



November 20, 2019

Dr. Fred E. Wood
Contra Costa Community College District
500 Court Street
Martinez, California 94553

Sent via U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail (fewood@4cd.edu)

Dear Chancellor Wood:

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) and the College Media Association are disappointed that President Susan Lamb of Diablo Valley College (DVC) did not respond to our letter of November 4, 2019, expressing serious concern about the dismissal of student newspaper adviser Fernando Gallo in apparent retaliation for content critical of the DVC administration in *The Inquirer*.

As detailed in our letter, a copy of which is enclosed for reference, the dismissal or non-renewal of student media advisers because of disagreement over content violate the First Amendment rights of both the adviser and student journalists. These actions also run afoul of California Education Code sections 66301 (The "Leonard Law") and 76120, as well as DVC's stated commitment to free expression.

Compliance with the First Amendment and California law is a nonnegotiable legal obligation for public institutions of higher education in California. The credible allegation that DVC is in violation of its constitutional, statutory, and moral obligations merits a serious response, not silence. To that end, we again ask that DVC cure this violation by immediately reinstating Gallo.

We renew our request for a response to our letter of November 4, and request receipt of that response no later than the close of business on December 4, 2019.

Sincerely,



Lindsie Rank

Program Officer, Individual Rights Defense Program



Kenna Griffin

President, College Media Association

Cc:

Vicki Gordon, President, Contra Costa Community College District Governing Board
(vcgordon@hotmail.com)

Susan Lamb, President, Diablo Valley College (slamb@dvc.edu)

Obed Vazquez, Dean of English and Social Sciences Division, Diablo Valley College
(ovazquez@dvc.edu)

Encl.

Letter from Lindsie Rank and Kenna Griffin to President Susan Lamb, Nov. 4, 2019.