



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

601 Walnut Street, Suite 510 • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106
T 215-717-3473 • F 215-717-3440 • fire@thefire.org • www.thefire.org

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January 12, 2007

President Robert A. Wild, S.J.
Marquette University
O'Hara Hall, 101/102, P.O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881

Sent via U.S. Mail and Facsimile (414-288-3161)

Dear President Wild:

FIRE writes today for the third time to inquire about the state of free expression at Marquette University. You will recall that FIRE initially wrote in September after an administrator removed a quote by humorist Dave Barry from a philosophy Ph.D. student's office door. In your subsequent responses, you have stated that the removal of that quotation did not present a denial of academic freedom. You also stated that students and faculty are ordinarily permitted to post materials on their doors, but "it was only within the context of a complaint that this was questioned."

This explanation is troubling because not all expression will appeal to all members of the community, and any environment of open inquiry is sure to invite disagreement. If Marquette values academic freedom—as its student handbook states and as you have made clear in letters to FIRE—then Marquette should tolerate the expression of political or ideological opinions, even in the context of a complaint.

Despite our numerous correspondences, three questions remain: First, was Stuart Distler within his rights to post the Barry quote? Second, are students and faculty free to post materials on their office doors, free from viewpoint discrimination? Third, do students and faculty at Marquette enjoy free speech rights comparable to those at any state college?

FIRE encourages Marquette to stand up for free expression on the Marquette campus. We request a response to this matter by January 26, 2007.

Sincerely,

Greg Lukianoff
President

cc:

Madeline Wake, Provost, Marquette University
Arthur Scheuber, Vice President, Marquette University
Greg Kliebhan, Senior Vice President, Marquette University
James South, Philosophy Department Chair, Marquette University

Mary Ellen Stanek, Chair, Board of Trustees, Marquette University
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Tom Schalmo, *The Badger Herald*
Nathan Burchfiel, *Cybercast News Service*
Megan Twohey, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
Nick Gillespie, *Reason Magazine*
Dave Barry
Nat Hentoff
Stuart Ditsler

Encl.