



Sabrina Conza <sabrina.conza@thefire.org>

University of Dayton article

Cilla Shindell <pshindell1@udayton.edu>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 7:44 PM

To: sabrina.conza@thefire.org

Cc: Tom Weckesser <tweckesser2@udayton.edu>

Feb. 10, 2022

Dear Ms. Conza,

The University of Dayton received your letter earlier today, and we were surprised to see an article posted shortly thereafter that did not include a statement or response from the University. The University strongly supports and protects faculty academic freedom, and we are concerned that the article contained inaccuracies and omitted important information. We ask that you incorporate the facts in the statement below into your article as soon as possible to accurately reflect the University's position. Please attribute any statement to the University or University officials.

Out of respect for our Catholic mission and identity, and for the University's sponsorship by the Society of Mary, the University expects advance consultation and thoughtful consideration about high-profile external speakers before they are invited, which did not occur in this case. As an abortion provider, Dr. Mofokeng's presence would have stood in sharp conflict with the University's Catholic, Marianist mission and the right to life, a core tenet of Catholic social teaching. The invitation was withdrawn because of her work as an abortion provider.

Our expected practice – where consultation occurs prior to a speaker being invited for large-scale, highly visible, widely promoted public events – allows concerns bearing on Catholic mission and identity to be addressed collaboratively within the University.

As a Catholic, Marianist university, we welcome serious meaningful dialogue on critical issues of the day, including reproductive issues and the right to life, which have been the topics of previous campus dialogues. The University fully respects the content of academic curricula and research as approved by faculty and welcomes serious, informed, critical academic engagement with ethical or public policy positions that could be in tension with Catholic teaching.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,
Cilla Shindell

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