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- ☐ Russ Feingold
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- ☐ Joe Lieberman
- ☐ Barack Obama
- ☐ Bill Richardson
- ☐ Mark Warner

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## Townhall Spotlight



### Herman Cain

Herman Cain is host of the nationally syndicated radio talk show *The Bottom Line with Herman Cain* and a contributing columnist on Townh

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## News

### DePaul Investigates Mock Bake Sale for Possible 'Harassment'

By Nathan Burchfiel

Feb 14, 2006

(CNSNews.com) - A DePaul University bake sale, mocking affirmative action, has exposed the student who organized the sale to an investigation on the grounds that he discriminated against and harassed other students.

The Chicago-based school is investigating whether senior Michael O'Shea may have violated the school's anti-discriminatory harassment policy with an "affirmative action bake sale" he organized with the DePaul Conservative Alliance (DCA).

Affirmative action bake sales, in which white and Asian students are charged more for baked goods than blacks and Hispanics, are popular among conservative activists on college campuses. They are designed to criticize affirmative action policies, not to raise funds.

After the DCA protest sparked what the school's student weekly newspaper called "a heated conversation" among students, university officials told organizers to shut down the bake sale. On Jan. 20, O'Shea received notification that the event was under investigation.

University spokeswoman Denise Mattson told Cybercast News Service that the review was launched because "there was a question about what the application for the event read and how it was characterized, versus how it unfolded."

But the investigation is being led by Cynthia Summers, vice president for student affairs, who investigates "concerns regarding

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the DePaul Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Procedures," according to a letter she sent to O'Shea.

Mattson declined to comment on whether the investigation, which she said the university prefers to call a "review," would examine charges of harassment. "I'm not that privy to exactly what they're reviewing," she said.

The DePaul anti-discrimination policy defines harassment as "any behavior (verbal, written, or physical) that abuses, assaults, intimidates, demeans or victimizes or has the effect of creating a hostile environment for any person based on any of the above protected characteristics."

The wide-sweeping policy states that the university "values the free and open exchange of ideas within an academic community," but that it "will not tolerate the harassment of and/or discrimination against any person or group of individuals on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, parental status, family relationship status, physical or mental disability, military status, or other status protected by local, state, or federal law in its employment or education settings."

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a group that promotes free speech on college campuses, is urging DePaul President Dennis Holtschneider to apologize for stopping the bake sale and end the investigation of O'Shea.

In a Jan. 23 letter to Holtschneider, FIRE Program Manager Robert Shibley defended the bake sale as "a form of satirical political protest" and criticized the "dismaying disregard for freedom of expression and open debate at DePaul."

Shibley told Cybercast News Service that organizers of the bake sale "were expecting controversy to arise among students," but that he did not think "any student really expects the university to bring charges against them ... for having what's effectively just a protest."

Although Shibley declined to predict the outcome of the DePaul investigation, FIRE has successfully convinced four other universities to allow affirmative action bake sales to continue. Administrators at the College of William and Mary, the University of Colorado-Boulder, Northeastern Illinois University, and the University of California-Irvine all allowed the bake sales to continue after public pressure from FIRE.

A March 2005 affirmative action bake sale at Grand Valley State University in Michigan ended with three officers from the school's chapter of the College Republicans being forced to resign. The College Republicans chapter also issued an apology to students who were offended by the protest.

Mattson, the DePaul University spokeswoman, said she expected the review to be completed "sooner rather than later," but is "not sure yet" if the findings will be made public.


Make media inquiries or request an interview with Nathan Burchfiel.

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by Michelle Malkin (Feb 15, 2006)

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