

"For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it." —*Thomas Jefferson*

As the Great Books College of Chicago, Shimer is devoted to advancing understanding of the thinkers and ideas that have shaped Western civilization. This defining mission simultaneously depends on and, in turn, fosters intellectual as well as political freedom. That is to say, the intellectual freedom enjoyed by the Academy requires that it be situated in a free political order. And political freedom depends not only for its preservation but also for its ennoblement on free inquiry in our institutions of higher learning.

During the spring of 2008, Dr. William Ayers, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, came to Shimer to give a talk on education as part of Shimer's evening lecture series. He was told that education was to be the only subject of his talk, and he complied with that request. Ayers has no formal association with Shimer College and had never visited Shimer before that event.

Hearing and scrutinizing the competing views of others on important topics such as education is essential to Shimer's core mission. Shimer defends and depends on freedom of speech as essential to the Socratic questioning that is the life-blood of genuine liberal education.

For this very reason, Shimer categorically condemns any and all acts of violence committed against a nation ruled by law. Such acts are anathema to the reasoned discourse that is, and always will be, Shimer's *raison d'etre*.