



March 27, 2007

Tara E. Sweeney
Senior Program Officer
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education
601 Walnut Street
Suite 510
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

In response to your letter of March 16, 2007 concerning Central Michigan University's policies regarding registered student organizations, the university's legal counsel and other administrators have reviewed the issue raised in your letter and agree with your position. The university will change its policy to extend the rights currently in place for religious-oriented student organizations to all belief-based student organizations.

Student Life staff, under the direction of Dean of Students Bruce Roscoe, is in the process of drafting specific wording of a new policy. The current draft is similar to the following:

A belief-based registered student organization may use its belief system as a criterion for selection of membership or leadership. The beliefs on which membership will be limited must be set forth in the constitution of the RSO. No student who meets the belief criteria for membership can be denied membership on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age. If a belief-based RSO exercises this provision, it may not discriminate on the basis of, nor inquire about the beliefs of individuals with respect to, the admission of students to its meetings and activities.

There remain about four weeks of classes in the current semester. There is no practical way to announce, educate about, or implement the new policy with over 200 registered student organizations in that time. The university's commitment is to have the new policy in place for the beginning of the fall 2007 semester. If any student organization experiences a problem with limiting membership during that time, Tony Voisin, Director of Student Life, should be notified.

Central Michigan University is committed to first amendment rights, especially for its students. In fact, we have withstood considerable criticism for defending the rights of persons to express their disagreement with various points of view and speech.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Rao
President

c: E. Gary Shapiro, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost
Bruce Roscoe, Dean of Students
Tony Voisin, Director of Student Life