



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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January 7, 2010

President Brian C. Mitchell
Bucknell University
219 Marts Hall
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837

Re: Bucknell University Conservatives Club and FIRE's Red Alert list

Dear President Mitchell:

I am writing to draw your attention to the full-page advertisement that FIRE ran in the most recent "America's Best Colleges" issue of *U.S. News & World Report*. The advertisement appears on page 89, immediately adjacent to the rankings of the top 100 national universities, in the same position our advertisement appeared last year. We have enclosed a copy of the issue for your information. FIRE plans to continue its advertisements in *U.S. News* each year to bring attention to the colleges and universities that make up our "Red Alert" list. Though Bucknell University is not featured in this year's advertisement, it is currently on FIRE's Red Alert list of the "worst of the worst" offenders of campus liberty, and will be featured in next year's advertisement if Bucknell remains on that list at press time.

FIRE takes no pleasure in having Bucknell on its Red Alert list. As an organization that prides itself on its ability to quickly resolve disputes, we find it especially disappointing that Bucknell has continued to stand by its unjust actions and willingly imperil the free expression of its students and faculty. FIRE is no less determined, however, to continue to expose and fight abuses of liberty on America's campuses and at Red Alert institutions most of all.

All that Bucknell needs to do to ensure its removal from FIRE's Red Alert list is to live up to its promises of free speech and demonstrate its willingness to allow the unfettered debate of controversial issues—such as affirmative action—on the public areas of its campus without need for prior administrative approval. In doing so, Bucknell must also clarify that its recently enacted "Sales and Promotions" policy will not require prior approval for activities (such as the distribution of "Obama stimulus dollars") that would constitute protected expression on a public campus. Bucknell must also reverse its decision barring controversial political speech—including the

Bucknell University Conservatives Club's "affirmative action bake sale"—from the public areas of campus. Bucknell's degradations of free expression cannot be allowed to stand, and FIRE will continue to publicly call on Bucknell to remedy its wrongs until it does so.

Taking this step will cost Bucknell nothing and will only save the university from the further embarrassment of having to publicly defend its indefensible disregard of BUCC's rights. Bucknell has both a moral and a legal obligation to protect these rights, and it is past time that the university lived up to them.

I would, of course, be happy to speak with you personally about this matter. You may reach me at 215-717-3473 or at robert@thefire.org. Thank you for your attention to this crucial issue; I sincerely hope that Bucknell does not appear on next year's *U.S. News* advertisement from FIRE and that we will not be sending this letter again in another year's time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert L. Shibley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert L. Shibley
Vice President

Encl.

cc:

Tom Evelyn, Director of Media Relations

Sam Lundquist, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations