

March 1st, 2007

Dr. Samy Mahmoud
President & Vice-Chancellor
Carleton University

Re: Krista Prochazka
Manager, Prospect Development Services
Advancement Services
Carleton University

Re: Doug Wotherspoon
Director, University Communications
Carleton University

Dear President Mahmoud,

We are writing to express our disappointment that the university has not intervened to stop the discriminatory policy of the Carleton University Student's Association (CUSA). Last year, CUSA passed a resolution that banned certain groups from the use of its space, just because it morally disagrees with its ideas on a controversial issue, abortion.

Carleton University's pro-life student group, Lifeline, felt specifically targeted by this resolution because they are opposed to abortion. Thankfully, when other student clubs were given the option of recognizing Lifeline, they voted to make them an official club. **However, this does not mean CUSA's policy has changed.** CUSA can still pull Lifeline's club status at anytime based on their discriminatory policy and have already warned the pro-lifers that the club's activity will be monitored. If CUSA pulls Lifeline's club status, it means the club will not get funding and other resources *that every other campus group* has access to.

This action is unworthy of a school that boasts world-class public affairs programs, including a journalism program that graduates many of this country's top reporters.

Carleton University would not tolerate this kind of behaviour if it were a politically correct institution or popular club that was being targeted. The second point on Carleton University's own *Statement on Conduct and Human Rights* states that:

Membership in the University community entails certain rights and responsibilities, including an obligation to deal ethically and fairly with other members and to not discriminate or harass. The University requires tolerance, civil conduct and respect for the rights of others. It endeavours to provide a safe environment, conducive to personal and intellectual growth, which is not only free of discrimination, injustice and violence but is also characterized by understanding, respect, peace, tolerance, trust, openness and fairness.¹

¹ http://www.carleton.ca/equity/human_rights/policy.htm#universitystatement

Point six indicates:

The University respects the rights of speech and dissent and upholds the right to peaceful assembly and expression of dissent.

As such, the university is obligated to stop CUSA's discriminatory actions. As an organization on campus, it must follow the university's own human rights guidelines. It is not enough for Carleton to offer space to Lifeline. It must ensure that the students are not discriminated against just because of their moral point of view. Though the club has been recognized this term, the existence of CUSA's policy against pro-lifers means that it's status is always going to be attacked and questioned unlike *every other club*. This threatens their activities, including the ability to meet at the Unicentre, to use central poster boards and to list their contact information on the CUSA calendar. Without equal access to these resources, the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly of pro-life students is hindered.

Until the university can assure us that all of its students are treated equally and are allowed to express freely, their points of view, even on contentious issues, we will not be donating any money to the school and will be encouraging others to do the same.

Sincerely,

1. Jojo Ruba, Bachelor of Journalism 1998, Masters of Arts (Political Science) 2000

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