



January 17, 2013

Mr. Joseph S. Aziz



Dear Mr. Aziz:

On January 4, 2013, I received a letter from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) concerning a disciplinary action taken by the University in regard to you. I had not then, nor have I to date, received any communication or appeal from you in regard to the matter. Nevertheless, on that same date, I referred that letter to University Counsel for review, which is my usual procedure. Today, I received the results of that review, and with the concurrence of Vice President Pennington, I have determined that because the University hearing officer found you had not violated Section F (Disruptive Conduct) and Section M (Harassment) of the Student Code of Conduct, the University's No Contact Order (UNCO) should have been rescinded. Therefore, the hearing officer should not have found a violation of Section F (Failure to Comply) with the UNCO, and I am overturning the decision of the hearing officer dated December 13, 2012. As a result, your suspension is revoked and you are permitted to attend the courses in which you are registered for the Spring 2013 semester.

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct and New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act is to try to create a campus community in which you and every student at the University is able to pursue his or her education in a positive learning environment, free from substantial disruption and interference from others. In implementing these laws and policies, there is a very fine line that must be observed between the violation of one individual's enjoyment of his or her rights in the community and the placing of inappropriate restrictions on another individual's freedom of expression. Because this is a University where the free exchange of ideas and views is a primary and defining value, the University is very loath to curtail expression, even when some members of the community find it offensive.

In short, up to a point that can only be determined on a case-by-case basis, a student is free to act in an offensive manner and free to say offensive things. The right to be offensive, however, does not mean that one should be. In my opinion, statements and actions that are offensive usually interfere with one's ability to make an important point. Your point was to object to the interference with the right of the Young Americans for Liberty to hear the views of a speaker they had invited to campus. I think your important message was lost, however, by the manner of your expression.

Once you complete your graduate studies, achievement in your chosen profession will require an understanding of the world, an ability to deal appropriately with people of all characteristics, backgrounds and views, and at least some minimal empathy and compassion for others. I am

sure you are capable of achieving all these qualities if you wish to do so, and I urge you to pursue them. If you do, the world will be a better place, and you will play a more meaningful role in it.

Hoping that you will think about this experience carefully, I wish you a very successful and productive academic term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan A. Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "C".

Susan A. Cole
President

SAC:pw

c:: Vice President Karen Pennington