



ROBERT M. MYERS
CAMPUS COUNSEL

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November 13, 2023

By email to ida.namazi@thefire.org

Ida Namazi
Program Officer, Campus Rights Advocacy
Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE)
700 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Suite 340
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Ms. Namazi:

I am responding to your letter dated November 1, 2023 (emailed November 2, 2023).

Santa Monica College does not disagree with your recitation of the legal responsibility of academic institutions. Santa Monica College is fully committed to the Academic Freedom of our faculty. This commitment is reflected in Board Policy 4030 and contractual commitments with the Santa Monica College Faculty Association.

We disagree with your suggestion that College administrators subjected the faculty member's academic freedom to a vote of the cast. The vote was initiated by the faculty member; an administrator assisted her by creating a secret ballot for her use.

As reflected in the statement of the American Association of University Professors, all Santa Monica College faculty, including those who select plays for theatrical performances, have the right "to select the materials, determine the approach to the subject, make the assignments, and assess student academic performance in teaching activities for which faculty members are individually responsible, without having their decisions subject to the veto of a department chair, dean, or other administrative officer." We affirm that we have not – and will not – impose discipline on students for participating in any play or declining to participate in any play. Please note that the class producing "By the River Rivanna" concluded on November 9, 2023.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Myers".

ROBERT M. MYERS

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