



Office of the
PRESIDENT

December 18, 2018

Mr. Adam Goldstein
Program Officer, Individual Rights Program
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)
510 Walnut Street, Suite 1250
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Sent Via Certified Mail

Dear Mr. Goldstein,

Thank you for your letter of December 7, 2018. We have reviewed your concerns and have several observations to share with you.

As president of the University of North Alabama and a firm believer in everyone's right to free speech, I can assure you that the First Amendment is alive and well here. I also can assure you that UNA's decision to transition the position of media adviser to faculty status does not involve any considerations that pose a threat to the First Amendment. This personnel decision, which was three years in the making, is consistent with our academic duties and responsibilities.

Even though the College Media Association (CMA) has decided to take a position on this personnel matter, it is important to note that their principal investigator admitted that his investigation found "no smoking gun" to substantiate the claim of retaliation. UNA also shared clear, written evidence of our three-year timeline in making this decision, which was surprisingly not acknowledged in the CMA's announcement. In addition, no CMA representative ever visited the campus or met with me before they chose to act.

You also need to know that the University has never interfered with *Flor-Ala's* coverage of any topic or issue. As educators, however, we do have a responsibility to inform the student journalists when we see inaccuracies or ways in which their reporting could be improved. These are teaching moments, not censorship.

As a strong advocate of free speech, we recognize and respect your right to publicly share your views on this personnel matter. At the same time, we ask that you please respect the facts and the responsible way we are addressing this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. D. Kitts', written in a cursive style.

Kenneth D. Kitts, Ph.D.
President