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## It's Safe to Read Again at Indiana University

[Jacob Sullum](#) | May 1, 2008, 12:24pm

Remember Keith Sampson, the janitor at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis (IUPUI) who was accused of racially harassing his co-workers by reading a scholarly book about the Ku Klux Klan? When I last [discussed](#) the case, IUPUI's Affirmative Action Office had backed off its initial charge—not because Sampson has a First Amendment right to read whatever books he wants at a state-run university but because the office could not determine exactly what he had been thinking while reading the book about the Klan. The implication was that if he ever read another book that a co-worker considered offensive, he could be investigated again and might be subject to disciplinary action if he displayed clearer signs of racial insensitivity than he did the first time around. But in a recent [response](#) to a letter from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), IUPUI Chancellor Charles Bantz suggests the university has seen the light:

I can candidly say that we regret this situation ever took place and that IUPUI takes this matter very seriously. IUPUI is committed to ensuring that its future approach to such matters is consistent with and affirms the long-standing commitment of this campus to the principles of freedom of expression, lifelong learning, and respect for the rights of all members of the IUPUI community. In the near future, IUPUI will be reexamining the campuswide affirmative action processes and procedures related to internal complaints.

This is probably as close to an apology as Sampson is going to get. FIRE [notes](#) that IUPUI's reconsideration of its harassment-by-reading theory came only after the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana repeatedly contacted the university on Sampson's behalf.

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