to speak at the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents' June 20 meeting. The team kicked off the Board's agenda with their 45-minute presentation, Expressive Freedom and Contemporary Campus Culture.

Andy discussed the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and its application to public institutions of higher education. "The rubber meets the road not as to views that are popular, but as to those that are not. And this is what has made American higher education the best in the world," he said. "We do not indoctrinate. We do not merely pass on knowledge. We do not simply certify. Instead, we foster critical thinking and thereby pass on the key to lifelong learning and a better, more civil society."

Mariana outlined the work of the Oklahoma Free Speech Committee, an adjunct of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, for which Andy serves as Chair while Mariana chairs its Training Task Force. She explained the Committee's aim "to complement the work of each of the State's 25 public institutions of higher education in safeguarding expressive freedom on campus." Mariana also described the Committee's inaugural training program, which has successfully facilitated "over 300 college and university leaders ... learn about best free speech practices."

At Spencer Fane, Andy has a civil litigation and appellate practice in both state and federal courts. His fields of emphasis include complex business, civil rights, commercial, constitutional, and state and local government law. Mariana likewise assists clients in a variety of complex litigation matters. She uses the full range of dispute resolution methods to carefully navigate private settlements and, when necessary, employs proactive litigation to obtain the most favorable outcomes for

clients and associated parties.