



Sabrina Conza <sabrina.conza@thefire.org>

Response to FIRE Letter and Article

Andrew Morse <andrew.morse@uni.edu>
To: Sabrina Conza <sabrina.conza@thefire.org>

Tue, Mar 29, 2022 at 9:44 AM

Dear Ms. Conza,

Thank you for your message and continued interest in UNI's commitment to uphold the First Amendment rights of our students and employees. Below is a statement from UNI, which includes the steps we have taken to ensure Resident Assistants understood their rights as they received the *Northern Iowan* (NI) inquiry. In addition, I've attached the text of an email sent by the Director of Housing and Residence Life this morning to all Resident Assistants reiterating what has been shared with Resident Assistants since the start of the NI inquiry.

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UNI Statement

University Housing and Dining proactively supports and protects the First Amendment rights of Resident Assistants. As the *Northern Iowan* survey was distributed to Resident Assistants, some RAs approached Residence Life Coordinators about participating. To assure all Resident Assistants understood their rights, Residence Life Coordinators held staff meetings with RAs to affirm their right to speak to the media as private citizens. In addition, University Housing and Dining issued a written notice on Tuesday, March 29, 2022, to Resident Assistants reiterating their rights under the First Amendment. We continue to value opportunities to assure Resident Assistants—as with all UNI students and employees—understand the protections afforded under the First Amendment.

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Thank you again for your message.

Respectfully,

Andrew

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Andrew Morse, Ph.D.

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Date: Tue, Mar 29, 2022 at 8:21 AM

Subject: RAs and Media Inquiries

To: UHD Resident Assistants

Dear RAs,

Over the past two months there have been occasions in which Resident Assistants have been approached by members of the media for input on articles, policies, and other points of interest. During this time, Resident Assistants have had questions about their involvement and how to participate in such inquiries.

In an effort to further clarify points that have been noted and addressed in staff meetings and emails, I would like to reiterate that Resident Assistants may speak with the media (including on-campus newspapers) in their capacity as a private citizen without seeking prior approval from UNI Housing & Dining (UHD). In such a situation, it may be helpful when communicating to use phrases such as, for example, that you are not authorized to represent or speak on behalf of UNI Housing & Dining, and/or that statements made are solely your/the Resident Assistant's personal opinion and not a representation of UNI Housing & Dining.

The University provides annual notification of training on the First Amendment (the training is available on the UNI website), and has sent regular notifications about the rights and responsibilities relating to free speech and expression. I encourage you to explore your resources including training on the First Amendment via BlackBoard, [University Policy 13.10](#), and the [UNI Free Speech webpage](#).