



Office of the President

Rochester, Michigan 48309-4400
(248) 370-3500 Fax: (248) 370-3504

VIA ELECTRONIC AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

March 12, 2012

Mr. Adam Kissel
Vice President of Programs
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education
601 Walnut Street, Suite 510
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Dear Mr. Kissel,

Thank you for your March 8, 2012 letter on behalf of Joseph Corlett. Oakland University understands your organization's stated mission to educate the public and communities about individual rights, including the freedom of speech. As to the substance of your letter, however, we are unable to agree.

Oakland University never prosecuted Mr. Corlett for any crime, and certainly never branded Mr. Corlett a criminal. Nor do we believe that Mr. Corlett's speech and conduct at issue was protected by the First Amendment as you allege. None of the cases you cite deal with student speech and conduct in the context of legitimate pedagogical concerns, and it is well settled that different standards apply to speech and conduct as part of the curriculum. In that regard, Mr. Corlett's academic assignment does not qualify as a public forum, limited or otherwise, and the contents of his writing journal were not a matter of public import. As such, Oakland University need not tolerate student curricular speech or conduct that is inconsistent with its basic educational mission.

Therefore, we will not intervene to vacate the decision of Oakland University's Conduct Committee, or that of the Vice President for Student Affairs, as you request. We understand that this is not the response that either Mr. Corlett or your organization were hoping for, but we do believe that it supports Oakland University's educational mission and is consistent with well-established First Amendment principles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary D. Russi".

Gary D. Russi
President



Rochester, Michigan 48309-4401

To **Mr. Adam Kissel, Vice President of Programs, FIRE**

Date **March 12, 2012** Fax **215-717-3440**

From **Gary D. Russi, President** Phone **248-370-3500**

Fax

www.oakland.edu

Pages **2** (including this one)

FAST FACTS

FOUNDED 1957

FALL 2010 ENROLLMENT 19,030

- 134 undergraduate programs
- 124 graduate degree and certificate programs
- Opportunity for high-level undergraduate research projects, usually reserved for the graduate level at other universities
- 466 full-time faculty members; 94 percent hold doctoral degrees
- Eighty-five percent of graduates are employed within six months of graduation
- One of two doctoral research universities in Michigan
- More than 86,000 alumni who live and work in every state in the U.S. and around the world
- 200 student organizations, 12 with Greek affiliations

WHAT'S NEW

- The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine has received preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and will begin instruction in August 2011.
- Oakland University has partnered with area community colleges to create **concurrent enrollment programs** that offer students maximum flexibility on the path to an OU bachelor's degree. With a single application, students who meet OU's admissions criteria are admitted to both OU and the partner community college. They can then enroll in courses at both institutions at the same time.
- Degree in Three, one of Michigan's first accelerated degree programs, allows students to complete any of 19 select programs in three years and to begin career pursuits or graduate studies a full year earlier.
- With nearly \$30 million invested in research each year, OU offers knowledge, resources and programs that help companies grow and researchers achieve far-reaching breakthroughs in the laboratory.
- Oakland captured five Summit League championships in 2009-10 and led The Summit League for the fifth consecutive season in Academic All-League selections with 202. The Golden Grizzlies finished third in the Commissioner's Cup Standings with 92.5 points, the highest finish since joining the league in 1999.

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