

Gaitan Maria

From: Agrella Robert
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2009 8:31 AM
To: DL.STAFF.ALL
Subject: Use Of College Name

To: The College Community
From: Robert F. Agrella, President
Subject: Use of College Name

As you may recall, during the Spring '09 semester controversy arose regarding using the college's name, or some form of it, in personal email addresses and/or domain names. While the intent of this prohibition was to protect the college's name, it is clear that the intent to limit free speech was never the intent. Over the past twenty years, I am aware of incidents where the college name was attempted to be used in a manner that strongly implied that the college endorsed a product, a cause, or an individual, when this was not the case. The college interceded, as it has a right to do under these circumstances, and the matter was cleared up in very short order. All of this occurred prior to the widespread use of email and the proliferation of domain names. The use of the name of the college as well as the initials "SRJC" by students and others appears to have proliferated merely as a product of ease, and to the best of my knowledge at this time is not the result of any attempt to use the college's name in an inappropriate manner. When this became apparent the college stopped looking at the use of the name and informed parties who inquired directly to me that we were not pursuing the matter any further, with the caveat that that fraudulent use (endorse a product, candidate, etc) would be subject to further review. End of story, dead issue--not quite.

As could be expected, given the free speech issue that was raised, this matter found its way to individuals and organizations outside the SRJC community. One such organization, the Foundation For Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) wrote me a letter on July 1, 2009 that I responded to on July 16. Since I no longer have the electronic version of that letter and my response, I have placed copies of both documents in the libraries.

FIRE did not accept my letter as a sufficient response and on August 3, 2009 wrote a letter to the Chancellor, Jack Scott, with a copy to me. In response to FIRE's letter to the Chancellor I furnished my original letter as well as further information to Chancellor Scott. Copies of FIRE's letter to Chancellor Scott as well as my letter to the Chancellor have been placed in the libraries. In my letter to the Chancellor you will note that FIRE agrees that the college has legitimate interests in protecting its name where "reasonable persons might mistake private expression as institutional expression" and that SRJC has no interest in limiting speech that is "unambiguously private". To date I have not spoken to the Chancellor or received correspondence from him on this matter.

So why am I providing this information to the college community at this time? Simply because it appears that some individuals inside as well as outside the college believe this issue should be pursued further. I have also placed copies of emails written to me late last week and over the weekend by a member of the faculty that again raise this issue. I believe that it would be better if I responded to the entire college community rather than to a single individual. It is not my intent to become involved in an email treadmill on this issue nor to renegetate the issue. Free speech is alive and well at Santa Rosa Junior College. You are welcome to read

Thank you-