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To the Catalyst:

I protest the disciplinary proceeding and verdict against Chris Robinson and another student. The students were found guilty of violating the student code of conduct forbidding threats of violence. I find that decision deeply troubling.

Reacting to the regular appearance of "The Monthly Rag," a poster put out by students associated with Feminist and Gender Studies, the two students concocted the scheme of parodying said publication. In the guise of "The Coalition of Some Dudes," they imitated various preoccupations and imaginings contained in the former publication, many of them sexual in character, but from the stereotypical male macho standpoint. A quid for your quo, so to speak-but no raunchier and with no more intimations of violence than that which was the object of their satire. ("The Monthly Rag" had referred in a jocular vein to male castration, whereas "The Monthly Bag" included various instances of "tough guy wisdom" and "chain-saw etiquette." Neither publication contained anything that can remotely be construed as a threat of violence; but if such be found in the one, it may as easily be found in the other.)

The manifest intention of the two accused students was to make fun of the dubious monthly ruminations of "The Monthly Rag." The aspiring satirists wanted to provoke a laugh and a debate; instead, they were greeted with a persecution.

Both the proceedings and the verdict traduce principles of free expression to which the college is professedly devoted, but which it has unconscionably violated in this instance. The decision is at war with the college's status as refuge for unorthodox opinion and a haven of diverse viewpoints. It violates the plainest constitutional rights of the ordinary citizen, relegating student rights of free expression to a faint shadow of that which is the common birthright of every American.

Supporters of the decision have fastened on the "anonymous character" of the offending poster as being especially deserving of punishment. But they do not apply a consistent standard. The poster made the object of satire also had no names attached to it. The authors of "The Monthly Rag," that is, made use of

