



Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

601 Walnut Street, Suite 510 • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106
T 215-717-3473 • F 215-717-3440 • fire@thefire.org • www.thefire.org

Greg Lukianoff
PRESIDENT

July 28, 2006

Robert L. Shibley
VICE PRESIDENT OF
OPERATIONS

Martin Lipton
Chairman, Board of Trustees of New York University
Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen and Katz

Samantha K. Harris
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND
PUBLIC ADVOCACY

51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

Sent via U.S. Mail and Facsimile (212-403-2000)

Alan Charles Kors
CO-FOUNDER AND
CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Dear Chairman Lipton:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Harvey A. Silverglate
CO-FOUNDER AND
CHAIRMAN

William J. Hume
Joseph M. Maline
Marlene Mieske
Daphne Patai
Virginia Postrel
James E. Wiggins

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works on behalf of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, due process, and legal equality on America's college campuses. FIRE wrote to New York University's (NYU's) president and administrators last March to protest their refusal to protect free speech and open discussion at an event hosted by the NYU Objectivist Club. FIRE now writes to NYU's Board of Trustees because the errors of last March have not yet been rectified, and we fear that they will only be repeated.

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Lloyd Buchanan
T. Kenneth Cribb, Jr.
Candace de Russy
William A. Dunn
Benjamin F. Hammond
Nat Hentoff
Roy Innis
Wendy Kaminer
Woody Kaplan
Leonard Liggio
Herbert London
Peter L. Malkin
Milton Rosenberg
John R. Searle
Ricky Silberman
Christina Hoff Sommers

The Ayn Rand Institute, in conjunction with student objectivist clubs, organized events at five colleges across the country last spring to show and discuss the well-known Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed. Of these universities—the University of California at Los Angeles, the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Southern California, the University of Chicago, and NYU—NYU has the dubious distinction of being the only institution to censor the public display of the cartoons. The events at the other universities took place without incident or censorship and produced meaningful and informed dialogue on the global controversy.

NYU proudly promises its students that it “is committed to maintaining an environment where open, vigorous debate and speech can occur.” NYU's Policy on Speakers and Other Campus Visitors provides that “[t]he interests of the academic community are not served by fear and suppression of free discussion, controversy, and dissent.” Sadly, NYU did not live up to its commitments and has been roundly condemned by the press for that failure (see the attached “NYU Knuckles,” a *New York Post* editorial, and “‘Free speech’ cries ring hollow on college campuses and beyond,” by Nat Hentoff in *USA Today*).

Like previous NYU Objectivist Club events, this panel was to be open to the public. Two days

cc:

Phyllis Putter Barasch, Board of Trustees, NYU
Marcus H. Bell, Board of Trustees, NYU
William R. Berkley, Board of Trustees, NYU
Edward H. Bersoff, Board of Trustees, NYU
Ronald E. Blaylock, Board of Trustees, NYU
Leonard Boxer, Board of Trustees, NYU
Kevin R. Brine, Board of Trustees, NYU
Arthur L. Carter, Board of Trustees, NYU
Evan R. Chesler, Board of Trustees, NYU
Florence A. Davis, Board of Trustees, NYU
Barry Diller, Board of Trustees, NYU
Joel S. Ehrenkranz, Board of Trustees, NYU
Laurence D. Fink, Board of Trustees, NYU
Paul E. Francis, Board of Trustees, NYU
Paul J. Fribourg, Board of Trustees, NYU
Jay M. Furman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Richard A. Grasso, Board of Trustees, NYU
Alan C. Greenberg, Board of Trustees, NYU
H. Dale Hemmerdinger, Board of Trustees, NYU
Richard D. Katcher, Board of Trustees, NYU
Henry Kaufman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Richard Jay Kogan, Board of Trustees, NYU
Jerry Labowitz, Board of Trustees, NYU
Kenneth G. Langone, Board of Trustees, NYU
Donald Baird Marron, Board of Trustees, NYU
Brooke Garber Neidich, Board of Trustees, NYU
L. Jay Oliva, Board of Trustees, NYU
David C. Oxman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Herbert M. Paul, Board of Trustees, NYU
Lester Pollack, Board of Trustees, NYU
Catherine B. Reynolds, Board of Trustees, NYU
E. John Rosenwald, Jr., Board of Trustees, NYU
Courtney Ross, Board of Trustees, NYU
William C. Rudin, Board of Trustees, NYU
John Sexton, Board of Trustees, NYU
Constance Silver, Board of Trustees, NYU
Henry R. Silverman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Larry A. Silverstein, Board of Trustees, NYU
Joel E. Smilow, Board of Trustees, NYU
Jay Stein, Board of Trustees, NYU
Joseph S. Steinberg, Board of Trustees, NYU
Michael H. Steinhardt, Board of Trustees, NYU

Henry Taub, Board of Trustees, NYU
Daniel R. Tisch, Board of Trustees, NYU
John L. Vogelstein, Board of Trustees, NYU
Casey Wasserman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Anthony Welter, Board of Trustees, NYU
Shelby White, Board of Trustees, NYU
Leonard A. Wilf, Board of Trustees, NYU
William D. Zabel, Board of Trustees, NYU
Mortimer B. Zuckerman, Board of Trustees, NYU
Mrs. W. Vincent Astor, Board of Trustees, NYU
Diane Belfer, Board of Trustees, NYU
Mrs. Elmer Holmes Bobst, Board of Trustees, NYU