

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



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Mr. David French
President
Foundation for Individual Rights in Education
601 Walnut Street, Suite 510
Philadelphia, PA 19106

December 12, 2005

Dear Mr. French:

In response to your letter of Nov. 23, let me assure you that DePaul University strongly supports free speech and provides forums for respectful dialogue among people of similar and differing views.

Regarding Ward Churchill's Oct. 20 lecture, I understand that a small group of students, including Nicholas Hahn of the College Republicans, met with Student Affairs administrators to express their views and ask that the university cancel Professor Churchill's lecture on campus. Administrators listened to the students' concerns and encouraged them to use the lecture venue to discuss their perspectives. The lecture was open to DePaul students, faculty and staff until the lecture room was filled to capacity.

Students – including College Republicans – and others from inside and outside of the university community, representing views both in support of and against Professor Churchill, distributed flyers and displayed placards documenting their views at the entrance of the lecture venue. Mr. Hahn and several of his colleagues attended the lecture, at which Churchill took questions from the audience facilitated by faculty members.

In early November, the university also hosted an open forum, titled "Difficult Dialogue," that provided an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to discuss issues raised by Professor Churchill. Mr. Hahn attended this forum and publicly stated his opinions and ideas to other participants.

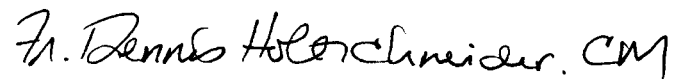
As for the brochure for which the College Republican organization sought permission to post around campus, DePaul University approves, as a matter of course, announcements of speakers who are coming to campus. We do not approve posters that denounce or criticize invited speakers. The same would be true in the reverse. If the College Republicans had invited a speaker who was objectionable to another group on campus, DePaul would have permitted posters advertising the event, but would not have permitted posters denouncing the College Republicans' speaker. These posters are meant to inform the campus community of upcoming events. DePaul does not use this particular venue for the expression of political views of any stripe.

I personally would not have used the word "propaganda" to summarize this criteria, and the word is not part of any policy at DePaul. The practice, however, seems a sensible one to me and is enforced equally for speakers of all topics and positions. Advertisements of speakers are posted. Denunciations of speakers are not posted. Disagreements with invited speakers may be expressed in other venues, such as the student newspaper, dialogue sessions, and public protest opportunities, all of which Mr. Hahn or his colleagues, to their great credit, used to good effect.

DePaul welcomes speakers of a wide variety of positions on a wide variety of topics every year. The university is committed to working with any student group in bringing speakers to campus. Students have the opportunity to hear these ideas first-hand from the women and men - sometimes famous and at other times infamous - who advocate them. In many cases, students will reject these ideas, and rightly so. But they will do so after having heard them first-hand. DePaul has a long history of supporting academic freedom and free speech. It would be a mistake to characterize the campus otherwise, based on the factually incorrect report you have received. We ardently support an open marketplace of ideas but insist that our faculty, staff and students adhere to the responsibility for maintaining an atmosphere of civilized and tolerant discourse, regardless of the speaker's affiliations and opinions.

As DePaul goes forward, we will continue to support free speech. In the meantime, I thank you for inquiring about this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M.
President