



T 215-717-3473 • F 215-717-3440 • fire@thefire.org • www.thefire.org



May 4, 2010

Alan Charles Kors
CO-FOUNDER AND
CHAIRMAN, FIRE

Sent via U.S. Mail and facsimile (202-687-6660)

Dear President DeGioia:

As you can see from the list of our Directors and Board of Advisors, FIRE unites civil rights and civil liberties leaders, scholars, journalists, and public intellectuals across the political and ideological spectrum on behalf of liberty, freedom of

Marlene Mieske

Lloyd B. Chanan
T. Kenneth Cribb, Jr.
Candace de Russy
William A. Evans

Woody Kaplan

Benjamin B. Hammond
Nat Henoff
Roy Inuit

Woody Kaplan
Leonard Liggio

exchange of ideas” because such obstruction “is an attack on the core principles the University lives by and may not be tolerated.” They thus argued:

The university is not just limiting free speech by barring H*yas for Choice and other pro-choice perspectives from full enfranchisement in the University community; by allowing discourse around reproductive rights to be one-sided and by endorsing one particular viewpoint the University also eliminates any prospect for real, substantive dialogue.

[...]

professional staff dedicated to Georgetown's Jewish Community. [See [http://www12.georgetown.edu/students/organizations/jsa/.](http://www12.georgetown.edu/students/organizations/jsa/)]

It truly is baffling that diversity of identity and diversity of belief at Georgetown, considering not only expression but also conduct, explicitly encompasses university benefits provided to Jewish and Muslim students but not to H*yas for Choice. Please clarify for us and for the Georgetown community whether students do in fact have equal rights without "any sort of special pleading in the interest of ideology or vested interest."

Again, Georgetown has a First Amendment right to freedom of association which permits the university to determine its own mission and values. Some students and faculty members may indeed wish to be part of an institution that places ideology, religious values, and other "vested interests" above free speech and equal treatment. Yet, Georgetown may not promise something that it simultaneously refuses to deliver. The campus community deserves an explanation why Georgetown seems to have chosen to promulgate a free speech policy that does not mean in practice what it plainly says. Please clarify Georgetown's position in this matter.

FIRE hopes to resolve this question so that members of the Georgetown and wider communities will better understand what Georgetown values. Is the university dedicated to a free marketplace of ideas or to an unequal playing field? Saint Thomas Aquinas did not shy away from confronting the fullest variety of objections to a vast number of theological questions, and Father Peter Abelard did not shy away from confronting the *sic* and *non* aspects of many controversial

