



**Foundation for Individual Rights in Education**

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June 4, 2009

William P. Leahy, S.J., President  
Boston College  
Botolph House  
18 Old Colony Road  
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02467

*Sent via U.S. Mail and facsimile (617-552-3090)*

Dear Father Leahy:

It is with disappointment that FIRE must once again ask Boston College to clarify its commitment to free expression. We have received no response to our letter of April 2, in which we asked for a response by April 23. A copy of that letter is enclosed.

Boston College, a private institution, has a First Amendment right to determine the standards of speech and conduct that it will enforce in its community. Although Boston College has strongly stated its commitment to the rights of free expression and intellectual inquiry, some of the college's actions over the years have betrayed that commitment. Students and faculty members deserve honesty about the college's advertised commitments. They also deserve consistent application of these commitments, which is as much a matter of respect as it is a matter of contract. If Boston College decides that other values are more important than freedom of expression and intellectual inquiry, that is your institution's right, but in that case we only ask that you make this clear so that prospective members of the community know what to expect. A clarification in either direction might repel some but might inspire others to honor the college even more. In any event, Boston College community members, both present and future, deserve a clear enunciation of the school's commitment to free expression.

Please respond by June 30. Your students and faculty deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Adam Kissel  
Director, Individual Rights Defense Program

cc: Boston College Board of Trustees

Encl.