

Date: Tue, 16 May 2006 13:01:39 -0700 (PDT)
From: "Frederick Fagal" <fffagal@yahoo.com> [View Contact Details](#) [Add](#)
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Subject: Free Speech Policy Clarification Requested
To: mreap@marywood.edu

President Sr. Mary Reap
Marywood University
Scranton, PA

May 15, 2006

Dear Sr. Mary:

At our March 21, 2006 meeting you told me that I did in fact have the right to post the Danish Mohammed cartoon on my office door even though you thought it a bad idea.

I have been waiting for you to publicly clarify Marywood's official policy. Right now any faculty member (and some students) must assume, based on the letter I sent to the faculty on March 17, that hanging such a cartoon is prohibited.

For your information, the faculty response to my February free speech faculty survey letter shows mostly an unwillingness to respond. The faculty votes received tallied as follows:

- 9 Faculty For Free Speech
- 5 Faculty Against Free speech
- 10 Faculty 'Nuanced view'/can't decide

I was interested in student opinion on the issue of student campus free speech, so I got some dorm students to survey dorm students. In an attempt to make sure that the students were casting an informed vote, students were given a free speech poster and informative letter. I attach the poster/letter as a pdf file. My Mohammed cartoon incident was not the focus of the survey or letter, there is no mention of it in the letter. In the letter I did make a minor mistake tallying up the (as then) reported faculty vote. I blame my middle-aged eyes. Three faculty votes arrived after the poster/letter was completed, the vote totals above are correct and complete.

I held off surveying students until it seemed clear to me that you might not issue a free speech clarification letter. Madonna Hall voted most heavily (dedicated vote gatherers at work). In fact the Madonna vote gatherers report that the students were very enthusiastic about supporting free speech, and often voiced the unsolicited view that they could not see how any other choice would be justifiable. I want to make it clear that my explicit directions to the vote gatherers were that they were to encourage voting but NOT push for a specific outcome. The other dorms were canvassed more lightly, but absent evidence to the contrary **I think the results reflect the truth as to strongly held student opinion on the Marywood campus.**

Dormitory	For Free Speech	For Responsible (Limited)	Spoiled
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		Speech	
Madonna	100*	3	3
Regina	19	3	
Immaculata	11	5	
TOTAL	130	11	3

*The initial count (2 students counting, 1 student observer, plus me observing) was 116, but when I recounted the ballots in my office I only got 100. But it could have been 116 if some ballots were misplaced/lost in the transition from the counting table back into the ballot box and thence into my office.

In a closely related matter, Dr. Rod Carveth's Word Word editorial pertaining to the free speech Mohammed cartoon issue was spiked by the Wood Word editorial board. This distresses me, and I know that others are unhappy with that decision. See www.thefire.org for a report on similar cases.

As you begin your last year as president I think you are in the perfect position to clear the air, save your successor many headaches, and do the right thing by clearly supporting free speech on campus.

Sincerely,

Frederick F. Fagal, Jr
Associate Professor of Economics
Marywood University
Scranton, PA

PS For you convenience I also attach this letter as a Microsoft Word file.

New Yahoo! Messenger with Voice. [Call regular phones from your PC](#) and save big.

Attachments

Files:

 **Dorm_Free_Speech_POSTER_and_Letter.pdf** (606k)

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 **Free_Speech_Clarification_Request_May_16_2006_Fagal.doc** (31k) [[Preview](#)]

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