

# BINGHAMTON REVIEW

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## BINGHAMTON REVIEW

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# BU's Conservative Moment

Binghamton University has seen a lot change in the past twenty-one years. We've had a new university president, offices have been restructured, new departments have been created, and professors have come and gone. Obviously, students twenty-one years ago are not the same students who are here today.

What else has come and gone is the campus liberal movement. While Binghamton Review has endured, and now, in its 22nd year of publication, still stands for the same principles it did in 1987, there has been a left wing crack up. The Experimental Media Organization takes up a few causes each semester, but does not engage those in favor of a traditional university very often. There are no longer calls for "diversity" requirements, and while useless, divisive, and counterproductive, the VPMA is no longer the left wing bastion it used to be. Prospect Magazine remains the only left-wing publication on campus, and it is not even very liberal and not at all involved in on-campus politics. Even Pipe Dream's editorial board focuses very little on campus politics. The Student Association is no longer made up of the e-board of EMO/SAC, and does not generally advance any ideological agenda.

But BR remains true to the same principles that our founders were dedicated to. These are principles that will never cease to be relevant or become extinct. We've used them to win countless battles with the administration and campus multiculturalists and to persist in the face of opposition. Read more about this in the following pages of this special anniversary edition.

Today, we are engaged on several fronts.

The City Housing Commission is set to issue its report any day now, and could recommend the suspension of the free market when it comes to off campus hous-

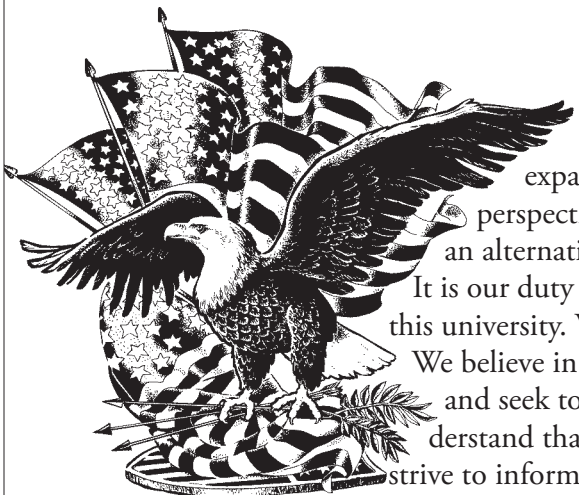
ing in Binghamton. This is an issue that we've covered for years, and specifically this semester since it has now again been brought up. When the commission's report passes, it is then up to the City Council to decide whether to implement it. Last time zoning laws were being debated, the city council tried to make its decision while students were home on winter break. It is imperative that we do not allow them to do this again. Call the mayor's office (607-772-7001) and tell him that we want our voices heard, and that we respectfully request that no decisions be made until we return from our break.

Student Affairs continues its disregard for student rights. Last year, it pushed for and implemented a 'failure to cooperate' policy that forces students to exit their residencies at the whims of an RA. While not all those on Judicial Affairs are out to get students, much of the system is designed to make things easier for the prosecution. Cases like that of Andre Massena are only settled when outside organizations like F.I.R.E. get involved to point out to the university its own department's violations (see page 8).

And we still have a VPMA, a source of divisiveness and racism on our Student Association. This is an issue that has been discussed for a long time, and will continue to be discussed for a long time. Check out page 6 for the start of that debate.

In sum, Binghamton Review has endured for 21 years; we've outlasted much of the opposition, but there is still work to be done. I raise my glass to what my predecessors have accomplished in the past, and look forward to the next 21 years of truth and two staples.

**-Adam Shamah**



## Our Mission

*Binghamton Review* is a non-partisan, student-run periodical of conservative thought at Binghamton University. A true liberal arts education expands a student's horizons and opens one's mind to a vast array of divergent perspectives. In that spirit, we seek to promote the free exchange of ideas and offer an alternative viewpoint not normally found on our predominately liberal campus. It is our duty to expose the warped ideology of political correctness that dominates this university. We stand against tyranny in all its forms, both on campus and beyond. We believe in the principles set forth in this country's Declaration of Independence, and seek to preserve the fundamental tenets of western civilization. Finally, we understand that a moral order is a necessary component of any civilized society. We strive to inform, engage, and perhaps even amuse our readers in carrying out this mission.

# Lighting a F.I.R.E. Under the Social Work Department

THE CASE OF ANDRE MASSENA LED THE FOUNDATION FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION TO GET INVOLVED

by Adam Shamah '11

Political dissent. Our founders built a country around it. It's supposed to be protected, right? Wrong. Not at Binghamton University, or at least, not in Binghamton University's Master in Social Work (MSW) program.

Just ask Andre Massena, a social work masters student who was nearly suspended and, if it were up to certain members of the department, could have been expelled for denouncing the department's hiring of David Tanenhaus, the Executive Director of the Binghamton Housing Authority.

Andre was an intern at Opportunities for Broome. In August, one of his clients was evicted from public housing by the BHA, headed by David Tanenhaus. Later that month, Massena began posting flyers on campus and in the community under the pseudonym "Justice-speaks." The poster displayed photos of the evicted family, explained the situation, and asked people to "call the Social Work department at the university to let them know what you think."

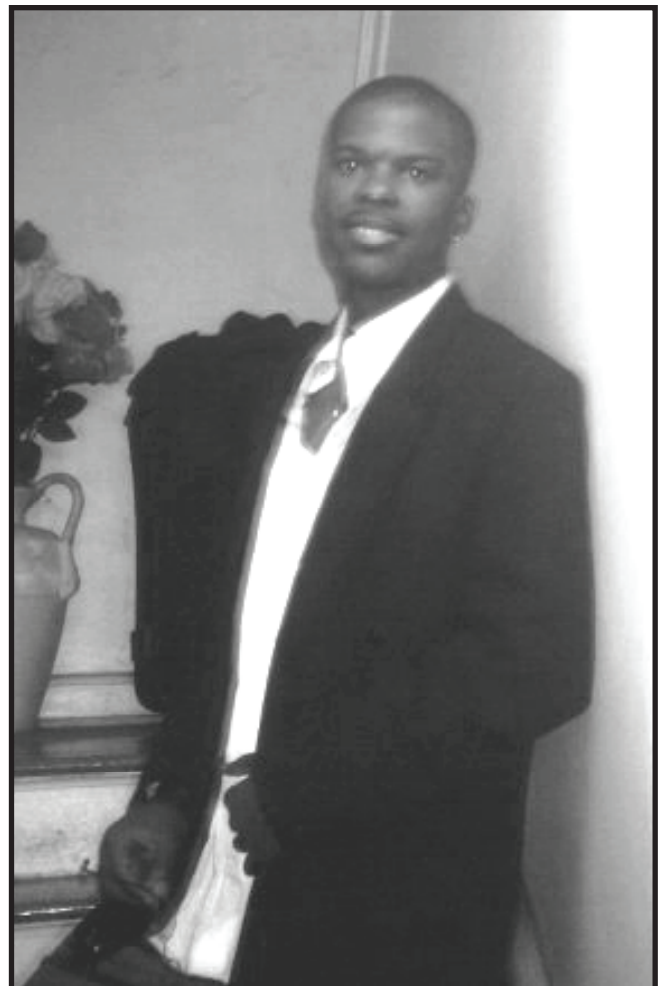
One week after putting up the posters, Andre received a document called the "Written Plan for Andre Massena" (could they think of a more Soviet sounding title?), which outlined a series of actions the department demanded Andre take. One, he would have to immediately withdraw from all of his courses with no guarantee of reinstatement. "The satisfactory completion of this written plan does not guarantee his continuance

in the program in the future, but, rather, makes it possible for him to be eligible for continuance [with departmental approval]."

In addition to being suspended, Andre would be required to do several other things in accordance with the "written plan." The plan demanded that he write a formal apology to all parties concerned. Who would decide who these parties are? "Dr. Bronstein [the chair of the department] and Dr. Wiener [the author of the written plan] will discuss this 'list' with Mr. Massena to be sure it is comprehensive." He would also be forced to write a written retraction and "will acknowledge verbally to Dr. Bronstein and Dr. Wiener that he understands that he is entitled to his opinions, and that taking responsibility for the harm that his actions have and may have caused is not the same as having these opinions." In plain English, as FIRE so eloquently put, "While we can't actually force you to think the way we want, we can certainly force you to pretend that you do and

to act accordingly."

The plan also mandated that Andre make "every effort possible and will inform Profs. Bronstein and Wiener of his efforts to end the process whereby students, service providers and community members approach the Dept. of Social Work in an effort to alleviate 'wrong' they may see as occurring at the Bing-





hamton Housing Authority.” Not only would did the department try to squash Andre’s resistance, they tried to use him to squash the voices of the people Andre was allied with. Freedom of conscience is just as important a right as freedom of speech. Being compelled to act against your political beliefs by a university department is deplorable, and a violation of Andre’s constitutional rights.

The plan contained no specific charges. Though the department claimed that Andre was being prosecuted because he failed to identify himself as the author of the poster to both UPD and Bronstein, the punishments outlined in the written plan revolved around the content of the flyers, not Andre’s actions. As FIRE reported, “According to Massena, the Advancement Committee had focused on Massena’s placing of the flyer inside one building in particular, the University Downtown Center. According to Massena, it was alleged that he entered the building under false pretenses and lied to University Police officer Matthew Rossie and others about having posted the flyer. Even after the evidence showed that Massena was not guilty of these alleged offenses, Massena was alleged to be guilty of ‘lying by omission’ for not spontaneously revealing to the police that he had posted the flyer in the building.” Anonymous speech is in no way outlawed, in fact, it is a fundamental right.

Andre appealed, and on September 23rd was informed that the suspension had been upheld. He appealed once more, this time in a grievance against Laura Bronstein, the chair of the Social Work department. Bronstein responded with a 50 page memorandum detailing a new set of allegations against Andre, many of which dealt specifically with Andre’s political opposition to the Binghamton Housing Authority of which Professor Tanenhaus directs, and recommending his expulsion from the program.

On November 13th, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) made the case public by issuing a detailed press release. This is over two weeks after they wrote President DeFleur

to express their dismay with the department’s behavior. The very next day, the case was dropped. “Due to procedural misunderstandings, the case pertaining to you is no longer being pursued,” read the one sentence email sent to Andre by Laura Bronstein. No elaboration, no nothing. The *Review* contacted Gail Glover, the University’s Director of Media Relations and official spokeswoman on the case, who would not elaborate much further, saying that “there were a number of issues relating to the appeals process and in the interest of fairness, the faculty of social work decided not to pursue the case further” and that the “process to review the recommendations began before the interest from FIRE.” We attempted to contact Laura Bronstein, but received no response.

When it came down to it, the university provided no defense for Andre; organizations like FIRE and the Graduate Student Organization (and now BR) were the only ones to advocate for him. According to Andre, he tried to seek help from Valerie Hampton, of the Affirmative Action office, and Francine Montemurro, the University Ombudsman, but received no response. Laura Bronstein is still chair of the department, and it’s clear that she has no regard for students’ rights. When asked to comment on the outcome of the case, Andre said, “My hope is that some good come out of this situation as we learn from it and move forward. I’m optimistic that the social work department as well as President DeFleur will respond to this situation and take the initiative to make sure policies are set in place so that student’s right are protected on this campus.” We’re glad that the University dropped its case against Mr. Massena, but it still has a lot of work to do if it wishes to show that it is serious about protecting its students.

*-Adam Shamah is a sophomore majoring in Management and is Editor-in-Chief of the Review. Laura Bronstein will soon deliver him a “written plan” of his own.*

# BINGHAMTON REVIEW AND THE CAMPUS LEFT

by Adam Shamah

*Binghamton Review*, for obvious reasons, is often at odds with the campus left. Last year, we disagreed on almost every issue. When UPD was armed with tasers, *BR* defended them as the leftists declared Binghamton University a “fascist police state.” We sparred on issues like “Killer Coke” and NYPIRG funding. We brought speakers like Daniel Pipes and Dinesh D’Souza and were met with protests and attacks from the left.

But this semester, so far, things have been different. The Experimental Media Organization and various students with ties to the campus left have been some of the *Review*’s greatest supporters on the housing issue. The GSO, EMO, and *BR* are some of the only organizations that have defended Andre Massena. In private, we’ve discussed problems with the Judicial Affairs, another issue in which we are in agreement. We’ve shown that we are willing to work together when we have a common goal.

Then, the issue of the VPMA came up. Immediately, Andrew Epstein, the former president of EMO, and other campus lefties began attacking the perceived motivations behind me advocating for its removal. The *Review* was brought up and denounced as “racist” garbage with a history of attacking diversity and student rights. Past articles we’ve printed and events we’ve held were brought up with the intention to prove that nothing that comes from the *Review* should be taken seriously. We were no longer the same organization that defended student housing and Andre Massena, but rather a racist fascist faction that had to be stopped. This is how the campus left works. An ally becomes a “racist” as soon as he disagrees with them. This is because their arguments are so weak they are forced to use smear tactics to win over the undecided. Listen to the arguments, not the attacks please.