

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



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April 8, 2005

Mr. David French
President, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education
210 W. Washington Square, Suite 303
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Mr. French:

We are in receipt of the foundation's March 24 letter regarding Mr. Thomas Klocek. Indeed, we became aware of your personal interest in the matter on March 4, when we saw your article on FrontPageMagazine.com criticizing DePaul University for what you have characterized as a violation of academic freedom. While I was concerned that you chose to comment publicly on the matter at that time with only selected information Mr. Klocek chose to share with you, I am grateful you have chosen to request further information now.

DePaul emphatically rejects Mr. Klocek's characterization of this incident as a matter of academic freedom. The university acted to address threatening and unprofessional behavior. In addition, we have encouraged Mr. Klocek to pursue the university's grievance process, but he has refused.

It is important to us that you and others know that DePaul holds academic freedom as a fundamental premise underlying our campus atmosphere, and it is a right afforded unequivocally to faculty and students. Like the foundation, DePaul ardently supports an open marketplace of ideas. Faculty, students and staff must be able to think vigorously, challenge assertions and argue their case. DePaul insists on maintaining a civilized environment to ensure that this can take place.

DePaul University was created on a foundation that has as its cornerstone a profound respect for academic freedom and the diversity of opinion that our free and open environment encourages. Since its founding in 1898, DePaul has never excluded students, staff or faculty because of their religion or race. In fact, for example, DePaul welcomed Jewish students when other universities excluded them or used quotas to limit their presence and was the first Catholic university to admit women on an equal basis with men. Recently, I have found myself as president standing up for this academic freedom when the university withstood a nationally organized campaign against a production of *The Vagina Monologues* on campus. I also have found myself supporting certain faculty when outside political interests call for a professor's removal because of his or her opinions on controversial issues.

DePaul has a long history of supporting the tenets of academic freedom and free speech. In fact, DePaul insists that our faculty and staff accept responsibility to create an atmosphere of civil discourse so that speech is never intimidated. We demand high professional standards of behavior from our faculty and staff and will continue to do so. Our students deserve no less.

Thank you for seeking further information on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Dennis Holtschneider" followed by a horizontal line.

(Rev). Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.
President