

The Reverend Janet Cooper Nelson  
Office of the Chaplain's and Religious Life  
Brown University  
Room 228, Faunce House  
75 Waterman Street  
Providence, RI 02912

September 28, 2006

Dear Reverend Cooper Nelson:

We write to you as the variously elected representatives of Reformed University Fellowship (RUF). Our members are deeply concerned and unsettled by the recent formalization of our suspension by Brown University, a suspension your office enacted in your September 13, 2006, e-mail to Ethan Wingfield, student president of RUF. As those in whom the leadership and care of the members of RUF has been placed, we too are concerned and are eager to work with your office toward the reinstatement of our fellowship. We value greatly the opportunity to be recognized by the Office of the Chaplain's and Religious Life, and view our current suspension as renewed opportunity to improve this relationship.

The membership of RUF, and we as their representatives, write to you for help in understanding and answering the many questions that face us today. In the paragraphs that follow, we will lay out in more detail our questions and concerns. As the Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life, we look to you for help in understanding our standing as a group of students wishing to practice our religious traditions while studying at Brown during this season of our lives.

First, we do not know what acts of RUF have been committed which would constitute what you described in your September 13, 2006 e-mail to Ethan Wingfield, student president of RUF, as "non-compliance with University policy and procedure as outlined in The Standards and Conditions Governing the Appointment of Religious Life Affiliates and their Sponsoring Religious Agencies at Brown University" in such a way as to merit the suspension of our group. We are aware that our RLA of several years, Eric Molicki, did submit a late RLA renewal application in the fall of 2005. We doubt that this oversight alone is the single basis of our suspension. RUF and OCRL are pleasantly agreed on this point, as you indicated in your agreement on this point with our president, Ethan Wingfield, in our September 15, 2006, meeting with Russell Carey, Vice President for Campus Life; Eddie Park, RUF Interim Director of Student Ministries, and Ethan Wingfield, student President of RUF. Further, our new Interim Director of Student Ministries, Eddie Park '02, was careful to submit an on-time RLA application this fall. Because the latest RLA application on behalf of RUF was submitted on time, and because RUF and OCRL have agreed that a late RLA application does not constitute the

basis of our suspension, we hope that this source of strain between our organizations can be put to rest. This being clearly not the reason for the suspension, we have looked further into the correspondence between RUF and the Office of the Chaplain's and Religious Life.

In an e-mail dated September 13, 2006, your colleague, The Reverend Dr. Allen Callahan wrote the reasons the Office of the Chaplain's and Religious Life believed that RUF has become "illegitimate" and "unsupportable." Dr. Callahan mentions the late RLA application, but goes on to discuss further strains between our organizations. "Under the leadership of Rev. Molicki and...student president Ethan Wingfield, RUF has become possessed of a leadership culture of contempt and dishonesty that has rendered all collegial relations with my office impossible." Dr. Callahan continued, "The RUF leadership's repeated and willful failure to be respectful and transparent in its dealings with OCRL and other offices on campus has made RUF the topic of more meetings, e-mails, letters, and phone calls than all my other fifteen-odd Religious Life Affiliates combined."

We find these accusations to be troubling for a variety of reasons. As the duly elected leaders of RUF, we can assure you that neither Eric Molicki nor Ethan Wingfield have done anything to cultivate a culture of contempt or dishonesty. To the contrary, we believe they have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to an open and collegial relationship with your office through their steady and genuine efforts to build the relationship between our organizations over the past months.

Further, we have seen no actual proof that any person on RUF leadership has developed a pattern of contempt, dishonesty, disrespect, or lack of transparency. We have observed no pattern, nor have been shown by your office any reason to suspect such a pattern. These sorts of behaviors run counter to the Christian ethic we strive towards in our practice of the Christian faith, we can assure you that a pattern of such behavior in our leadership would be confronted swiftly, lovingly, and firmly. However, we have seen no such pattern. In their current state, these accusations appear to us to be slights of our character and unsubstantiated claims. If we are wrong in this belief, we would eagerly welcome your correction and seek your guidance if you believe such a pattern of sin exists within our membership ranks.

Continuing in our consideration of violations, we would like to return to a phrase written by The Reverend Dr. Callahan in his September 13, 2006, e-mail. Dr. Callahan stated that the "disruptive" nature of RUF's leadership on the workings of OCRL, "must be brought to an end." We are concerned about the ominous language of termination used by Dr. Callahan. While we feel the terms of our suspension have not been made clear, we are even more concerned that our suspension will be transformed into a termination, because the terms of our *reinstatement* have also not been made clear.

We have requested to know the terms of reinstatement on a multitude of occasions. These occasions on which we have asked for such terms include, first, a meeting of leaders from RUF, Trinity Presbyterian Church, and UCS, with The Reverend Dr. Callahan, on February 1, 2006. We asked a second time for terms of reinstatement in a meeting between Margaret Klawunn, Associate Vice President for Campus Life; yourself; The Reverend Dr. Callahan; The Reverend Molicki; and Ethan Wingfield, RUF student president; on March 24, 2006. We asked a third time in a meeting between Russell Carey, Vice President for Campus Life; yourself; Eddie Park, RUF Interim Director of Student Ministries; and Ethan Wingfield, RUF student president. On each of these occasions, we have been given no clear terms of reinstatement, neither verbally nor in writing.

The absence of the terms of our reinstatement, coupled with Dr. Callahan's language of termination, has caused us a great deal of unease. It is our hope that it would please your office to see RUF reinstated to reestablish its work in service to the Brown University Religious Life community. So that we may work toward this common goal together, please lay forth in detail the concrete steps that the Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life expects RUF to take over the coming school year to guarantee our reinstatement in the near future.

Further, we find the length of our suspension to be quite burdensome, particularly when we do not know the terms of our suspension or the terms of our reinstatement. We ask that as you explain to us both the terms of our suspension and the terms of our reinstatement, you also grant us the opportunity to be reinstated in the spring semester 2007.

We hope to please our unsettled membership with quick answers to the questions and concerns we have lay forth in this letter.

We thank you for your kind consideration of our questions and concerns.

Sincerely,

Edward Park '02

RUF Interim Director of Student Ministries

Ethan Wingfield '07

RUF Student President

Ruth Chung RISD '07

RUF Treasurer

Selorm Adzaku '07

RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Phillip Hwong '08  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Tiffany Jon RISD '09  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Christine Lee '09  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Danny Lee '07  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Winston Messer '09  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

Glenda Tan '09  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

David Yeh '07  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

John Yi '08  
RUF Leadership Through Servanthood

cc. The Reverend Dr. Allen Callahan, Associate Chaplain  
Russell Carey, Vice President for Campus Life  
Margaret Klawunn, Associate Vice President for Campus Life  
John Gillis, President, UCS