'Fahrenheit UVSC': It's hot
Moore's appearance still weeks away, but a campus forum adds yet more sizzle

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OREM - They are 15 minutes away, but worlds apart.

Clearly, UVSC is no BYU - as 250 demonstrative students showed Tuesday.

During a panel discussion at the Orem college, that contrast was painted amid a chorus of support for the
student government's decision to schedule liberal filmmaker Michael Moore for an Oct. 20 speech.

That invitation, which threatens millions in school donations and continues to fuel a firestorm of controversy,
was lauded anew Tuesday by Utah Valley State College President William Sederburg.

"The student government has a right to invite a national figure," he said, "even if it is disconcerting."

Panelist Pierre Lamarche, a UVSC professor, said he knows the student body can ably evaluate and, if so
inclined, disagree with Moore's message.

"That's what college is," he told the throng.

Shoehorned into an auditorium, while police kept a keen eye out, many in the standing-room crowd agreed.

"Maybe it's a good thing that Michael Moore is waking us up from the coma we've been in," one student said.

Another chastised Moore detractors for what he said is tantamount to chasing somebody out of town for their
views. "It's important that we as a state remember that this state was founded by people that were chased out of
town," he said, referring to the Mormon exodus from Illinois.

But not everyone is willing to welcome Moore.

Kay Anderson, father of a UVSC student who lives next to Sederburg, called his appearance an insult to the
community.

"I should not have to send my children to a private university to get a conservative education when I live in a
conservative community and have a state college in my back yard that is paid for by conservative taxpayers and
donors," he said. "A balanced education does not require we teach our children to be so open-minded that their
brains fall out."

Anderson held up a cashier's check for $25,000 to help restoke student-body coffers if student President Jim
Bassi and Vice President Joe Vogel rescind the Moore invitation.

But Anderson's offer drew hisses and boos from the capacity crowd. Even a petition to recall the two student
leaders reportedly has stalled.

Linda Shelton, a 35-year Orem resident with two kids at UVSC, argued that, while the community's core
values are important, "I also want my children to be able to learn to think."

Student leaders caught flak earlier this month for offering Moore $40,000 in student fee money to speak.
Administrators jumped into the fray and helped lure talk show host Sean Hannity as a conservative
counterbalance. Hannity waived his $100,000 speaking fee and settled for a travel reimbursement. Up to
$10,000 of his expenses will be covered by Republican gubernatorial candidate Jon Huntsman Jr., who is
paying the Fox News commentator in campaign cash.

Students, along with Lamarche, said they thought balancing Moore was unnecessary in light of the school's
long line of conservative guest speakers. "To say we need a correction to the correction just seems silly,"
Lamarche said.

Despite Hannity's scheduled visit, UVSC donors continue to slam shut their checkbooks, according to Tom
Heal, chairman of the UVSC Foundation.
"It could be in the millions," he warned of the fund-raising shortage due to the Moore episode. "We have donors who have their names on the sides of buildings there that have expressed some real concern. This kills the warm and fuzzies they have about UVSC."

On Tuesday, students wondered if legislators also would withhold money.
"I'm going to duck that question," Sederburg said. "There is no doubt, however, it has not helped our fund raising."

Moments earlier, when the lights inexplicably dimmed for a few seconds, Sederburg joked, "They cut our budget already," drawing hearty laughs.

Tuesday's forum was emotional but largely respectful.
Dean of Students Bob Rasmussen said that type of civil debate beats the venomous assaults he has received from hundreds of callers - 100 percent of whom, he added, have not seen Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11." A free screening of the Bush-bashing film is set for Oct. 14 on campus for interested students.

Vogel noted some people have likened Moore to Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein. "He's not a torturous dictator."

To help keep the peace at Moore's and Hannity's appearances, Sederburg said a committee is studying formats to help prevent the speakers from being shouted down. Protest zones also will be set up outside.

But don't expect Betty Hunt to be packing a placard.
"I disagree with Moore's ideas, but I'm glad he's coming," said the mother of three children at UVSC, including one who just returned from a military stint in Iraq. "Try not to go in there with all these preconceived ideas. Go in there with an open mind."

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