



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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January 24, 2005

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Dean of Students and Assistant Vice Chancellor
for Student Life and Academic Services
Office of the Dean of Students
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

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URGENT

Sent by e-mail, U.S. Mail, and Facsimile (225-578-9441)

Dear Dean Price:

Thank you for your prompt effort to provide further clarification about LSU's student organization policies in response to our December 1, 2004, letter. We believe that this has been a constructive dialogue and we recognize the distinctions between your policy and the policies that have been litigated at other schools. We are pleased that you agree that the Muslim Student Association (MSA) should be permitted to define its own mission and to select members and leaders who will advance that mission. We now ask that you assist the MSA in exercising its freedom of association by officially recognizing the MSA and providing it with the same rights, privileges, and benefits as other recognized student organizations.

Your December 7, 2004, letter asserts that, under the current student organization requirements, the university does not infringe upon the MSA's legal and moral right to be a recognized student organization. In particular, you state that the "MSA can freely exercise their [*sic*] beliefs within the context of the University's existing policy" and that LSU addresses its students' rights to unite with individuals who share a common cause and purpose through the following policy statement:

Any individual who subscribes to the purpose and basic policies of the organization may become a member of this organization, subject only to compliance with the provisions of the constitution.

You further state that LSU's "policy clearly supports any organization's right to choose members in full support of 'the expressive purpose of the group.'" If this is true, we have no doubt that LSU will immediately grant the MSA recognition and allow it to promptly resume its regular activities on campus.

We have attached the MSA's current constitution, which is expressed in the manner that the MSA believes to be consistent with the free exercise of its beliefs and purpose. We ask that you grant the MSA official student organization recognition and approve its constitution as it currently stands.

The MSA is eager to resolve this issue. However, if LSU chooses not to recognize the MSA with its current constitution, we have no choice but to conclude that the university's interpretation of its policies is at odds with the assurances in its most recent letter and with the requirements of the U.S. Constitution. If the MSA remains derecognized, it is fully committed to defending its constitutional rights.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D French".

David French
President

cc:

William L. Jenkins, Interim Chancellor, Louisiana State University

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F. Neil Mathews, Vice Chancellor, Louisiana State University

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Katrice Albert, Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Louisiana State University

Mohammad Inamullah, General Secretary, Muslim Students Association at Louisiana State University