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## Students censured for Minuteman protest

30 March 2007 | By Morgan Figa, Assoc. News Editor | [The Flat Hat](#) » [news](#)

The New York Times reported that eight Columbia University students who rushed a stage during a presentation done by the Minuteman Project were warned or censured by university officials. The warnings and censures will not be noted on students' transcripts after graduation, but if they are charged with other disciplinary action they will face harsher punishments.

The Minuteman Project is a group of individuals who support stronger laws against illegal immigration and have started a civilian border patrol along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Inside Higher Education reported that students who received "disciplinary warnings" will receive no other punishment and that the warning will stay on student transcripts until Dec. 31, 2008.

"All of these punishments have a gravity to them and they should not be taken lightly," Robert Hornsby, a Columbia spokesman, told the times.

The incident was put in the national spotlight after video of students storming the stage and tearing posters was posted on YouTube. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg criticized Columbia after the incident occurred.

The Columbia University College Republicans, who sponsored the event, told the Times that they felt the punishment for the students was not harsh enough.

"I'm glad they took some action," Chris Kulawik, president of Columbia's College Republicans told the Times, "But personally, I don't think it is strong enough to prevent people from doing it again."

Tim Bueler, the national spokesman for the Minuteman Project, said that the disciplinary actions taken were a "whitewash."  
"If they keep going down this route, in the eyes of the public, they will lose their credibility," he told Inside Higher Education.

Free speech organizations are upset with the censures. "It was an attempt to silence a controversial speaker," Greg Lukianoff, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's president told the Times. "I don't think there's any doubt about that, and attempts to make it look any other way are pretty foolish."

In a statement released to the public, Columbia's President, Lee Bollinger, said, "Columbia University has a longstanding and very specific process for disciplinary actions involving students ... If the rule of law is to mean anything, it is vital that we respect the results of the system of rules we live under."

The disciplinary actions were first reported by the student newspaper The Columbia Spectator.

"I view the fact that I got the lightest possible punishment as a small victory," David Judd, a junior who participated in the protest and subsequently received a warning, told the Times.

1. How is it that free speech advocates would condone an "effort to silence a controversial speaker." Does free speech only apply if you have nothing controversial to say?  
Is this irony lost on everyone?

— jason ellsworth Mar 31, 11:32 AM #

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