



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

OFFICE OF THE
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

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June 6, 2014

Mr. Peter Bonilla
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education
170 S. Independence Mall W, Suite 510
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. Bonilla:

Father Jenkins asked that I respond to your letter of May 23 concerning the denial of club recognition for Students for Child-Oriented Policy (SCOP). Let me begin with a description of the approval process.

Club recognition at Notre Dame is overseen by the University's Student Activities Office, but it is concurrently designed to offer an opportunity for our students to develop and grow as leaders.

The first stage of approval involves a review, if relevant, by academic or administrative departments. The second stage of approval is a review by the Student Activities Office, where administrators confirm that the prospective club meets the broad guidelines outlined in our student handbook. If the prospective club meets these criteria, its application is then referred to a branch of student government, the Club Coordination Council (CCC), for review. It has the responsibility of reviewing applications, allocating student activities fees, and informing clubs of the regulations surrounding the usage of funds. The CCC student leaders then recommend approval or denial to the Director of Student Activities Programming.

In this instance, SCOP successfully passed review by the University's Student Activities Office and was referred to the CCC, which ultimately recommended that this club not be approved, specifically because its purpose was viewed as redundant with existing clubs on campus. Redundancy has been the most common reason for the denial of all club applications by the CCC over the last 10 semesters – 31% of which have not been approved. It is our practice at the University to follow the recommendation of the CCC when we believe their recommendation is made in good faith in order to empower the student leaders who are ultimately stewards of all club funds. Administrators have conducted discussions with students involved in the CCC and the prospective club application following this denial, and we have also encouraged the students to meet with one another to resolve the perceived overlap in the purpose of SCOP with existing clubs. Second applications for recognition are often successful as a result of these types of discussions among student leaders.

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Contrary to your assertion that the CCC's conclusion was either misguided or a pretext to discriminate against SCOP because of its message, our examination of this issue has reiterated our confidence that the CCC student leaders reviewed SCOP's application in good faith and made a well-informed recommendation thoughtfully for the reason stated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Hoffmann Harding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Erin Hoffmann Harding, J.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

cc: Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., President