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September 21, 2007

Colorado State University President Issues Statement in Response to *Collegian* Editorial

Colorado State University President Larry Edward Penley issued a statement this afternoon regarding an editorial in *The Rocky Mountain Collegian* student newspaper, a self-funded publication not supported by student fees.

"While student journalists enjoy all the privileges and protections of the First Amendment, they must also accept full responsibility for the choices they make," Penley said. "Members of a university community ought to be expected to communicate civilly and rationally and to make thoughtful arguments in support of even unpopular viewpoints. I am disappointed that the *Collegian's* recent editorial choices do not reflect the expectations we have of our student journalists nor the standards that are clearly articulated by student media policies. I also have every expectation that the readers of the *Collegian* will make their viewpoints known to the editor and the Board of Student Communications, which serves as the newspaper's publisher, and that ultimately, the newspaper will answer to its readers."

Colorado State, as a state institution, is **prohibited by law from censoring or regulating the content of its student media publication**. The university encourages readers to express their concerns to the student editor, J. David McSwane - editor@collegian.com - who has editorial control over the newspaper's content, and the Board of Student Communications, which hires and, if necessary, removes student editors from office.

The Board of Student Communications has the authority – granted by the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System – to hear any and all grievances and complaints related to student media operations and performance. The BSC is charged to: "approve operating policies and procedures of CSU student media; promote professional development of student media and their personnel; and conduct evaluations of the media and approve position descriptions, establish performance criteria, and hire, or if necessary, remove from office, the Student Media general manager and student publications and electronic media heads."

The Board of Communications met to hear comments about the Rocky Mountain *Collegian* editorial on Tuesday, Sept. 25.

- [Board of Student Communication Members](#)

BSC guidelines for resolution of complaints are contained in Appendix B of the Board bylaws at studentmedia.colostate.edu.

Written complaints may be sent directly to the Board of Student Communications, c/o Student Media, Lory Student Center, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution precludes a state institution like Colorado State from exercising prior restraint on expression with regard to public areas such as student newspapers, based on the content of the messages or ideas expressed therein. For that reason, the university may not, under clearly established legal principles, attempt to control or dictate the content of what the *Collegian* has published or may publish in the future.

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