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**SUMMER09** Boston University

## **Administration rejects SGA suspension of The Minuteman**

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Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life Esther Terry rejected an enactment by the Student Government Association (SGA) that would suspend conservative campus newspaper The Minuteman in a letter to President Ngozi Mbawuike last week.

The letter, dated April 15, informed Mbawuike and the SGA that the enactment, which would suspend the registered student organization (RSO) the Silent Majority, which publishes the paper, did not bear Terry's signature.

"As the enactment does not reflect an appreciation of the Silent Majority's constitutional right to the exercise of free speech, I reject it altogether and recommend that it be rescinded in its entirety," Terry wrote.

University spokesman Ed Blaguszewski said the University found that the enactment was "inappropriate, and did not conform to the value of protecting free speech on campus."

The enactment was filed as a motion by speaker Shaun Robinson on Tuesday, April 7, and accused the Silent Majority of committing "slander" against SGA member Vanessa Snow, whom The Minuteman had personally attacked.

"It's quite simple that in my understanding of what slander is that The Minuteman crossed the border from opinion to slander," he said.

Robinson said that members of the Silent Majority were not invited to the meeting because the motion did not require immediate action.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a civil liberties group, took issue with the SGA's enactment, in light of an incident at the April 1 "Rally for Free Speech," which

the Silent Majority co-sponsored. A video surfaced on the Internet which showed Snow and Orchard Hill senator Ben Thompson taking newspapers from the hands of a member of The Silent Majority.

Blaguszewski said that University police have looked into the matter.

"UMass police have reached the conclusion that there is no basis to seek a criminal complaint," he said.

FIRE spokesman Adam Kissell calls that incident and the enactment voted in by the SGA a "direct violation" of a number of basic rights. FIRE has written numerous letters to Chancellor Robert C. Holub urging him to come to The Minuteman's defense.

The following week, commuter senator Derek Khanna filed a motion to redact the bill, citing FIRE's letter, which would mandate a full-page ad in The Massachusetts Daily Collegian and the return of \$1,500 – the estimated value of newspapers stolen – to the Silent Majority.

Speaker Robinson declined to entertain Khanna's motion, and Khanna refused to give up the floor until the bill was heard. Robinson called the police and Khanna was asked to leave.

Robinson said the SGA was not in a position to repeal the bill, as per its bylaws. Khanna disagreed.

"If the SGA has passed the bill, it certainly can repeal it," he said in an interview afterward.

Blaguszewski said the administration has the authority to reject certain bills, called enactments, if they aren't in accordance with University policy.

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