



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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April 17, 2007

President Robert L. Carothers
Green Hall
35 Campus Avenue
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881-1303

URGENT

Sent via U.S. Mail and Facsimile (401-874-7149)

Dear President Carothers:

We write for a second time with great disappointment and deepened resolve regarding the actions taken by the Student Organizations Advisory and Review Committee (SOARC) of the Student Senate against the College Republicans student organization. FIRE appreciates your April 6 memo directing the Senate to abandon its demand that the College Republicans publicly apologize for advertising the satirical WHAM scholarship.

However, as you may now know, last night SOARC chose to defy both your directive and the constitutional prohibition on compelling speech by unanimously voting to derecognize the College Republicans.

FIRE is most disappointed by this decision. A governing body at a public institution cannot and must not so blatantly flout the constitutional rights of the students over whom it presides. Furthermore, a president of a public institution cannot and must not allow these actions to stand. FIRE calls upon you to immediately reverse the decision to derecognize the College Republicans. By fulfilling this responsibility as a public official, you can teach the Senate leadership that they must respect the rights of URI students and help to instill in them an understanding of the full repercussions for repeatedly and recklessly defying the Constitution.

As always, FIRE is prepared to use the full extent of its resources to see this matter through to a just and moral conclusion.

Sincerely,

Greg Lukianoff
President

cc:

Fran Cohen, Dean of Students, URI

M. Beverly Swan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, URI

Thomas R. Dougan, Vice President for Student Affairs, URI

Bruce Hamilton, Assistant Director for Student Affairs, URI

Michael Ryan, Vice Chair, Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education

James DiPrete, Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education

Frank Caprio, Chair, Rhode Board of Governors for Higher Education

Neil Leston, President, URI Student Senate

Amanda LaRocca, Chair, SOARC, URI Student Senate

Ryan Bilodeau, President, URI College Republicans