

# THE FIRE QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

## In This Issue:

- 2 From the Board of Advisors
- 3 Bucknell University Slams Door on Student Satires of Obama Stimulus Plan, Affirmative Action
- 4 Cal Poly Suspends Reporting on 'Politically Incorrect' Faculty and Students
- 5 Victory for Student Rights in Wisconsin: Regents to Restore Due Process Rights
- 6 From the Campus Freedom Network
- 8 Fanning the Flames: FIRE's 10th Anniversary Dinner Celebration!
- 10 From the Director of the Campus Freedom Network
- 11 FIRE Announces Student Video Contest Winners
- 11 New Videos Enhance FIRE's Multimedia Project
- 12 The Last Word



601 Walnut Street • Suite 510  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
215.717.3473 tel  
215.717.3440 fax  
[www.thefire.org](http://www.thefire.org)



## First Amendment Rights Trampled by Pittsburgh College after Student Advocates for Concealed Carry of Firearms on Campus

A student who wants to form a gun-rights group at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) has been threatened with disciplinary action for her efforts. Student Christine Brashier has turned to FIRE for help after reporting that administrators banned her informational pamphlets, ordered her to destroy all copies of them, and told her that further "academic misconduct" would not be tolerated.

"CCAC has demonstrated a shocking lack of respect for the rights of free speech and free association," FIRE President Greg Lukianoff said. "Across the country, students are increasingly denied the First Amendment right to debate the Second Amendment. At CCAC, this censorship trend has reached a new low."

In April, CCAC student Christine Brashier created pamphlets to distribute to her classmates encouraging them to join her in forming a chapter of the national Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC) organization at CCAC. The handbill states that the group "supports the legalization of concealed carry by licensed individuals on college campuses." She personally distributed copies of the flyer, which identified her as a "Campus Leader" of the effort to start the chapter.

On April 24, Jean Snider, Student Development Specialist at CCAC's Allegheny Campus, summoned Brashier to a meeting that day with Snider and Yvonne Burns, Dean of Student Development. According to Brashier, the deans told Brashier that passing out her non-commercial pamphlets was prohibited as "solicitation," and that trying to "sell" other students on the idea of the organization was prohibited. They also informed Brashier that the college must pre-approve any distribution of literature to fellow students, and that pamphlets like hers would not be approved. They even insisted that Brashier destroy all copies of her pamphlet.

Brashier reports that she was also interrogated about why she was distributing the pamphlets, whether she owned a licensed firearm and had ever brought it to campus (she had not), whether she carried a concealed firearm off campus, and whether she disagreed with the existing college policy banning concealed weapons on campus.

When Brashier stated that she wanted to be able to discuss this policy freely on campus, she was told to stop doing so without the permission of the CCAC administration. Dean Burns reportedly said, "You may want to discuss this topic but the college does not, and you cannot make us." Brashier was then told to cease all activities related to her involvement with SCCC at CCAC and that such "academic misconduct" would not be tolerated.

FIRE wrote CCAC President Alex Johnson on April 29 about these violations of Brashier's First Amendment speech and association rights, pointing out that her free speech in no way constituted solicitation, that CCAC is obligated to permit students to distribute literature and may not ban it on the basis of viewpoint or content, and that if CCAC recognizes student organizations at all, it must recognize an organization that supports concealed carry on campus. FIRE requested a response by May 13, and CCAC responded only by promising a reply from either CCAC or the Allegheny County Solicitor's office at some "reasonable" future time.



Christine Brashier with FIRE's Adam Kissel

# From the Board of Advisors

By Wendy Kaminer



Wendy Kaminer

---

*Note: the following is excerpted from Kaminer's keynote address, "What Causes Campus Censorship and How to Combat it," delivered at the Campus Freedom Network Conference on June 19, 2009.*

I think I can remember the first time I heard a Harvard student complain that she was oppressed, as a woman and a member of a racial minority, back in the early 1990s. Of course, she may have encountered some discrimination, although it would probably have been much more subtle and much less socially respectable than the discrimination that confronted her counterparts a generation earlier. Indeed, like most elite schools, Harvard didn't even admit women on an equal basis until it was forced to do so by law, in 1972, with passage of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act. But, by the 1990s, the kind of discrimination a student might encounter in the Ivy League, relatively subtle and occasional, was not "oppression."

So how did this young woman come to view herself as oppressed? I think you can trace her sense of oppression to the confluence of three movements: the feminist crusade against pornography; multi-culturalism; and popular therapeutic notions of dysfunction and abuse. In the late 1980s, feminist antipornography crusaders Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin re-framed porn as actual assaults against women. Obliterating the line between words and action, MacKinnon came up with the novel idea of defining pornography as a violation of women's civil rights. "Words wound" was a mantra of anti-porn feminists, and they meant it literally, describing porn as virtual rape—with an emphasis on rape and not its virtuality. Some years ago, I debated a rabid anti-porn, feminist academic who likened the production of pornography to the manufacture of unsafe cars, like some infamous old Fords with exploding gas tanks.

Meanwhile, by the late 1980s, the personal development movement was focused on recovery from a wide array of supposed abuses and addictions. Virtually all of us were said to require the support of a 12-step group modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous because virtually all of us were said to be addicted to something or other—food, sex, running, gossiping—whatever. In the late 1980s and into the 90s, stories of recovery and codependency filled daytime talk shows the way reality shows fill prime time today. Oprah was enormously important in popularizing the

recovery movement and the idealization of victimhood, which is what helped create a culture of censorship. Self-appointed recovery experts declared that we all suffered from the disease of codependency, transmitted by our supposedly dysfunctional families and our histories of child abuse: we were all said to have been victims of abuse, in one form or another. This meant that practically all of us were fragile, vulnerable, and easily damaged—by words as well as actions. As anti-porn feminists insisted, "words wound."

Words were said to be especially wounding when directed against members of historically disadvantaged groups or women. Multiculturalists focused on nurturing but not assimilating minority students and eradicating racism, sexism, and various other "isms" from the hearts and minds of students from historically advantaged groups—mainly white males. Free speech came to be commonly and even reflexively regarded as an instrument of oppression; censorship became essential to a supposedly progressive vision of equality. Words wound.

So, the anti-porn movement, popular therapies, and multiculturalism combined into a powerful force for censorship. All of these movements—and the rigid political correctness they fostered—were sharply critiqued and satirized throughout the 1990s. Mockery of campus speech and harassment codes was conventional; still they prospered on college and university campuses. In fact, over the past 10 years, repression on campus has only gotten worse, as a quick look at FIRE's website confirms.

"I'm not in favor of censorship, but..." people say. "But hate speech isn't free speech," or "free speech isn't the right to offend," they insist rather stupidly, as if we'd need free speech rights to protect the right not to give offense. And the term hate speech has become rather meaningless, because like "codependency" or "child abuse," it has been defined so broadly and applied so promiscuously: criticism, petty insults, arguments, jokes, and political talking points are all apt to be labeled hateful in this culture where people revel in taking offense -- and finding excuses for censorship.



# Bucknell University Slams Door on Student Satires of Obama Stimulus Plan, Affirmative Action

Student rights are under assault at Bucknell University, where a conservative student group's protests against affirmative action policies and President Obama's stimulus plan have repeatedly been shut down or forbidden by administrators using flimsy or patently false excuses. After the Bucknell University Conservatives Club (BUCC) had three events censored in two months, the students turned to FIRE for help.

"Bucknell promises free speech, but it delivers selective censorship," said FIRE President Greg Lukianoff. "Bucknell administrators have gone out of their way to abuse and even invent policies in attempts to silence these students, all the while professing to respect free speech."

Bucknell's recent forays into censorship began on March 17, 2009, when BUCC members stood at Bucknell's student center and passed out fake dollar bills with President Obama's face on the front and the sentence "Obama's stimulus plan makes your money as worthless as monopoly money" on the back. One hour into this symbolic protest, Bucknell administrator Judith L. Mickanis approached the students and told them that they were "busted," that they were "soliciting" without prior approval, and that their activity was equivalent to handing out Bibles.

The students protested, but despite the fact that Bucknell's solicitation policy explicitly covers only sales and fundraising materials, Mickanis insisted via e-mail that prior permission was needed to pass out any materials—"anything from Bibles to other matter."

"Distributing protest literature is an American free-speech tradition that predates even the founding of the United States," said Adam Kissel, Director of FIRE's Individual Rights Defense Program. "Why is Bucknell so afraid of students handing out 'Bibles [or] other matter' that might provide challenging perspectives? Colleges are supposed to be marketplaces of ideas. Bucknell is betraying this ideal."

Bucknell's increasingly disturbing crusade against free expression continued on April 7, when administrators shut down BUCC's "affirmative action bake sale" protest. Affirmative action bake sales are a widely used form of satirical protest against affirmative action policies that treat people differently based on race. Organizers typically display suggested pricing in which African-American and Hispanic students are asked to pay lower prices than Asian and white students for the same items. The protests are thus intended to satirize and spark debate about affirmative action policies, not to raise revenue.

A video recording shows that an hour into BUCC's protest, Associate Dean of Students Gerald W. Commerford arrived and informed the students that he had the "opportunity" to shut down the sale because the prices they were charging were different (lower) than what they had listed on their event

application. The students offered to raise their prices on the spot, but Commerford refused and insisted that they close the event immediately and file another application for a later date.

Accordingly, BUCC members filed an application to hold the same event two weeks later, but were then told that they would have to obtain the permission of the Dean of Students to hold a "controversial" event. No such permission is required by Bucknell policy. When the students nevertheless attempted to get this special permission, Commerford rejected the request. In a recorded conversation, Commerford said that such a bake sale would violate Bucknell's nondiscrimination policy, even with satirical recommended (not actual) pricing, and that the only event he would approve on the topic would be a debate in a different forum altogether. This novel restriction also does not exist among Bucknell's official policies.

After these three instances of censorship in two months, BUCC President Travis Eaione turned to FIRE. FIRE wrote Bucknell President Brian C. Mitchell on May 21, informing him of these incidents and reminding him that the university's handbook "instructs students not only that they have freedom of speech but that 'deliberate interference' with this freedom is prohibited ... By shutting down BUCC events, Bucknell sends the message to its students that speech is to be feared, monitored, and ultimately restrained if it is deemed sufficiently controversial."

Bucknell responded, claiming that the BUCC tried to hold a discriminatory sale, when actually they wanted to hold a satirical "sale" that protested *against* affirmative action policies that they believed to be discriminatory. Due to the release of Bucknell's false and misleading information, FIRE wrote a second letter to President Mitchell on June 30 and awaits another response.

| EQUITY BAKERY<br>aka<br>THE GAP                      |         |
|--|---------|
| PRICES PER ITEM,<br>BASED ON PERCENTAGE OF EARNINGS. |         |
| WHITE MEN  | \$ 1.00 |
| WHITE WOMEN  | .73     |
| BLACK MEN  | .30     |
| BLACK WOMEN  | .65     |
| HISPANIC MEN   | .61     |
| HISPANIC WOMEN                                       | .57     |
| ASIAN MEN  | .37     |
| ASIAN WOMEN  | .67     |





# Cal Poly Suspends Reporting on 'Politically Incorrect' Faculty and Students

## *'Bias Incident' Reporting a Disturbing Nationwide Trend*

California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), which has already been on the losing side of a free speech lawsuit, has suspended an unconstitutional program targeting professors and students whose speech is “biased” or not “politically correct.” The program even planned to let students report complaints anonymously, meaning that those deemed “politically incorrect” might never have known whom they had offended or why. Under pressure from FIRE, Cal Poly has promised that any future CARE-Net program (short for Community Advocating REspect) “will not function to suppress controversial, offensive, or any other kind of protected speech.”

“This program jeopardized students’ and faculty members’ human, legal, and academic rights as members of a public university,” FIRE President Greg Lukianoff said. “Cal Poly should be commended for seeing what terrible consequences such inquisitions could have on its campus. We will be watching to make sure this program does not resurface in some other form.”



CARE-Net was launched in May for the purpose of “protecting students from biased teachers” and other “biased incidents,” according to a May 3 article in the *Mustang*

*Daily*, the school’s student newspaper. The program defined a “bias related incident” as “any speech, act, or harassing incident or action taken by a person or group that is perceived to be malicious or discriminatory toward another person or group based on bias or prejudice relating to [various human characteristics].”

The program also featured a dozen student, faculty, and staff “advocates” who would respond to reports of faculty bias. A frighteningly honest comment to the *Mustang Daily* by one student advocate revealed that one of CARE-Net’s targets is any “teacher who isn’t politically correct or is hurtful in their actions or words.”

After Cal Poly faculty members asked FIRE for help, FIRE’s Lukianoff wrote Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker on May 6, explaining that targeting “biased” speech for investigation is an unconstitutional infringement on freedom of speech and academic freedom. FIRE’s letter noted that encouraging people to report on one another’s “biased” or “politically incorrect” speech poses a serious threat to the very qualities that make a university a “marketplace of ideas” and chills the expression of controversial ideas across the campus.

Cal Poly’s Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Undergraduate Education, W. David Conn, responded for Cal Poly on May 15. Conn announced that the program has been “suspended.” He also stated that the program, if it is reinstated at all, will not suppress any kind of protected speech, and that it will comply with the law, the Constitution, and campus policies and agreements that promise the protection of rights on campus. No such program is expected to be in force until “next fall at the earliest.”

“We are glad that Cal Poly did not wait for yet another lawsuit to repudiate its unconstitutional actions and policies,” said Will Creeley, FIRE’s Director of Legal and Public Advocacy. “It is hard to imagine how a program like CARE-Net could exist at all without betraying fundamental liberties on campus.”

Please visit



for comprehensive information on the state of liberty on America’s campuses, including pages for individual academic institutions, relevant links to our research of speech codes, and case materials from FIRE’s Individual Rights Defense Program.

# Victory for Student Rights in Wisconsin: Regents to Restore Due Process Rights

**After substantial input from FIRE, the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents has restored essential due process rights for students statewide. The restored rights include the option of a hearing before a committee including student peers, attorney representation in the case of serious allegations, and both e-mail and paper notification of proceedings.**

After substantial input from FIRE, the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents has restored essential due process rights for students statewide. The restored rights include the option of a hearing before a committee including student peers, attorney representation in the case of serious allegations, and both e-mail and paper notification of proceedings.

“The Board of Regents should be highly commended for protecting students’ rights and fundamental notions of fairness across the state,” FIRE President Greg Lukianoff said. “The policy revisions are a victory for due process rights, which have been systematically reduced in higher education over the last few decades. It is very refreshing to see a university system take steps towards restoring procedural protections for students.”

Since 2007, the Board of Regents has been developing a new version of Chapter UWS 17 of the State Administrative Code, which governs infractions and judicial procedures within Wisconsin’s public universities. A committee of administrators and students suggested many controversial changes that met with strong opposition from FIRE and student groups. The most objectionable changes limited due process rights and afforded a dangerous degree of discretion to administrators. Had it been granted, this discretion would have opened the door to due process lawsuits as well as arbitrary and inconsistent punishments.

Adam Kissel, Director of FIRE’s Individual Rights Defense Program, went on a speaking tour of Wisconsin campuses sponsored by the United Council of UW Students in early March to advocate against the controversial changes. On March 5, he spoke before several Regents directly at a public hearing. Together with the Committee for Academic Freedom and Rights at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, FIRE wrote the Regents with seven specific concerns on March 13. Almost all of FIRE’s concerns were addressed satisfactorily by the Regents, who voted on the final version of the policy on May 8.

One significant issue involved a single word. The revision committee had changed “shall” to “may” in the provision that “The hearing examiner or committee shall observe recognized legal privileges.” The change to “may” would have taken away a huge swath of legal privileges that had been guaranteed to students, leaving students with no idea, until they actually arrived at the hearing, what the rules of their hearing would be. After FIRE intervened, the Regents restored the original word.

At least one member of the revision committee has criticized these positive changes. “It is sad that some administrators are unhappy about these improvements for students’ rights,” Kissel said. “Students should not have to fight administrators for their rights every step of the way.”

*Continued from front cover story*

“If it is true that trying to ‘sell’ students on an idea is prohibited as a matter of solicitation, virtually the entire enterprise of the college is prohibited,” said Robert Shibley, FIRE Vice President. “All persuasive speech would have to be pre-approved by the college. CCAC must end this unjustified assault on its students’ rights immediately.”

On June 1, CCAC responded to FIRE, saying that Brashier will not be punished for her efforts to organize the group, but only if she follows CCAC’s unconstitutional policies.

“CCAC students, as well as every citizen of Allegheny County, should feel very disappointed by the county’s apparent disregard of fundamental rights. FIRE will continue to pursue this matter until the First Amendment is restored to CCAC’s campus,” Lukianoff said.

## 2nd Annual CFN Conference a Smashing Success

FIRE hosted the 2nd Annual Campus Freedom Network Conference here in Philadelphia June 18–20. Fifty-one students from across the country gathered in Philadelphia for two days of lectures, panels, and workshops on all aspects of free speech on campus.

Students learned about the threat to free speech on campus from KC Johnson, co-author of *Until Proven Innocent: Political Correctness and the Shameful Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Rape Case*, and FIRE Co-founder Harvey Silverglate. They received an education in the philosophical foundations of free speech from Alliance Defense Fund senior counsel David French, University of Massachusetts professor Daphne Patai, and executive director of the Stanford Constitutional Law Center Derek Shaffer.

FIRE President Greg Lukianoff discussed the phenomenon of “unlearning liberty,” where students are taught by the example of administrators to censor fellow students. FIRE Director of Speech Code Research Samantha Harris lectured on campus speech codes, and FIRE staffers hosted speech codes workshops where students could learn about the specific speech codes on their own campuses. Lawyer, author, and FIRE Board of Advisors member Wendy Kaminer discussed the intellectual and cultural origins of the current threats to liberty on campus. A new media panel offered attendees insight into using new technologies to uncover free speech abuses, and a student case panel demonstrated concretely the threat to students’ liberty while also showing how students can fight back to defend their rights.

This year’s conference was a great success. After the conference, one student wrote, “I would definitely recommend this conference to friends in the future. The entire conference was extremely interesting and informative. It’s something every college student should be aware of.”



## Increasing the Conference's Impact through New Media



We take seriously our work to educate students and the general public about individual rights on college campuses. To increase the educational impact of the conference, we streamed the event live over the Internet and invited students, FIRE staff, and the general public to join in a public conversation about the conference on Twitter. Ninety unique visitors tuned in to the conference via our live stream page and FIRE sent “tweets” throughout the conference to over 1,100 Twitter followers—potentially reaching four million people on Twitter. Students at the conference and people watching via live stream tweeted about the conference as well, directly reaching a total of 4,360 of their followers with FIRE’s message.

## Campus Freedom Network Spring Incentive Program Winners Announced

This May, the Campus Freedom Network wrapped up the spring semester incentive program. To earn points in the program, students had the opportunity to write op-eds, bring FIRE speakers to campus, and recruit new members to the CFN. Three very impressive students distinguished themselves through their activism and dedication to liberty.

### 3rd Place:

This year’s third place winner is **Adam Shamah** from Binghamton University. A rising junior, Adam is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Binghamton Review*, a conservative publication on the Binghamton campus. Adam authored an article about the case of Binghamton social work student Andre Massena, who FIRE successfully defended this past fall. But rather than stop there, Adam’s pursuit of justice continued into the next semester. A follow-up article was published in the magazine’s February issue, as Adam hosted FIRE’s Adam Kissel on campus and interviewed him. As our way of rewarding him for standing up for liberty on his campus (goodness knows Binghamton University is unlikely to do it!), Adam received a 16GB iPod Touch.

### 2nd Place:

Our second place winner is **Colin Reusch**, who this year graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a Master’s degree in Public Administration. Colin has been working along with the ECU student government to reform campus policies for several years. Colin first got involved in reforming campus policies by protesting a policy banning window postings in the residence halls. Shortly thereafter he began working with a number of other students to propose revisions to a restrictive campus posting policy, and his group hopes that its

hard work and steady patience will bear fruit after the college administration finishes reviewing its suggested changes. In honor of his hard work, we sent Colin a new MacBook laptop.

### 1st Place:

Our spring incentive program grand prize winner is **Kyle Duerstein**, a rising senior at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Kyle, working with other student government leaders across the University of Wisconsin system, led the fight against proposed changes to the State Administrative Code—the law that governs judicial procedures within Wisconsin’s public universities. Working with the United Council of UW Students, Kyle organized a statewide speaking tour that brought FIRE’s Adam Kissel to lecture at a number of UW system campuses and even arranged to have Adam testify before a hearing of the UW Board of Regents.

As the CFN’s grand prize winner, Kyle will receive a \$2,500 scholarship toward his school expenses for next year. In addition, Kyle is the fifth student to be inducted into the CFN’s Prometheus Society, a distinguished honor reserved for only the most active members of the Campus Freedom Network.

## CFN Surpasses 3,000 Member Mark

The CFN’s growth has been breathtaking. In the last issue of the *Quarterly*, we reported that the CFN had grown to over 2,000 members. We are proud to announce that we have now surpassed the 3,000 member mark.



# Fanning the Flames: FIRE's



Since our founding ten years ago, FIRE has achieved 150 public victories at 116 colleges and universities with a total enrollment of more than 2.5 million, and we are directly responsible for changing 74 repressive or unconstitutional policies affecting nearly 1.5 million students. In 2008 alone, we spread awareness about the state of liberty on campus to 93 million people through an array of important and diverse media outlets and so far in 2009 our message is reaching a bigger audience than ever before. In our first ten years of existence, FIRE has become the leading authority on civil liberties in higher education and a serious voice in the battle for rights on campus, and we are continuing to gain ground against a higher education establishment that has 250,000 times our level of resources.

Throughout 2009, we are taking every opportunity to commemorate FIRE's ten years of success. The cornerstone of this celebratory year is FIRE's 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner in New York City in October.

**We hope you can join us.**

## EVENT DETAILS:



## EVENT TICKETS:

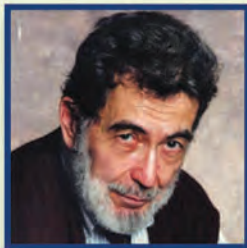
Formal invitations will be mailed out around Labor Day, but the event is open to all who wish to attend. To make sure you get a ticket before they run out, ticket purchasing is available now at [www.thefire.org/anniversary](http://www.thefire.org/anniversary). To order tickets over the phone, please contact Alisha Glennon ([Alisha@thefire.org](mailto:Alisha@thefire.org)) at 215-717-3473.

| TICKET LEVEL                     | PRICE    | BENEFITS   |
|----------------------------------|----------|--|
| Patron Ticket                    | \$350    | Reception and dinner   |
| Benefactor Ticket                | \$500    | VIP reception, dinner, and listed in the program   |
| Beacon Table (seats 8)           | \$3,000  | VIP reception for 2, basic reception for 6, dinner, and listed in the program  |
| Lighthouse Table (seats 8)       | \$5,000  | VIP reception for 8, priority seating at dinner, and listed in the program   |
| Lodestar Society Table (seats 8) | \$10,000 | VIP reception for 8, priority seating at dinner, listed in the program, featured in <i>The FIRE Quarterly</i> , and a commemorative signed photograph with dinner speakers |



# 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

## FEATURED SPEAKERS:



### **Nat Hentoff, *Honorary Dinner Chairman***

*Renowned columnist, historian, music critic,  
and member of FIRE's Board of Advisors.*



### **Virginia Postrel, *Mistress of Ceremonies***

*Contributing editor for The Atlantic and  
FIRE Board Member*



### **Eugene Volokh, *Keynote Speaker***

*Noted UCLA law professor and creator  
of The Volokh Conspiracy blog*

---

**FIRE is also pleased to have the following accomplished individuals supporting  
us as Honorary Vice Chairs of our 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner:**

Dave Barry  
David Boaz  
Edward H. Crane  
Donald Downs  
Penn Jillette  
KC Johnson  
Wendy Kaminer  
Alan Charles Kors  
John Leo

Richard Losick  
William Mellor  
Steven Pinker  
Dorothy Rabinowitz  
Glenn Reynolds  
Nadine Strossen  
Mary Beth Tinker  
Walter Williams  
James Q. Wilson



# “Educating Students to Fight Back”

By Luke Sheahan



Luke Sheahan

---

Every student and faculty member who registers for the CFN is sent a t-shirt with the inscription, “A nation that does not educate in liberty will not long preserve it and will not even know when it is lost.” Every FIRE supporter knows how true this statement is and how tenuous is the hold of liberty on campus. At FIRE, we deal every day with the fallout of universities that have abandoned their commitment to freedom on campus and have created an environment that not only chills and stifles dissent, but also teaches students that freedom from offense is more important than freedom of speech.

In addition to our work defending the rights of students censored by their universities, FIRE also seeks to educate students, faculty, and the general public about the threat to free speech on campus.

Our newest and most effective educational program is the Campus Freedom Network. As a loose affiliation of students and faculty members, the CFN has registered over 3,000 members nationwide and is still growing. The CFN has members at over 1,200 campuses across the country. Through our CFN members, we distribute *Guides* across the country and we make our *Spotlight* research count by informing students about how speech codes threaten their liberty. CFN members have written op-eds exposing repressive campus speech codes and have organized lectures by FIRE staff members.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we hosted the 2nd Annual Campus Freedom Network Conference. More than 50 students from across the country gathered in Philadelphia for two days of intensive study of the philosophical foundations and practical applications of their free speech rights and how those rights are threatened on campus.

An essential component of this educational enterprise is teaching students how to fight back and assert their rights to dissent and to express their individual views. We facilitated small group workshops on speech codes so students could learn about the common types of censorious regulations administrators enact on campuses as well as what specific illiberal codes were in place on their own campuses. Students had the opportunity to ask experienced FIRE staff members about why specific policies violated students’ rights.

After the conference, one student wrote, “I feel quite prepared to return to my campus and defend my right[s]—and also to help inform other students about their rights and how to defend them.” Another told us, “I feel confident that I can take what I learned here back to my campus.” When these students return to campus in the fall, they will be educated and committed emissaries for liberty.

Our annual conference is a microcosm of the CFN’s mission and impact. Through the CFN, FIRE is combating censorship by educating students about their rights so not only will they not back down under pressure, but they will also educate their classmates and fellow students about their rights. As one student wrote over Twitter at the end of the conference, “Knowledge is power and I’ve got a lot more knowledge now!”

---

*Luke C. Sheahan of Lebanon, Oregon, graduated cum laude from the Honors College at Oregon State University, where he studied political science. For three years he served as executive editor and publisher of The Liberty, an independent commentary paper at Oregon State. During his time at Oregon State, Luke held executive positions and chairmanships in a number of student organizations as well as memberships in the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Golden Key Honor Society, and Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society. He was a 2005-2006 recipient of the Ronald Reagan Future Leaders Scholarship and he was a student panelist at the Conservative Political Action Conference in February 2006. Luke was a FIRE summer intern in 2005.*

---

## About the Publication

The *FIRE Quarterly* is published four times per year by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

The mission of FIRE is to defend and sustain individual rights at America's increasingly repressive and partisan colleges and universities. These rights include freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of individual liberty and dignity. FIRE's core mission is to protect the unprotected and to educate the public and communities of concerned Americans about the threats to these rights on our campuses and about the means to preserve them.

FIRE is a charitable and educational tax-exempt foundation within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to FIRE are deductible to the fullest extent provided by tax laws.

Editor: Erin Osovetz

Design & Layout: Rachael Frank

### HOW TO REACH US:



601 Walnut Street • Suite 510

Philadelphia, PA 19106

215.717.3473 tel

215.717.3440 fax

[www.thefire.org](http://www.thefire.org)

# FIRE Announces Student Video Contest Winners

FIRE is pleased to announce the winners of its "Freedom on Campus" student video contest. American college and university students were invited to submit short videos documenting school policies or practices that stifle their freedoms on campus, with the opportunity to win scholarships and other prizes. A grand prize of \$5,000 and an invitation to the Campus Freedom Network's summer conference went to a group of students from Ohio University (OU) for their video, "That's What She Said." Robert Nyerges, Dan Ray, Evan Mitchell, and Aaron Karp produced and filmed a documentary on OU's sexual harassment policy, describing how the policy likely violates the First Amendment.

FIRE also awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to Timothy Hawco of SUNY Fredonia for his video, "Day of Protest," and to the Student Media Association of Westchester Community College for their entry, "Autonomy." An honorable mention of \$250 was awarded to Chad Ainsworth of Southeastern University for his video, "Campus Freedom."

"FIRE is thrilled that the winners of our video contest displayed a clear understanding of student rights on campus and portrayed both sides of the issue by interviewing campus administrators and FIRE representatives," FIRE President Greg Lukianoff said. "Congratulations to all the students who participated in the contest and helped shine some light on abuses of basic rights on campus."

## New Videos Enhance FIRE's Multimedia Project

FIRE has released a new video called "Threats, Coercion, and Bullying at Missouri State." The short documentary covers FIRE's case at Missouri State University (MSU), where social work student Emily Brooker was threatened with expulsion after she refused (as a matter of personal belief) to send a signed letter to the Missouri state legislature in favor of homosexual foster parenting and adoption.



This violation resulted not only in a federal lawsuit (which the school settled) but also in an official report that found that a culture of intimidation was rife in the university's School of Social Work. For instance, "many students and faculty stated a fear of voicing differing opinions from the instructor or colleague," and "[the term] 'bullying' was used by both students and faculty to characterize specific faculty." The 12-minute documentary features interviews with Brooker, faculty at MSU who were involved in the case, and Missouri State Senator Jane Cunningham.

"Emily Brooker's case is an object lesson in what can happen when a department puts its own political views before the basic rights, autonomy, and freedom of conscience of its students," said FIRE's Lukianoff. "We hope that this documentary will serve as a reminder that our universities should value the free speech and free minds of their students, rather than try to stifle a healthy diversity of opinion."





601 Walnut Street • Suite 510  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

NON PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PHILA PA  
PERMIT 5634

FIRE thanks all of its supporters for their dedication to FIRE and its mission.

...

If you would like to donate to FIRE, please visit [www.thefire.org/support](http://www.thefire.org/support) or call 215.717.3473.

## The Last Word:

THE **FIRE** QUARTERLY

# FIRE Launches Redesigned Website

If you've been to [thefire.org](http://thefire.org) lately, you will have noticed that the layout and navigation you've come to recognize have changed. We've been working hard for more than six months to design and develop a new online look for FIRE, and we believe that the result increases functionality while displaying news and issues in a way that's interactive and educational. Help get the word out about FIRE's website by posting a link to the newly designed [thefire.org](http://thefire.org) using your Twitter, Facebook, or MySpace account.

