



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

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January 7, 2010

President Ronald J. Daniels
Office of the President
The Johns Hopkins University
3400 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Re: Johns Hopkins University and FIRE's Red Alert list

Dear President Daniels:

I am writing to draw your attention to the full-page advertisement that FIRE ran in the most recent "America's Best Colleges" issue of *U.S. News & World Report*. The advertisement appears on page 89, immediately adjacent to the rankings of the top 100 national universities, in the same position our advertisement appeared last year. We have enclosed a copy of the issue for your information. As we informed your predecessor, President William Brody, in our last letter, FIRE plans to continue its advertisements in *U.S. News* each year to bring attention to the colleges and universities that make up our "Red Alert" list. The increased traffic the advertisement brings to FIRE's website, thefire.org, as well as the negative attention it draws to Johns Hopkins University's public image, make it all the more disappointing that FIRE must include Hopkins among the "worst of the worst" for protecting campus liberty for a second straight year.

FIRE takes no pleasure in keeping Johns Hopkins on its Red Alert list. As an organization that prides itself on its ability to quickly resolve disputes, we find it especially disappointing that Johns Hopkins has continued to stand by its unjust actions and willingly imperil the free expression of its students and faculty. We are further disappointed that President Brody did not see fit to remedy the situation before departing as your predecessor. FIRE is no less determined, however, to continue to expose and fight abuses of liberty on America's campuses and at Red Alert institutions most of all.

As we have said repeatedly in our letters to Johns Hopkins, as well as in numerous press releases and entries on FIRE's blog, *The Torch*, removing the university from FIRE's Red Alert list is simple. While Johns Hopkins has missed its chance to bring justice in the case of Justin Park, it can undo the lasting damage done by President Brody in instituting the poorly named "Principles for Ensuring Equity, Civility and Respect for All" in response to

Park's posting of an "offensive" Halloween invitation on Facebook.com. The Principles chill speech across Johns Hopkins, and the document's breadth guarantees that it will be arbitrarily and selectively enforced. Such a degradation of free expression and academic freedom cannot be allowed to stand, and FIRE will continue to publicly call on Johns Hopkins to remedy this wrong until it does so.

Taking this step will cost Johns Hopkins nothing, and will only save the university from the further embarrassment of having to publicly defend its indefensible disregard of student rights. Johns Hopkins has both a moral and a legal obligation to protect these rights, and it is past time that the university lived up to them.

I would, of course, be happy to speak with you personally about this matter. You may reach me at 215-717-3473 or at robert@thefire.org. Thank you for your attention to this crucial issue. I sincerely hope that FIRE will not be sending this letter again in another year's time.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Shibley
Vice President

Encl.

cc:

Thomas S. Lewis, Interim Vice President for Government, Community, and Public
Affairs

Michael C. Eicher, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations