



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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April 13, 2011

Martha T. Nesbitt, President
Gainesville State College
3820 Mundy Mill Road
P.O. Box 1358
Gainesville, Georgia 30503

Sent via U.S. Mail and Facsimile (678-717-3830)

Dear President Nesbitt:

Gainesville State College (GSC) has not responded to our letter of March 7, 2011, regarding GSC's censorship of art instructor Stanley Bermudez. FIRE had requested a response to our letter by March 21. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

To reiterate: GSC's unilateral decision to remove Bermudez's painting "Heritage?" from a faculty art exhibit has chilled free speech and academic freedom at GSC. The fallout from this censorship risks still further damage to GSC's reputation in the eyes of students, faculty, and the public.

FIRE again asks that you make clear to GSC students and faculty that their protected expression will never meet the censorship that GSC committed against Professor Bermudez. We remind you once more of the Supreme Court's statement in *Terminiello v. Chicago*, 337 U.S. 1, 4 (1949): "[A] function of free speech under our system of government is to invite dispute. It may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, creates dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger."

Gainesville State College must recognize and affirm its obligations to the First Amendment. FIRE asks that you immediately respond to let us know whether you plan to address our letter and our concerns.

Sincerely,

Adam Kissel
Vice President of Programs

Encl.

cc:

Al Panu, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Gainesville State College

Beth Sale, Director, Roy C. Moore Art Gallery, Gainesville State College

Andrew Santander, Chair, Department of Visual and Performing Arts, Gainesville State College

John Amoss, Art Program Coordinator, Gainesville State College

Jonathan Rajala, President, Student Government Association, Gainesville State College