



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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September 20, 2007

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ensure that all students understand what is at stake in a diverse community.” You urge “the Media Board and other existing oversight boards [to] look further into making substantive, constructive changes in ameliorating the situation at the *Recorder*.” The university also has chosen not to advertise its programs in the *Recorder*.

In addition, FIRE has become aware of a formal judicial complaint filed by Communications Professor Serafín Méndez-Méndez against seven students who are members of the editorial board and staff of the

convened a Journalistic Integrity Task Force, which produced a report on April 26, 2007, stating specifically that “Finding a paper’s content abhorrent or contrary to the university’s policies is insufficient” to meet the burden of substantial interference with CCSU’s educational environment. Since the cartoon in question makes no threats and does not represent intimidation, neither the U.S. Constitution nor CCSU’s own policies permit the university to censor or sanction the *Recorder*.

Regarding immediate suspension, it is quite clear that, following the CCSU Student Code of Conduct, Part IV(E), the *Recorder*’s editorial board presents no continuing danger in any way, and we strongly doubt that the accused students pose any reasonable threat to the safety or well-being of other members of the campus community.

When a university holds hearings or conducts a lengthy investigation of clearly protected speech, it produces a chilling effect on freedom of expression. FIRE requests that the appropriate judicial officer, according to the CCSU Student Code of Conduct, resolve all complaints on this matter without further action, finding that there is no probable cause to believe that any violation has occurred. Please live up to the promise of the U.S. Constitution, CCSU’s policies, and the commitments made by the Journalistic Integrity Task Force by dismissing all complaints against the *Recorder* and ensuring the free speech rights of all CCSU students.

FIRE hopes to resolve this situation amicably and swiftly. We request a response about this matter by October 11, 2007.

Sincerely,

Adam Kissel
Director, Individual Rights Defense Program

cc:

Jane W. Higgins, Dean of Students, CCSU
Carl R. Lovitt, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, CCSU
Carolyn Magnan, Journalistic Integrity Committee Chair and Counsel to the President, CCSU