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### Hopkins student appeals suspension for offensive Web posting

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Ron Cassie, The Examiner

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**BALTIMORE** - The Johns Hopkins University student suspended for a year after posting a racially tinged Halloween party invitation on the Web site Facebook.com is appealing the ruling today with the school's dean of student life, Susan Boswell.

The university's student review board, made up of three students and two faculty members, found 18-year-old junior Justin Park guilty of failing to respect the rights of others, harassment and intimidation.

Park then sought help from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, the pro-free speech organization said Thursday in a written statement.

According a news release by FIRE, Park currently faces suspension from the university until January 2008, during which time he cannot set foot on campus, must complete 300 hours of community service, read 12 books and write a reflection paper on each, and attend mandatory attendance at a workshop on diversity and race relations. Park filed an appeal of the university's decision Monday.

FIRE wrote a letter on Park's behalf to Johns Hopkins University president William Brody.

"Jeopardizing a student's entire academic career because some students were offended by a joke is not just unfair — it's cruel," FIRE Director of Legal and Public Advocacy Samantha Harris said. "Hopkins should teach its students that the way we deal with speech we dislike in a free society is with more speech, not with severe and life-altering punishment."

The uproar began shortly after the "Halloween in the 'Hood" party held Oct. 28 was advertised on the Web site Facebook.com. The invitation encouraged racially stereotyping costumes, included references to the late attorney Johnnie Cochran and O.J. Simpson and prefaced descriptions of Baltimore as "a ghetto," "the hood" and "the HIV pit" with a four-letter epithet. Director of Greek Affairs Robert Turning asked Park to remove the invitation after student complaints. Park removed the advertisement on Oct. 27, but later reposted a similar advertisement. Sigma Chi, the fraternity which hosted the party, has been put on probation by the university.

JHU spokesman Dennis O'Shea said the university could not comment on individual student disciplinary action.

FIRE said Park did not want to address the suspension publicly while his appeal is pending.

[rcassie@baltimoreexaminer.com](mailto:rcassie@baltimoreexaminer.com)

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