



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REPORT

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August 5, 2009

William P. Leahy, S.J., President  
Boston College  
Botolph House  
18 Old Colony Road  
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02467

*Sent via U.S. Mail and Facsimile (617-552-3090)*

Dear Father Leahy:

Prompted by ambiguities in Boston College's policies and actions relating to free expression, FIRE wrote to you twice to ask you to clarify the status of the college's commitment to free expression. We received no response to either of our letters, sent on April 2 and June 4. Copies of those letters are enclosed.

FIRE maintains a well-known database of college and university speech codes in which we rate hundreds of institutions as "red light," "yellow light," or "green light" based on how much, if any, protected speech each institution prohibits.

speech, then it does not belong in the “not rated” category. If Boston College will not publicly state that it does not protect the right to free speech, then prospective students and faculty cannot adequately consent to giving up that right before they make commitments to join the Boston College community, resulting in a grave injustice for anyone who relied on Boston College’s apparent professions of freedom of speech.

If at any time you wish to clarify the college’s stance on free expression, FIRE is willing to reconsider this decision. However, as of today we are changing the college’s rating to “red light” to warn prospective students and faculty that they have significantly fewer rights at Boston College than they would have at any of Massachusetts’ public colleges or universities.

Sincerely,



Samantha Harris  
Director, Speech Code Research

cc: Boston College Board of Trustees

Encl.