

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY™

Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication

**DRAFT FOR APPROVAL**

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## **Supreme Court Winner Encourages Minorities to Fight for their First Amendment Rights**

Leader of The Slants is chosen as keynote speaker for First Amendment Days

**AMES, Iowa** – First Amendment rights do not disappear based on the color of a person’s skin, the language they speak or where they’re from. That’s what Simon Tam, leader of the band The Slants, is going to be speaking about during his keynote speech at the 17<sup>th</sup>-annual First Amendment Days April 9, 2019.

“The First Amendment provides protection for everyone here in the United States; nevertheless, some people of color feel as if they cannot use their rights the same way as others in fear of retribution from law enforcement, jobs or people in higher positions,” said Kenyatta Shamburger, director of Multicultural Student Affairs.

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Tam is a social justice activist and musician. He won a lawsuit against the Patent and Trademark Office for rejecting the registration of his band’s name, which the United States considered to be a disparaging name. With the landmark win, Tam has become a staunch First Amendment rights leader. The Hugh M. Hefner Foundation also honored him with the First Amendment Award in 2018.

“We chose Simon Tam as the keynote speaker because our theme this year is art and expression. We wanted to especially focus on how music can also be an art form. Music is a part of the First Amendment, yet it isn’t normally thought of. Having Tam come and talk about his case provides us a great opportunity to do

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that. His case had a big impact on and set another precedent for First Amendment rights,” said Audrey Ward, First Amendment Days communication manager.

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First Amendment Days is the longest-running continual First Amendment celebration at any university in the United States. Students, faculty and staff will be able to receive free t-shirts, food and entrance to all events during the five-day (April 8-12) celebration.

Tam will deliver his speech on the first day of First Amendment Days, April 9 at 8:15 p.m. in the Great Hall of Memorial Union. Some other First Amendment Days events include:

- Depth and Dialogue sessions where students, faculty and staff can share their stories about their experience with the First Amendment
- Democalypse March, an interactive experience of society without the First Amendment
- Speed mentoring with Iowa State Daily
- Feast on the First, where students, faculty and staff can get freebies and participate in First Amendment Days activities
- Street art demonstration
- First Amendment workshop for campus and community advocates

To learn more information about Simon Tam and his band The Slants, visit The Slant’s website at [www.theslants.com](http://www.theslants.com). Learn more about First Amendment Days and find the 2019 event schedule at [www.greenlee.iastate.edu/experience/first-amendment-days](http://www.greenlee.iastate.edu/experience/first-amendment-days).

### **Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication**

The Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University is the oldest journalism program in the state and one of the oldest in the country. The school celebrated 100 years of journalism education in 2005. The school prepares

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leaders in advertising, journalism and mass communication and public relations.

### **First Amendment Days**

First Amendment Days was created by the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication in 2003. The school received a \$15,000 grant to create a program to educate and encourage students to learn about their First Amendment rights, which include freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition.

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