



Office of the President

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, regarding your organization's stated mission to educate the public and communities about the rights of individuals. We appreciate your interest in our university, 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 a school's educational mission is not to protect and promote the First Amendment rights of its students. In that regard, Mr. Corlett's academic speech and conduct is not protected by the First Amendment, and the university's decision to discipline Mr. Corlett is not an impermissible restriction on his First Amendment rights. We believe that the university's decision to discipline Mr. Corlett is a necessary and appropriate response to his conduct, and we 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. We believe that it supports Oakland University's educational mission and is consistent with well-established First Amendment principles.

Sincerely,

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**

[www.oakland.edu](http://www.oakland.edu)

Pages **2** (including this one)

### FAST FACTS

#### FOUNDED 1957

FALL 2010 ENROLLMENT 19,030

- 124 graduate degree and certificate programs
- Opportunity for high-level undergraduate research projects, usually reserved for the graduate level at other universities

hold doctoral degrees

In Michigan

in every state in the U.S. and around the world

- 200 student organizations, 12 with Greek affiliations

#### WHAT'S NEW

The Oakland Network of Healthcare

received preliminary accreditation from

the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and will begin

concurrent enrollment programs that

With a single application, students who meet OU's admissions criteria are admitted to both OU and the partner

enroll in courses at both institutions at the same time.

- Degree in Three, one of Michigan's first accelerated degree programs, allows

programs in three years and to begin career pursuits or graduate studies a full year earlier.

research each year, OU offers knowledge, resources and programs that help companies grow and researchers achieve far-reaching breakthroughs in the

Oakland captured five Summit League championships in 2009-10 and led the Summit League for the fifth consecutive

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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