

Setting the record straight

A day after ACTA put out a [press release](#) commending the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors for agreeing to undertake a comprehensive review of the university's tenure and diversity policies, as we requested in an earlier letter, representatives of the university wrote to us to object. The rector, who heads the board, denied that he had agreed to undertake a comprehensive review, saying, "The only statement I made was that any **change** in policy would have to be approved by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors." The administration, via the University Relations department, explained that board members "would have nothing to review until it is presented to them for review." Since [Inside Higher Ed](#) published a short piece today on the disagreement over what was said during a telephone conversation between the rector and me, I believe this summary of our good-faith efforts to communicate productively with the board is in order.

After the National Association of Scholars brought to light Virginia Tech's controversial tenure policies and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education wrote to the president, we wrote a [letter](#) to the board on March 27th, calling upon it to undertake a "full and immediate review - - at the board level -- of all policies relating to tenure, promotion, and diversity." We drew attention to both the proposed tenure and promotion guidelines of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and to several other related policies implemented by the universit2cr0o 401 §a T11.37

The following afternoon, on April 2nd, we faxed and mailed him a letter recounting the conversation. In the letter, we praised the board for deciding to undertake a "comprehensive review" and specified, once again, that the proposed CLAHS policies are "just one part of a web of policies that raise First Amendment and academic freedom concerns."

On the afternoon of April 6th, we sent the press release praising the board, whose language parallels that of the follow-up letter to the rector, to the media. A few hours later, we received a call from University Relations saying the rector disputed our account. The following morning, we received an email from University Relations demanding we retract our press release, as well as a four-sentence letter from the rector indicating he had said only that changes in policy would have to be approved by the board. For the reasons outlined here, we declined the administration's request.

ACTA's message has been consistent from the start: The board must review all policies. We made this clear in every communication with the board. The rector had four days between the time we faxed him our follow-up letter and the time we issued our press release to attempt to